EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a compilation of basic information on democratic governance in Japan, impact of COVID-19 to SDGs, human rights and civic space, and overall responses to COVID-19 by the government, civil society organizations between November 2020 and January 2021, and policy recommendations.

Both the government and civil society organizations (CSOs), including NGOs and NPOs, has responded to COVID-19 pandemic. On 14th December 2020, the Prime Minister suddenly announced that the national campaign, “Go to Travel” would be suspended from 28th December to 11th January nationwide. On 7 January 2021, the new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared the second state of emergency in four prefectures, and later three prefectures were added. The second state of emergency has been extended until March 7th. The number of new confirmed cases dramatically increased this winter, scoring approximately more than 6,000 daily new cases around the end of 2020 and the beginning of this year.

Key SDGs goals, such as Goal 3 (Health), Goal 4 (Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 8 (Decent Work), as well as vulnerable groups such as children, migrant workers, refugees, women and girls, older persons, and LGBTI people, are heavily affected in Japan due to COVID-19 and its countermeasure by the government. Japan's health systems were not able to secure the people's rights to access to diagnostics and treatment amid the third wave of pandemic spread. Female health workers faced a triple burden: risky work, household work, and more childcare burdens. Many refugees are finding it difficult to make ends meet in order to avoid "dense" conditions. A lot of children are suffered from mental health and psychological abuse. The right to information was restricted as the number of journalists to attend the government’s press briefings was limited, and follow-up questions were denied.

Civil society organizations responded by providing foreigners who had problems accessing information about COVID-19, the testing and medical systems, learning support packs to children and high school students, delivering foods and supporting people who have lost their jobs through providing temporary work or business skills training, temporary shelters and support for finding new jobs. CSOs were also active on defending civic space by issuing various statements on the principles of responses to COVID-19, and the declaration of a state of emergency.

As an independent group, Japanese CSOs should play the role of empowering those on the periphery of society and reflecting their voices in policy decisions. Japanese CSOs should also exchange situations and advocacy strategies in different countries and regions to identify common advocacy points and organize international mobilizations for global solidarity. Furthermore, CSOs should develop their capacity to monitor and follow up policies in line with data-driven methods such as indicators and statistics as well as hearing voices from people in need.

Japan, as other high-income countries, should expand the openness, transparency and accountability of production and procurement of vaccines and other COVID-19 tools, including supporting the option that India, South Africa and other 9 countries are proposing WTO to waive COVID-19 related intellectual property rights protection until the end of COVID-19. The government also measure the progress of national targets and indicators of SDGs, especially Goal 16 (Peace and Justice), periodically, and report it during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and related regional conferences.
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E.6 Advocacy Action calendar 2021 and beyond

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Annex 3 Other international reports on COVID-19 on your country
Annex 4 UN human rights reports and recommendations on your government – UPR, Treaty Bodies, and Special Procedures, etc. (From 2010 to 2019)
Annex 5 Other reports and documents
INTRODUCTION

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Masaki INABA
Africa Japan Forum

Noriko SHIBATA
World Vision Japan

Yumiko HORIE
Save the Children Japan

(Alphabetical order)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APFSD  Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development
CIS    COVID-19 Intermediary Social Solidarity
COVAX  COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
CSOs   Civil Society Organizations
DOLAB Department of Overseas Labor Administration
DV     Domestic Violence
HLPF   High-Level Political Forum
KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency
ICCPPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICE    Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Agency's
JFBA   Japan Federation of Bar Associations
JFTC   Japan Fair Trade Commission
JICA   Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAFF  Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
METI  Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MEXT  Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
MHLW  Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare
MIC  Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication
MLIT  Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
MOFA  Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NANCiS  Japan NGO Action Network for Civic Space
NHK  Nppon Hoso Kyokai (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)
NPO  Non-Profit Organization
NGO  Non-Governmental Organization
ODA  Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC  Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR  Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDGs Japan  Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs
SMEs  small and medium-sized enterprises
UNICEF  United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO  World Health Organization

MAJOR WEBSITE ADDRESSES NATIONAL COVID-19, SDGS, HUMAN RIGHTS, ETC.

(Accessed on 28th February 2 021)

STATE INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENTS

- The Government of Japan  
  https://www.japan.go.jp/
- Cabinet Secretariat  
  https://japan.kantei.go.jp/
- Cabinet Office  
  https://www.cao.go.jp/index-e.html
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)  
  https://www.maff.go.jp/e/index.html
- Ministry of Defense  
  https://www.mod.go.jp/e/
- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)  
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)  
  https://www.mext.go.jp/en/
- Ministry of the Environment  
- Ministry of Finance
  https://www.mof.go.jp/english/
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
  https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html
- Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC)
- Ministry of Justice
  http://www.moj.go.jp/EN/index.html
- Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT)

WEBSITES ON SDGS

- “Japan SDGs Action Platform”, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- SDGs Promotion Headquarters (in Japanese)
  https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/sdgs/
- Japan's Voluntary National Review (July 2017)
- “Japan’s Efforts for Achieving the SDGs” (November 2020)
  https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/1-3.%20Iwasaki%20Tetsuya.pdf
- Local Governments SDGs (in Japanese)
  https://future-city.go.jp/
- Local SDGs Platform
  https://local-sdgs.jp/?lang=en_us

NATIONAL WEBSITE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

- UN OHCHR - Japan
  https://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/JPIndex.aspx
- Human Rights, Humanitarian Assistance, Refugees, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Human Rights Bureau, Ministry of Justice
  http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/HB/hb.html

WEBSITES ON COVID-19
- Cabinet Secretariat  
  https://corona.go.jp/en/  
- Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare  
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
  https://www.mofa.go.jp/p_pd/pds/page22e_000910.html  
- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry  
- NHK (Japan’s public broadcast station)  
- Japan COVID-19 Coronavirus Tracker  
  https://covid19japan.com/  
- COVID-19 Japan Anti-Coronavirus Dashboard  
  https://www.stopcovid19.jp/#en

### CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON COVID-19, SDGS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- COVID-19 Intermediary Social Solidarity (CIS)  
  https://stopcovid19-for-npo.jp/  
- Facebook Group to share information on how NPOs/ NGOs should operate in COVID-19 context  
  https://www.facebook.com/groups/covid19np ongo/learning_content/  
- SDGs Civil Society Network (SDGs Japan)  
  https://www.sdgs-japan.net/en  
- Information Hub of International Human Rights Standards and Practice, Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA)  
  https://www.hurights.or.jp/english/  
- COVID-19 Labor & Employment Q&A for Workers, Labor Lawyers Association of Japan  
  https://covid19-labourqanda.jimdosite.com/  
- COVID-19 Multilingual Support Project  
  https://covid19-tagengo.com/

### OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES

- The Japan Times COVID-19 News Updates  
- Time Out Live updates: the COVID-19 coronavirus situation in Tokyo and Japan right now  
- The Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training  
  https://www.jil.go.jp/english/
METHODOLOGY

- Data and Trends about COVID-19
  - "WHO COVID-19 Dashboard", Japan
  - "Our World in Data", Japan
  - CORONAVIRUS GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TRACKER
- Reports by NGOs, etc.
- Newspaper articles accessible on the Internet
- Key building blocks for preparing the review" in "Handbook for preparation of Voluntary National Review".
- Suggestions and recommendations in the Northeast Asia Multi-stakeholder CSO Statement
### A. DATA AND TRENDS ABOUT COVID-19

#### A.1 CHRONOLOGY FROM 1 OCTOBER 2020 TO 31 JANUARY 2021

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Global Events</th>
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<td>1 October</td>
<td>In the Annual Report of the United Nations, the UN Secretary-General called for pandemic recovery to be assessed in “human rather than economic terms”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 October</td>
<td>The WHO Director-General wished both President Trump and the First Lady of the United States “a full and swift recovery” and called for strong leadership and comprehensive strategies so that countries could &quot;change the trendlines&quot; of the coronavirus pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 October</td>
<td>The WHO estimated that 10% of the world's population may have been infected with coronavirus, with 10 countries accounting for 70% of all reported cases and mortality, and only three countries accounting for half. The WHO also announced survey results showing that the pandemic has interrupted essential mental health services in 93% of countries surveyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 October</td>
<td>OHCHR (the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights) called on Iran to release imprisoned lawyers, human rights defenders, and political prisoners, citing concerns over the situation they are facing and the risk of their contracting Covid-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 October</td>
<td>The UN Secretary-General launched his latest policy brief, <em>COVID-19 and Universal Health Coverage</em>, stating that pandemic had highlighted the importance of emergency preparedness and investing in robust public health systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 October</td>
<td>The UN Secretary-General, highlighting that &quot;inadequate&quot; global health care systems had contributed to the million deaths from the pandemic so far, stressed that universal health care was a key recommendation in the UN's <em>COVID-19 and Universal Health Coverage</em> policy brief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 October</td>
<td>The UN reported that China, the Republic of Korea and Nauru had joined COVAX global vaccination programme during the week, raising the total of participating nations and economies to 171.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 October</td>
<td>A joint statement by the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labor Organization, and World Health Organization, called for “global solidarity and support, especially with the most vulnerable in our societies.” It also highlighted that tens of millions of people, especially in the developing world, risk falling into...</td>
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extreme poverty, with nearly half of the global 3.3 billion work force at risk of losing their jobs.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>14 October</td>
<td>Youtube announced that it would remove anti-coronavirus vaccine content from the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 October</td>
<td>Marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the UN Secretary General called for solidarity with people living in poverty during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October</td>
<td>The world crossed the 40 million case mark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October</td>
<td>A new World Bank Group and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) analysis indicated that the number of children in extreme poverty will likely worsen significantly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October</td>
<td>The Department of Economic and Social Affairs launched the 2020 The World's Women: Trends and Statics report, which noted that the pandemic has been stalling and/or reversing efforts to achieve gender equality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 November</td>
<td>Fifty million Covid-19 cases recorded worldwide.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 November</td>
<td>AstraZeneca and Oxford announced that interim results showed their vaccine candidate reduced the risk of symptomatic Covid-19 by an average 70 percent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 December</td>
<td>COVAX announced that it had arrangements in place to access nearly two billion doses of Covid-19 vaccine candidates on behalf of 190 participating economies and would be able to distribute doses to all participants in the first half of 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 December</td>
<td>The European Union approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 December</td>
<td>Global Covid-19 cases were over 80 million.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 December</td>
<td>The UK authorized the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 January</td>
<td>WHO granted emergency approval for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 January</td>
<td>India authorized the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 January</td>
<td>Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was reported as effective against mutation in new COVID-19 variants.</td>
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1 Maan, Anurag; Ahluwalia, Shaina; Kavya, B. (8 November 2020). "Global coronavirus cases exceed 50 million after 30-day spike". Reuters. (Accessed on 02/08/2021)
8 January
WHO officially said that the second dose of a Covid-19 Vaccine could up to six weeks after the initial shot if supplies were limited.

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<td>4 November</td>
<td>The government of Japan eased re-entry procedures for foreign nationals with residence permits for pleasure and business, revising its travel ban list, which now covers 152 countries and regions, with the additions of Jordan and Myanmar and the removal of 11 from the list, including Australia, China, and South Korea, where the coronavirus is considered to be relatively under control.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 November</td>
<td>The official subcommittee decided that a large-scale event will have been restricted to be held through the end of February.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 November</td>
<td>The government announced that areas experiencing the brunt of a nationwide surge in Covid-19 infections would be removed from &quot;Go to Travel Campaign,&quot; a government tourism promotion campaign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 November</td>
<td>The government excluded Hokkaido and Osaka, eventually, Hokkaido and Osaka from the &quot;Go to Travel Campaign.&quot;</td>
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<td>26 November</td>
<td>The labor ministry said that it decided to extend a special measure again under the government’s employment adjustment subsidy scheme by two months until the end of February 2021.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 November</td>
<td>The Liberal Democratic Party proposed suspending the Go to Travel Campaign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 December</td>
<td>In the Upper House plenary session, a bill to provide free Covid-19 vaccinations was passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 December</td>
<td>Hokkaido and Osaka prefectures have asked the government to dispatch Self-Defense Force nurses in response to the tight medical situation following the outbreak of a series of infections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 December</td>
<td>In response to Hokkaido’s request, the Defense Minister announced that he would dispatch 10 SDF nurses and assistant nurses to Asahikawa City, Hokkaido prefecture, where the medical system is under pressure due to frequent clusters of the spreading infection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event/Announcement</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 December</td>
<td>Responding to a request from the Osaka prefectural government, the Defense Minister announced that seven nurses and others from the Ground Self-Defense Force’s Chubu Area Command would be dispatched to Osaka Prefecture, where the medical system is under pressure due to the spread of the infection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 December</td>
<td>The government announced that the Go to Travel Campaign was suspended temporarily at the national level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 December</td>
<td>During the period when the national-wide campaign was postponed, the prime minister had dinner with a total of eight people at a steak restaurant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 December</td>
<td>Late-night trains on New Year’s Eve in Tokyo were cancelled due to Covid-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 December</td>
<td>The Kansai Region declared a state of emergency for the New Year holidays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 December</td>
<td>In areas where the infection is spreading, mainly in Tokyo, the government announced that it would return the upper limit on the number of people allowed to attend large-scale events to 5,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 December</td>
<td>The government announced to suspend the entry of new foreigners from all over the world from December 28 until the end of January 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 December</td>
<td>Tokyo records 949 COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, a new daily high for the capital city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 December</td>
<td>Parties decided to move up Diet Talks on revisiting Covid-19 law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 December</td>
<td>Tokyo reached 1,337 positive cases of COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 January</td>
<td>The four metropolitan prefectures govern the Tokyo metro area, Yuriko Koike of Tokyo, Motohiro Ohno of Saitama, Yuji Kuroiwa of Kanagawa, and Kensaku Morita of Chiba, met with Nishimura and requested that he promptly consider declaring a state of emergency. Nishikawa responded, &quot;We will consider it,&quot; and asked the four prefectures to move up their closing times in connection with the shortening of business hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 January</td>
<td>Opposition parties objected to the proposed draft to punish companies that refuse to cooperate with anti-epidemic measures, a dispute that could delay legal revisions on combating the latest surge in novel coronavirus infections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 January</td>
<td>The government's task force on Covid-19 infections decided to issue a &quot;State of emergency on New Coronavirus Infections&quot; based on the Special Measures Law for Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo Kanagawa prefectures. The period was scheduled to begin at midnight on January 8 and end on February 7.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 January | Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo prefectures, where the number of infected people was increasing, requested the government to declare a state of emergency based on the Special Measures Law.  

12 January | Aichi, Gifu, and Tochigi prefectures, where the number of infected people is increasing, requested the government to declare an emergency state based on the Special Measures Law.  

13 January | Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Aichi, Gifu, Tochigi, and Fukuoka prefectures would be added to the emergency declaration based on the special measures law from 14th January 7th February, the new coronavirus infection control headquarters decided.  

13 January | The Prime Minister announced that business travelers and students along with all other nonresident foreign visitors from Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Taiwan, Singapore, Brunei, South Korea, and China would no longer be allowed into Japan.  

18 January | The Prime Minister has announced that Taro Kono, Minister of State for Regulatory Reform, will be the cabinet minister responsible for coordinating vaccinations against the new coronavirus.  

27 January | The ruling LDP moved to drop criminal penalties from Covid-19 bills.  

28 January | The Diet approved their supplementary budget for fiscal 2020  

2 February | The Government declared an extension of the state of emergency until March 7th.  

3 February | The Diet passed three bills that allows authorities to levy financial punishments to businesses and individuals that violate orders from authorities  

### A.2 MOST RECENT STATISTICS (AS OF 6TH FEBRUARY 2021) – NO. OF TESTS, CONFIRMED CASES, DEATHS, ETC.  

- Total number of tests : 7,485,659  
- Total confirmed cases : 401,967  
- Total deaths : 6,336  

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(Accessed on 02/08/2021)
- Recovered Cases: 360,108
- Active cases: 35,523

A.3 DATA AND TRENDS – NO OF TESTS, CONFIRMED CASES, DEATHS

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases

Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 6 February, 09:02 (London time), Official data collated by Our World in Data – Last updated 5 February, 14:30 (London time)

CC BY
Daily COVID-19 tests per thousand people

The figures are given as a rolling 7-day average.

Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data – Last updated 5 February, 14:39 (London time) OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

Note: Comparisons of testing data across countries are affected by differences in the way the data are reported. Daily data is interpolated for countries not reporting testing data on a daily basis. Details can be found at our Testing Dataset page.

Total COVID-19 tests per 1,000 vs. GDP per capita

GDP per capita is adjusted for price differences between countries (it is expressed in international dollars).

Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data; World Bank OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

Note: Comparisons of testing data across countries are affected by differences in the way the data are reported. Details can be found at our Testing Dataset page.
B. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC SPACE

B.1 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON KEY HUMAN RIGHTS AND SDGS


Japan's health and medical capacity on COVID-19, including diagnostics and treatment has been gradually improved after its 1st state of emergency. But the 3rd wave of COVID-19 from late November rapidly exceeded the capacity. Compared with the past trend of the disease, the 3rd wave is huge; the average number of new infections reached more than 5,000/a day, and the number of deaths exceeded 80/a day in late January. Japan's health systems were not able to secure the people's rights to access to diagnostics and treatment. According to the National Police Agency, 75 persons with COVID-19 died at their houses without access to hospitals on January 1 to 25 2021, and 56 persons in December.

Due to the 3rd wave of COVID-19 from late November, Japan became the 3rd worst-affected country of the impact of COVID-19 after Indonesia and Philippines in East, South-East Asia and the Pacific. Fortunately, the number of infections has gradually decreased since early January thanks to the 2nd State of Emergency, but the trend of infection is still at a serious level now.
The laws of COVID-19 response\(^3\) were revised in the current session of the National Diet, which imposed fines against the patients and business entities that resisted the government order. There was no expansion of the duty of the government and rights of the people to access to diagnostics and treatment of COVID-19.

Japan's limited medical resources for COVID-19 are due to the neglect of infectious disease control measures and reduced investment in public health throughout the 2010s, including the abolition and consolidation of many public health centers, budget cuts to local health institutes responsible for testing, and the consolidation of public hospitals. As a result, PCR testing equipment in local public health institutes was not updated, and the processing of data related to surveillance for infection was not digitized and was done manually. There was no pandemic preparedness or crisis management system in place in the government, to the extent that the government was forced to set up the Novel Coronavirus Disease Control Headquarters outside the framework of the law.

**B.1.2 RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND SDG 4**

According to the "Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds" by Nippon Foundation, more than half of the respondents felt that there is an educational gap. Of these, "family economic power" was cited as the second most common cause of educational disparity, followed by "school leadership. 52.9% of the respondents felt that the Corona disaster had widened the gap in the learning environment. 68.0% of the respondents, especially those who had felt the gap in the learning environment, felt that the Corona disaster had widened the gap.

There were also reports of cases where online education was abandoned due to reasons such as many students requiring the cooperation of their parents, some parents being uncooperative with online connections, and insufficient personal communication environment. There were also concerns that online classes, which mainly focus on "seeing and hearing," were not suitable for children with severe disabilities, and that visually impaired children would have a heavy burden of family support.

**B.1.3 RIGHT TO FOOD AND SDG 2**

COVID-19 has affected the right to food and nutrition and achievement of SDG2 among the poor households in Japan, especially among those who were dismissed from work or were forced to reduce their working hours, and single-parent households with part time work or temporary work. More than half of the part time workers have been negatively affected by COVID-19, resulting in reduced working hours, reduced income, unpaid leave, and layoffs. Reduced income has directly affected the affordability to buy

\(^3\) See C.1.2 Legislative body (national and local parliament, etc.)
food among these households. According to a survey conducted towards children by Save the Children Japan in March 2020, children have expressed their voices of anxiety and worries, including their inability to access adequate food, such as "I’m hungry all the time" or "I’m disappointed that I cannot eat school lunches". According to a questionnaire towards single parent who has signed up to Save the Children Japan’s emergency food package support, voices were expressed such as "We are cutting down on food expenses, and my children has lost around 3 to 6 kilograms during school closure", and "We can only eat twice a day and drinking lots of water to endure hunger".

On the other hand, experts have pointed to the risk of increase in overweight and obesity, due to self-quarantine and staying indoors, reduced exercise, and stress from COVID-19.

**B.1.4 RIGHT TO WORK/JOB AND SDG 8**

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the right to work and achievement of SDG8 among workers in Japan. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare has reported on 15 January 2021 that the number of people who lost their job due to COVID-19 is estimated to exceed 82,000. Nomura Research Institute estimates that there were approximately 900,000 female part-time workers who were essentially unemployed due to the significant reduction of their regular working hours of more than 50% and received no leave allowances, as of December 2020. These female part-time workers are not included in the government statistics. These people have been laid off or their contracts have been terminated from their employers due to poor business performance. Industries with the biggest number of people laid off include manufacturers, accommodation industry, restaurant business, and retailers. According to an investigation by a private credit research company, there has been a 24% increase since last year in the number of companies that were closed or temporarily closed. Over 900 small and medium-sized companies and stores have gone bankrupt. Part time workers and freelancers, including young people, women, elderly workers, as well as foreign technical trainees have been most vulnerable to lay off, contract termination, or reduced working hours.

Foreign technical trainees face multiple challenges of not being able to find other jobs in Japan, nor return to their homeland due to COVID-19. According to the Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training, around 6 million people were forced to take leave from work at the end of April, which decreased to around 2 million people at the end of January. However, many people have lost their jobs after some period of forced leave, and still many others are put under risk of being laid off.

The government has introduced an employment adjustment subsidy to support employers to continue employing workers by compensating for forced leave or reduced
working hours. According to a survey conducted by the Nomura Research Institute in December 2020, only 20% of female part time workers received compensation for the leave, while a survey in October 2020 showed that 63% of female full-time workers received compensation. Further, only 16% of female part time workers who did not receive compensation from their workplace knew about the government support fund which they are eligible to receive. In terms of work life balance, women have been bearing a disproportionate burden of childcare and domestic work in addition to their paid work due to closure of schools and day care centers.

### B.1.5 INEQUALITY (SDG 10)

The spread of Covid-19 gives varied range of impact, especially it prolongs tendencies of inequality in employment, low income, education⁴ and public health policy.⁵ Furthermore, such inequalities are fixed by the guidelines and actions of public authorities in the unequal distribution of wealth and unfair decision-making content.

According to a research by the Japan Research Institute⁶, the worsening of the employment situation due to the spread of the new corona epidemic has been limited so far on the whole. However, the impact of the epidemic by employment type has been varied, with low-income groups being particularly hard hit. Looking at the number of employees by annual income, the number of employees with annual incomes of 2 million yen or more increased compared to the previous year, while the number of low-income employees with annual incomes of less than 2 million yen increased. The number of employees with annual incomes of 2 million yen or more increased compared to the previous year, while the number of low-income employees with annual incomes of less than 2 million yen decreased significantly. In particular, the number of part-time workers, who are more likely to be the target of companies' employment adjustments, declined markedly. It is pointed out that such a situation may have resulted from the fact that the accommodation and food service industries, where many low-wage workers are employed, have been significantly affected by the Covid-19, such as a sharp decline in inbound demand and voluntary restraint from going out.

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⁴ See B.1.2

⁵ See B.1.1

⁶ Enka, Hiroki "Low-wage workers strongly affected by new Corona: Concerns about widening income gap due to prolonged unemployment"(in Japanese), the Japan Research Institute, December 25th, 2020.

One of the discriminative policies related to gender equality in Japan is that married couples must have the same name. On December 15th, members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party discussed the issue of revising the current system requiring married couples to use the same surname. Although a lot of opinions that claimed that such traditional policies should be eradicated, some members in the party pressured the government into backtracking on a proposal toward changing the long-established rule included in the draft Basic Vision for Formulating the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality. As a result, they had the Cabinet Office’s draft insert an expression to throw a wrench into introducing a new system and replace the phrase with "proceed with further consideration," and they erased "fufu bessi" (separate surnames for married couples) from the draft plan.

B.1.6 GENDER EQUALITY (SDG 5)

COVID-19 places more burden on women, leading to an increase in unpaid work, reduced financial access, a widening economic gap, and more incidences of domestic violence.

The government’s framework of cash handouts designates the head of the household to receive the payment on behalf of all family members. As such, the funds did not reach domestic violence (DV) survivors who left their abusers, often the head of households. [SDG5.1]

The number of unemployment has been an increasing trend with considerably greater impact on women (680,000) compared with men (270,000) in April 2020 during the government's first declaration of a state of emergency in response to the Covid19. The phenomenon reflected retail, service and entertainment industries - the industries that require direct human contact and traditionally attracted/preferred female employees- were hit directly by the pandemic.

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7 In a joint survey conducted by a non-governmental organization and Tanamura Masayuki’s lab at Waseda University, 35.9% respondents said that while they personally would prefer to have the same surname as their partner, they thought it was fine for other couples to choose. A further 34.7% also answered in favor, saying that they would prefer to choose separate surnames and other couples should be free to choose too.


8 These opponents tend to claim that such a system of separating surnames for married couples may damage family bonds and cause harmful effects to many children.
As the social and economic influence of Covid 19 continues, DV cases also remain to increase. From April to November 2020, the number of calls to the government DV hotline reached 132,355. 1.5 times increase compared with the same period in 2019. The number already surpasses the total calls received in the same year. [SDG5.2]

Starting from June 2020, the number of women’s suicide case has been an increasing trend. While men’s suicide case has historically been larger than women’s since the pre-pandemic time and it has shown a slight increasing since August 2020, it is important to note that the rate of increase in women is strikingly higher than men’s, reaching 189% increase in October compared to the same month in 2019. The latest figure in December shows the total number of women’s suicide cases as 592, up 133 cases and 129% increase compared to the same month in 2019.

As the lockdown prolonged, DV cases increased. The number of calls to the government DV hotline increased by 30% in April and 20% in May compared with the previous year. [SDG5.2]

Unpaid domestic and care work due to COVID-19 was not evenly shared between couples. Women suffered from their increased burden of unpaid work. In March, the government suddenly requested school closures for over a month without consultation, and the local governments blindly followed its lead. This decision severely affected parents, especially women and single-parent families. More women took absences from work than men did. The survey in May shows the figure of women tripled that of men. Short school hours suspended after school activities and the fact that companies did not favor remote work environments prevented women from going back to work. [SDG5.4]

Women represent only two out of 12 members of the COVID-19 expert panel, and three out of 20 in the Cabinet. The number in the Cabinet later decreased to two out of 20 in September under the new administration. The COVID-19 Basic Strategy document first issued in March 2020, merely suggested that the policies be gender-sensitive. It did not include any concrete measures except for the treatment of pregnant women. However, with the second issuance of the state of emergency in January 2021, two following sentences were added to the document.

- The government and its affiliated agencies’ implementations of restrictions on public freedom and rights to counter Covid19 pandemic must take into consideration the gravity of life and employment situation women are facing, and special care must be made to the influence it could cause on women and persons with special needs.
- The government shall, in coordination with local authorities provide adequate support to respond to numerous social challenges caused by the prolonged
The number of help line calls regarding teenage pregnancy reportedly increased. Pregnant women and postpartum women became more vulnerable due to a lack of accurate information. Limited access to contraceptives, especially emergency contraceptives, and the unavailability of medical abortion in Japan made it more difficult for women and girls to access sexual and reproductive health services. [SDG5.6]

B.2 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE GROUPS AND SECTORS

B.2.1 MIGRANTS (TARGET 10.7, 16.B, ETC.)

The intervention of overseas "sending organizations," which has been seen as a problematic factor contributing to the "intermediate exploitation" of foreign trainees, is now becoming mandatory in the newly established special skills system for the official acceptance of foreign workers.

In the Immigration and Naturalization Service document Specified Skills 1, which compares the technical training and specified skills systems, dated July 2019, when the specified skills system was first launched, the sending organization specified "none".

On January 6, 2021, the Immigration Bureau updated its "Information regarding the Socialist Republic of Vietnam." It clearly stated that businesses accepting new specified skilled workers from Vietnam are required to conclude a labor supply contract with a sending organization certified by the Department of Overseas Labor Administration (DOLAB) of the Vietnamese Ministry of Labor, Wounded Warriors and Social Affairs. It also explained that Vietnamese nationals who wish to apply for residency with specified skills must obtain prior approval of the "List of Recommended Persons" from DOLAB through authorized sending organizations.

B.2.2 REFUGEES (TARGET 16.B, ETC.)

Even before the pandemic, the situations of refugees in Japan have been criticized. Amid the recent period, it is getting worse and worse amid this period due to lack of fundamental rights of access to work, education, welfare and medical care.

It has been seen that many refugees who have been temporarily released (provisionally released) from the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Agency's

ICE detention facilities in order to avoid "dense" conditions in the fight against Covid-19, are finding it difficult to make ends meet. According to a report published in November 2021 by Solidarity Network with Migrants in Japan, the network gave aid from May to September 2020 to in total 1,645 of refugees’ claimants and parolees who could not receive any and people who have difficulty returning home, and immigrants or who cannot easily access official support. ¹⁰

The reason for this severe situation is that provisionally released foreigners are not allowed to work and cannot return to their home countries due to the decrease in air traffic. Furthermore, while on parole, the government’s support does not apply, and they cannot apply for welfare. Many foreigners who are stranded on the streets are being sheltered by civic groups. ¹¹ ¹²

B.2.3 WOMEN AND GIRLS (SDG 5 ETC.)

Young women and girls became more vulnerable. Far more calls than normal were received concerning teenage pregnancy. Shelters for teenage girls run by an NGO added an additional 50 rooms, but all available beds were immediately filled. Due to a shortage of part-time employment opportunities, some girls started selling their bodies. In August 2020, the number of teenage girl’s suicide rose up to 3.6 times more than the same month previous year. ¹³

A majority of single mothers suffered from the economic impacts of COVID-19. A June survey reported that 70% of single mothers experienced reduced income and 20% of them lost income. The figures rose higher than the previous month’s survey, which signals that the situation is deteriorating.

During the pre-pandemic era 81% of single mothers were in employment, of which 44% were part-time workers and 5% were contract employees, leaving them susceptible to


¹¹ The Asahi Shinbun “Kurdish Consultations Reveal Realities of Impoverishment” November 19. URL: https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASNCL7398NCLUTNB003.html (Japanese) (Accessed on 02/12/2021)

¹² The Tokyo Shinbun “Consultation at Kawaguchi "Tent Village" for foreigners in need of medical care, jobs, etc. Food and daily necessities will be distributed.” URL: https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/65800 (Japanese) (Accessed on 02/12/2021)

layoff and work hours cut. With the pandemic, 60% of single mothers are reportedly said to have experienced wage cuts while 11% have no income at all.  

Women with disabilities were significantly affected since they suffered from a shortage of female caregivers, as more women had to stay at home to provide care work for their own families. Another example is that a blind woman could not purchase food, as her guide helper had to resign from her job for the reason that she was afraid of being infected.

In general, 70% of health workers in the world are women. The figure in Japan is no different. Women encompass about 20% of medical doctors, 90% of nurses, and 66% of caregivers. For nurses, those aged between 20 to 39 occupy over 40% of positions, so 40% of them are within the age of primary caregiver for young children. However, it was reported that health workers’ children were refused by daycares due to the fear of spreading infections. Female health workers, in this sense, faced a triple burden: risky work, household work, and more childcare burdens.

According to a research conducted by Tohoku University on the change in the mental health of nurses and their willingness to quit under Covid19 pandemic conducted in December 2020, roughly 42% answered that “considered quitting a job, lost confidence in practice”.  

B.2.4 OLDER PERSONS

Japan has one of the highest proportions of elderly people in the world, and COVID-19 is more likely to cause severe disease in the elderly, obese people, and people with non-communicable diseases. Protecting the elderly from SARS-CoV-2 infection is one of the most important issues in Japan. Good coordination between elderly care and medical care can be effective in reducing the impact of COVID-19 in elderly care facilities. In addition, active preventive behaviors by the elderly, who are aware of the increasing trend toward nuclear families and the risk of severe COVID-19 infection in Japan, were effective in controlling the spread of infection among the elderly.

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15 Tohoku University School of Medicine, “Increased necessity for mental health care of nurses under Covid19 pandemic”, February 10, 2021.
On the other hand, the deterioration of dementia and non-communicable diseases was observed in many elderly people due to the deterioration of their quality of life such as bathing and limited access to medical facilities under the declared state of emergency. Following the end of the state of emergency declaration, essential services have resumed, but places for the elderly to relax and socialize in the community remain closed. In addition, many elderly people have avoided accessing health care facilities for fear of infection, leading to fears of worsening dementia and non-communicable diseases.

B.2.5 LGBTI

LGBTI rights in Japan have been remarkably progressed in the recent decade; discrimination and stigma against LGBTI are now recognized as a major social problem and mass-media keeps its focus on discriminatory comments of politicians. Many local governments, including key major cities in Japan, have already introduced their own domestic partnership. However, these positive changes have not affected the national policy. Japan does not have anti-discrimination law mentioning the rights of LGBTI,\(^\text{16}\) nor national-level LGBTI marriage or domestic partnership registration scheme.

In the context of COVID-19, LGBTI, especially gay communities in urban areas, have been affected by social discrimination against "nightlife districts" and unlawful reveals of personal information of the persons that have been partly mobilized by governors and other leaders of some local governments of urban area, and mass media, especially local newspaper. Even in such adverse circumstances, bar owners of Shinjuku 2-chome district, which is the largest gay industry concentration in Tokyo, started its project to prevent COVID-19 using SNS, with the support of AIDS service organizations in Tokyo. It is necessary for the government to take a strong leadership of the national government to prevent discrimination and prohibit irresponsible reveal of personal information nationwide.

B.2.6 CHILDREN AND YOUTHS

The number of children under the age of 18 who were reported by the police to child guidance centers (child welfare ministries) for suspected abuse during the last year increased by 8,738 (8.9%) over the previous year to 106,960 (provisional figures), exceeding 100,000 for the first time since statistics began to be collected in 2004 and

\(^{16}\) According to a figure made by OECD, Japan ranks 34th out of 35 countries in terms of LGBT legislation, the second worst among OECD countries.

OECD “Over the Rainbow? The Road to LGBTI Inclusion: 1. LGBTI-inclusive laws and policies in OECD countries: An overview” 2020. URL: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/8d2fd1a8-en/1/2/3/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/8d2fd1a8-en&csp=08fe0d77e14d6756f70b06d5b75479ab&&itemlGO=oeecd&itemContentType=book (Accessed on 02/09/2021)
doubling in the last five years. In terms of the breakdown of reported cases, the largest number of cases, 78,355 (up 10.8% from the previous year), were of "psychological abuse," accounting for more than 70% of the total. Psychological abuse includes "face-to-face domestic violence," in which spouses are violent to each other or to other siblings, repeated use of hurtful words and actions, and rejecting attitudes such as ignoring others.17

According to a survey by the National Center for Child Health and Development18, which asked about stress symptoms in the last month, 42% of children said they felt bad when they thought about Corona, 30% said they were easily irritated, and 26% said they had trouble concentrating lately. 73% of children chose one or more of these stress responses.

The number of "hidden unemployed" who are not counted as unemployed in the statistics is also increasing rapidly. The labor force is the sum of those who are actually working and those who are currently unemployed but have filed for unemployment and are looking for work. As a result of the increasing number of people who have given up even looking for a job in the first place, the working population is also decreasing significantly. Many of these people are believed to be part-time or casual workers, mainly young people.

A subcommittee of the Legislative Council has compiled an interim draft regarding the Civil Code's disciplinary rights for children and the period of time for which remarriage is prohibited. The draft proposed deleting the "right to discipline" in the Civil Code, which allows parents to discipline their children because it can be a pretext for child abuse and specifying that "corporal punishment shall not be inflicted. In the future, the Legislative Council will publicly solicit opinions and compile a report.

B.3 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CIVIC SPACE AND DEMOCRACY

B.3.1 THE STATE OF EMERGENCY AND ITS POLICIES

On 7th January, the prime minister declared the state of emergency under Article 32 of the Act on Special Measures, and it also released updated Basic Policies. This declaration took effect across Tokyo, and neighboring prefectures of Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama. In fact, the first declaration in the last April restricted various dimensions across all prefectures such as it called for closure of school and restaurants. But this latest

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17 https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASP2432Z7P22UTIL03R.html

emergency’s restrictions have not been as much limited as the last emergency call. It “asked for corporations” including below.

- it called for eateries to limit operations to between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. and to close by 8 p.m.
- it called for residents to stay indoors after 8 p.m. until the declaration is lifted.
- it called for business to reduce the proportion of employees commuting by 70% by promoting remote work and staggered hours.
- it called for event organizers to reduce attendee numbers to 50% of venue capacity or less than 5,000 people, whichever is lower.

**B.3.2 ACCESS TO INFORMATION (INFODEMIC, MISINFORMATION, ETC.)**

A survey of the tendency of ministers and bureaucrats to refuse to answer questions in recent years counted more than 300 times per year in the last five years of the Abe administration. Refusals to answer were more than 300 times a year in the last five years of the Abe administration, by far the most of any other administration; between 2017 and 2019, the number exceeded 500 times a year.
The number of members of the press who can participate in the Prime Minister's press conference is also limited: before the press conference on January 7, 2021, the Prime Minister's Office posted a notice on its website titled "Participation in the Press Conference by the Prime Minister on Covid-19. As stated in the notice, those eligible to participate are: (1) reporters belonging to member companies of the Japan Professional Journalists' Association (holders of the Diet Reporter's Insignia); (2) reporters belonging to member companies of the Japan Magazine Association (holders of the Diet Reporter's Insignia); (3) holders of the Foreign Press Registration Card issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; (4) reporters belonging to corporate member companies of the Japan Internet News

Association, and those who have a sufficient track record and actual activities. 4) Reporters belonging to a corporate member company of the Japan Internet News Association, who have a good track record of activities, and 5) Reporters who have a good track record of activities by providing signature articles, etc., to media published by the companies mentioned in 1, 2, and 4 above or member companies of the Japan Newspaper Publishers Association. Those who wish to participate must go through the procedures for pre-registration and registration of their residence. Those who fall under (4) and (5) and have participated in the Prime Minister’s press conferences since March 26, 2010, must submit an application form to the Press Office each time.

Since April 7, 2010, when the first state of emergency was declared, only 19 full-time secretaries of the Cabinet Press Club, two people selected by lottery from part-time companies, and eight people selected by lottery from each of the fields (2) through (5), for a total of only 29 people. From the notice by the government, the reason why the press is selected and limited is to avoid the so-called “three densities.”

B.3.3 RESPECT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

On September 30th, 2020, NGO Coalition for Free Expression & Open Information in Japan released its reports including recommendations to the government of Japan, according with the 7th Periodic Review of Japan at the UN Human Rights Committee session. The reports consist of two contents: part1 is Freedom of Expression, Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Assembly, and Right to Know. Part2 is of Conspiracy Law and Specifically Designated Secrets Act. The first one states, “the crisis for freedom of opinion and expression in Japan has become increasingly dire, with no improvement at all, as will be illustrated below through recent cases.”

B.3.4 FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Continuously, CSOs in Japan have been forced to stop visiting fields and close their own offices temporarily. Considering the official policy of avoiding “3Cs (closed spaces, poorly ventilated areas, crowds and close contact)

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20 Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, Yomiuri Shimbun, Nikkei Shimbun, Sankei Shimbun, Tokyo Shimbun, Hokkaido Shimbun, Nishinippon Shimbun, Kyoto Shimbun, Chugoku Shimbun, Japan Times, Kyodo News, Jiji Press, NHK, Nippon Television Network Corp. TBS, Fuji Television, TV Asahi, and TV Tokyo

21 (1) Poorly ventilated areas, (2) crowds and (3) close contact

22 NGO Coalition for Free Expression & Open Information in Japan “JOINT NGO REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL & POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR) ARTICLES 18, 19 & 21: For the 7th Periodic Review of Japan at the UN Human Rights Committee session” September 30th, 2020, p.5. URL: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oHQd-rvD4uaiwu6b2_a6jXjuiwX5SL/view (Accessed on 02/09/2021)
crowded places, and close-contact settings)” people are not usually willing to gather outside to advocate some social matters. Despite that, the recent period has seen some of the exceptions. One of those is that Japanese Trumpinist organized two demonstrations on November 25th and 29th. In both cases, demonstrators displayed signs such as “U.S. presidential election, Winner is Trump!” “The U.S. and Japanese media must report the truth!” “Defend Japan from China’s threats!” “Cheer up Hong Kong!” and “Fraud in the U.S. election is destroying democracy!23”

B.3.5 FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT (LOCKDOWN, SHUTDOWN, TRAVEL BAN, ETC.)

Basic Policies24 declared on January 7th, 2021 by the government, has recommended restaurants to take measures mainly for eating and drinking. To this end, it is recommended that, for example, the flow of people leading to eating and drinking be restricted, that restaurants be requested to shorten their business hours, that they refrain from going out, and that telework be thoroughly implemented. 25 The policy package also asked for cooperation in refraining from going out and moving around unnecessarily. In particular, residents were asked to refrain from going out unnecessarily after 8 p.m.26 Under the state of emergency, the government and/or the local government reiterated its call for universities and high schools to alert students and others about restrictions on club and circle activities with a high risk of infection. They also asked them for self-restraint on graduation trips and farewell parties.

C. RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 INCLUDING RECOVERY, MITIGATION, AND PREPAREDNESS

C.1 MAJOR POLICIES AND PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT

23 The Japan Times “Who were those Trumpists marching in Tokyo?” 15th December. URL: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2020/12/15/commentary/japan-commentary/trump-protests-tokyo/ (Accessed on 02/09/2021)

24 On 2nd February 2021, Basic Policies was updated.

25 However, this excludes going out and traveling to work, going to the hospital, going for a walk, and other activities that are necessary to maintain.

26 The Basic Policies updated on 13th January, includes "daytime" when people are asked to refrain from going out unnecessarily.
C.1.1 EXECUTIVE BODY (GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE)

Japan did not have a crisis management system in place for a pandemic, and neither the executive nor the legislative branch had a good understanding of the principles of democratic governance in a crisis. As a result, it was not possible to smoothly set up an administrative structure for pandemic response based on the principles of the rule of law. It also failed to make key policy decisions on COVID-19 measures in a manner based on transparency, accountability and adequate representation. Specifically, they are as follows from October 2020 to January 2021;

(1) On 14th December 2020, the Prime Minister suddenly announced that the national campaign, “Go to Travel” would be suspended from 28th December to 11th January nationwide. As many people were expected to use the service to plan their trips during the year-end and New Year holidays, confusion among businesses and users was inevitable, and the service was immediately being criticized for its backwardness. From the National Governors’ Association, there was some concern and opposition to the fact that the response was thrown to each prefectural governor. There were also calls for national leadership on unclear operational standards and where responsibility lies, and there were still issues of communication and information sharing with the local governments.

(2) On 7th January, the Prime Minister announced the state of emergency. However, the press conference after this declaration was cut off after 52 minutes, and some reporters were unable to ask questions to the Prime Minister. Furthermore, after that, the Prime Minister did not participate in the Diet session. Instead of him, Yasutoshi Nishimura, the Cabinet minister leading the government’s virus response, gave an explanation about the recurrence of the declaration.

On 28th January 2021, the Diet approved their supplementary budget for fiscal 2020 totaling around 19 trillion to fund measures related to the Covid-19. The budget includes 573.6 billion yen for coronavirus vaccinations, 1,301.1 billion yen to secure hospital beds in medical institutions, and 2 trillion yen to support technological development by companies in response to requests from restaurants and other establishments to shorten their business hours. In addition, 2 trillion yen is earmarked to support technological development for the realization of a carbon-neutral society, 178.8 billion yen to support the

27 On 2nd February, the government decided to suspend this national campaign until 3rd March 2021 across 10 prefectures. (Accessed on 02/09/2021)
digitization of local governments, and 3,141.4 billion yen to promote disaster prevention and mitigation measures.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textbf{C.1.2 LEGISLATIVE BODY (NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARLIAMENT, ETC.)}
\end{footnotesize}

On 3rd February, the Diet passed three bills that allows authorities to levy financial punishments to businesses and individuals that violate orders from authorities\textsuperscript{29} \textsuperscript{30}: The revised coronavirus special measures law, The revised infectious disease law and the revised quarantine law. These laws were planned to make measures more effective, although some doubt how effective each revised law. The revised coronavirus special measures law allows local governments to levy fines of 300,000 yen (maximum) on businesses, if those refuse to cooperate with orders to shut down or shorten their open time under a state of emergency. Even in non-state of emergency period, those refusing such orders will face fines of 200,000 yen (maximum). Under the Infectious disease law, those who are infected but refuse orders to be hospitalized can be fined up to ¥500,000. If a person makes a false declaration or refuses to submit to an investigation by a health center without a valid reason, the person will be subject to an administrative penalty of a fine of up to 300,000 yen. Under the revised quarantine law, quarantine station chief can request the infected person to stay at home or provide other necessary cooperation. If the infected person does not comply with the request to stay at home, the quarantine station chief can take measures such as placing the infected person in a facility to "suspend" the infected person, and if the infected person does not comply with the request, the quarantine station chief can impose a \textbf{criminal penalty} of imprisonment for not more than one year or a fine of not more than one million yen.

Along with such financial penalties, the coronavirus special measures law also includes “necessary” financial support from the national government and local authorities to businesses that were affected by the measures for prevention from infection of Covid-19. Also, it allows the government and local authorities to identify the actual situation, provide consultation support, and conduct awareness-raising activities to prevent discriminatory treatment of patients and healthcare professionals.

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{29} NHK “What are the details of the revised special measures law and other related laws?” 3rd February. URL : https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20210203/k10012847221000.html (Accessed on 02/09/2021)

\end{footnotesize}
C.1.3 OVERSIGHT INSTITUTION

The amendments to the revised special measures law and the infectious disease law, included in fact a penalty of up to one year's imprisonment or a fine of up to one million yen for patients who refuse to be hospitalized, and a maximum fine of up to 500,000 yen for businesses that fail to comply with orders to change their business hours.

In response, the opposition parties called for the withdrawal of penalties. At a meeting between the government and the ruling and opposition parties on the proposed amendments, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan called for a review, including withdrawal, of the penalties for businesses that fail to comply with orders from the governor. They also called for the withdrawal of penalties imposed on infected people who refuse to be hospitalized, saying that there is a risk that people suspected of being infected will go into hiding.31

On 22nd January 2021, the Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA) held a press conference in Tokyo and released a statement by its president, Mr. Aronaka.32 The statement said that the proposed amendment to the Infectious Diseases Law is likely to lead to the unfair application of penalties because the scope of those subject to the law is unclear, and that the easy introduction of penalties is likely to further promote discrimination and prejudice against infected people. It also pointed out that the proposed amendments to the Special Measures Law are unclear in terms of requirements and could be applied arbitrarily and could even take away the livelihoods and lives of businesses that are unable to close due to the worsening business environment. In order to prevent the spread of infection, it is essential to establish a system that allows people to receive hospitalization and treatment and investigations by public health centers without anxiety, and to compensate business operators fairly.

Consequently, in the passed bills, descriptions on criminal financial penalties were deleted, and also the number of fines was cut down in accordance with agreement between the ruling parties and the opposite parties.

C.1.4 JUDICIARY BODY


The courts in the areas subject to the state of emergency are planning to continue with the trial and other proceedings as they are at present. The reason for this is that countermeasures against the new coronavirus have been put in place and the impact of the previous declaration, in which most trial dates were cancelled, was significant, but if the number of infected people increases rapidly, jury trials in which citizens participate may be postponed. In civil trials, "web conferences," which connect courts and lawyers' offices via the Internet, have spread to district courts across the country.

However, during the current trial period, while the courts will make more use of these conferences, it will also consider postponing cases that involve long-distance travel of witnesses, etc., on a case-by-case basis. Also, there have been cases where trials have been postponed due to judges being infected or clusters occurring in the courts.

| C.1.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT / GOVERNANCE |

Although most local governments follow orders from the national government, some of them often announce their original governmental orders and implement policies. For example, some prefectures announced their original state of emergency, and give financial and/or material support to hospitals, to businesses especially engaging in the food and beverage industry and other vulnerable persons. Furthermore, each prefecture has held its monitoring meeting to monitor the situation and judge the effectiveness of local policies with its own indicators of hospitalization of infected persons and deaths etc.

A number of local governments and parliaments declared “Zero discrimination due to Covid-19”. On 14 October 2020, Chiba City has issued the "Declaration of a City with Zero Corona Discrimination" to protect the safety and security of its citizens from discriminatory acts and defamation caused by discrimination and prejudice due to a new type of coronavirus infection. The city also announced that it would take various measures to protect human rights and asked for the cooperation of its citizens. Similar declarations were issued by Akita Prefecture, Asakura City in Fukuoka Prefecture, Honda City in Aichi Prefecture, Hodatsushimizu Town in Ishikawa Prefecture, Kawachinagano City in Osaka Prefecture, Omitama City in Ibaraki Prefecture, and Yonago City in Tottori Prefecture etc..

| C.1.6 ELECTION BODY |

33 See this site: Status and response of each prefecture New Corona NHK (Japanese)
In Japan, 227 elections for local government leaders and councilors were held between October and December 2020. These elections were implemented in line with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' directives on infection control measures for elections.

C.1.7 NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION (NHRI)

Japan does not have any national human rights institution.

C.1.8 GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION

Japan does not have an independent Gender Equality Commission. Instead, major work regarding gender equality and women’s rights has been done by the Gender Equality Bureau under the Cabinet Office. In November 2020, the study group made eight recommendations to the government to improve the situation surrounding women such as prevention of sexual violence and suicide, improved treatment of essential workers, and support for single parents. The Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) arranged an extra child-rearing allowance (JPY 50,000 for one child, around USD 477.48) for single-parent households. Information on this special benefit is delivered by 15 languages including Japanese, English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese, Nepali, Bahasa Indonesia, Mongolian, and Burmese.

C.1.9 ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY

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36 The Bureau established the 24-hour DV hotline at the early stage of the pandemic (May 2020). Its service was available in ten languages. The Bureau also set up a study group on the influence and issues arising from COVID-19 on women.

37 On the other hand, as of 11th February 2021, there is no special benefit to double parents’ households in need.

38 As of 11th February.
The Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC), the main anti-corruption agency in Japan, is accepting information on alleged violations of the Antimonopoly Act and the Subcontract Act in relation to new coronavirus infections. Regarding possible responses by JFTC, it mentions three points: ①Response to the Efforts of Business Operators at the Time of the Spread of the Covid-19, ②Response to the wrinkling of small and medium-sized businesses and subcontractors, and ③Response to actions that undermine the interests of consumers.

① In order to ensure the smooth and fair distribution of goods whose supply is insufficient due to the global spread of the new coronavirus infection; it is assumed that there will be situations where it will be necessary for competitors to cooperate with each other in dealing with the situation. For this reason, the Fair Trade Commission considers the "Assumed Examples of Efforts in Emergency Situations such as Earthquakes" published by the Fair Trade Commission in March 2012 as a reference for the concept under the Antimonopoly Law when such efforts are made by competitors and made this known on the Fair Trade Commission's website on February 27, 2020. Furthermore, on April 23, 2020, JFTC posted on its website, Questions and Answers on the Antimonopoly Act Concerning Efforts to Cope with the Infection of the New Coronavirus. The website clarifies that the act of a manufacturer, etc. instructing a retailer to sell a product such as a mask at a price below a certain level for a limited period of time to prevent the retailer from setting an unreasonably high price is not a problem under the Antimonopoly Act because the act is considered to be in the interest of consumers and there is a justifiable reason for the purchase of the product.

② Since it is expected that ordering businesses will change their contracts with sole proprietors and freelancers, on March 10, 2020, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare, and the Chairman of the Fair Trade Commission jointly issued a request for consideration from businesses that do business with sole proprietors and freelancers. In addition, the Fair Trade Commission will continue to respond carefully to consultations and reports from business operators and small and medium-sized enterprises and subcontractors, and will take strict action against acts in violation of the Antimonopoly Act and the Subcontract Act, so that business operators will be able to take appropriate measures in their dealings with small and medium-sized enterprises and subcontractors in accordance with the Antimonopoly Act and the Subcontract Act.

③ In response to the fact that some sellers of hygiene products such as masks had been selling masks together with other products, on February 27, 2020, the Fair Trade Commission requested the relevant industry associations to which these sellers belonged to inform their member companies not to engage in similar activities in the future, as such

activities may lead to unfair trade practices (e.g., tie-in sales) prohibited by the Antimonopoly Law. In addition, the Fair Trade Commission will take strict action not only against such tie-breaking sales but also against price cartels that take advantage of the tight supply-demand situation and other actions by businesses that damage the interests of consumers.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has allocated 4.7 trillion yen in the third supplementary budget plan for this fiscal year, which was approved by the Cabinet on December 15, 2020, mainly for additional economic measures against the new coronavirus. In addition to digital reform, which is the government's top priority, and carbon-neutral measures (a state in which carbon dioxide emissions and absorption are virtually zero), which the government aims to achieve by the year 50, measures for small and medium-sized enterprises will be strengthened. The government will increase the amount of measures to support cash flow, subsidies for companies that use IT to improve productivity, and the "Go To Shotengai" program to support shopping arcades, all of which were provided in the previous supplementary budget. We have also increased the "supply chain subsidies" for companies, including large companies, that use Corona as an opportunity to relocate their production bases in Japan or diversify their operations overseas.

C.1.10 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTIONS

In April 2020, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) launched the "Study Group on the Disclosure of Sender's Information" in order to study how the Disclosure of Sender's Information under the Provider Liability Limitation Act should be. The interim report was published in August 2020, and the final report was concluded in December 2020.

To study comprehensive measures against slander on the Internet, MIC also conducted hearings from platform service providers such as SNS and business organizations at the "Study Group on Platform Services" (19th meeting, held in July 2020), and discussed how to respond to slander on the Internet. Afterwards, based on the results of the request for


opinions, the "Urgent Recommendations on How to Deal with Online Harassment" was compiled on August 7.

Considering the interim report and the urgent recommendations, on September 1, 2020, MIC compiled the "Policy Package on Addressing Internet Slander" in order to specify the measures that should be taken immediately in cooperation with relevant ministries, agencies, and stakeholders from industry, academia, and the private sector. According to the package, a comprehensive measure by MIC against slander and defamation on the Internet is composed of the following pillars:

1. Awareness-raising activities for users to improve their "information morality" and "literacy"
2. Support for the efforts of platform providers and "improvement of transparency and accountability"
3. System development for the disclosure of sender information
4. Improving the system for consultation services
5. Development of a system to enhance consultation services

C.1.11 PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES

See B.1.1 Right to Health and SDG 3 (Target 3.3., 3.8, 3.b, 3.c, 3.d, etc.)

C.2. MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY CSOS

C.2.1 RIGHT TO HEALTH AND GOAL 3

In general, there have been no effective movements of civil society to promote rights to health in the context of COVID-19 in Japan, especially the access to health and medical services of COVID-19 among the general population. There has been overwhelming diverse information and opinions in SNS and many of them are baseless or even fake. Recently, people are usually hesitant to use the concept of human rights when they talk about social issues in Japanese society and the movement of civil society based on human rights are often isolated to the minority of the society.

Despite this general trend, there are some significant achievements of civil society in some specific issues including migrants living in Japan; there have been significant civil society efforts to promote access to health and welfare services for migrants living in Japan, especially so-called "technical trainees" in telephone counselling services, Facebook and other SNS in diverse languages by civil society organizations and community organizations in many districts that have significant migrant populations. Community organizations of migrants are more active, especially Vietnamese, Burmese and Nepali.

42 Japanese: Here, English: Here
43 Japanese: Here
migrants. These activities have been more stronger during the 3rd wave of infection since this December.

C.2.2 RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND GOAL4

In August, a guidebook was published in cooperation with UNICEF and other international organizations, as well as civil society, for the reopening of schooling with consideration for gender equality. In August, a guidebook was published in cooperation with international organizations such as UNICEF and civil society to realize the resumption of school education with gender equality in mind, and civil society is conducting public relations activities in Japan.

The implementation of online education varies greatly from school to school and is dependent on the personnel, equipment, and skills within the school. Of the 196 special-needs schools surveyed, 57.9% implemented online education during the temporary closure last year, while 42.1% did not. A higher percentage of schools that implemented online education reported that they had discontinued experiential learning compared to those that had not. Factors that encouraged the implementation of online education included the fact that volunteers did what they could, and that a questionnaire was sent out to families regarding the Internet environment and the time available to participate in remote classes.

According to a survey on nature and environmental education by the Japan Environmental Education Forum, the number of people planning to participate in nature schools and other programs canceled or postponed this summer exceeded 380,000, indicating a serious decline in learning opportunities outside of school education. In addition to online nature observation sessions and distribution of learning tools, a project to distribute original teaching materials and picture books are being developed by NGOs that can be worked on at home, targeting poor families in need of support and children receiving education in a language other than their mother tongue. The project aims to provide mental health care for children through picture books, and to help them continue their studies with school supplies such as notebooks and colored pencils.

On the other hand, there are some challenges to ensure equal access to online education. Students who attend vocational schools are not interested in ordinary terminals, but rather in those with wide screen specifications. In addition, there are various ways of education for students with intractable diseases who are hospitalized, such as visiting classes, in-hospital classes, and remote classes. Many organizations provide opportunities for outdoor face-to-face interaction and home study materials for children who are unable to take advantage of online learning due to inadequate communication infrastructure,
poverty, or disabilities. We are helping them to continue their learning so as not to create disparities due to inequality in educational opportunities.

C.2.3. RIGHT TO FOOD AND GOAL 2

A number of civil society organizations provided food support through food banks and food distribution programs. Many food kitchens were forced to close their operation and change their operation to lunch box distribution. Many organizations which run food kitchens for children are concerned about the lack of communication and risk of overlooking problems such as child abuse and neglect.

For example, the NPO "Shingle Mathers Forum" supports about 2,000 single-parent households by sending rice and food to them every month. The NPO also conducts regular surveys to understand the living conditions of single-parent households. These surveys have revealed the current situation of single-parent households in need due to a decrease in income and what improvements are needed in support programs such as food banks.

University of Tsukuba, on 22nd January 2021, distributed free 20t. of food to help students who had lost money and income due to the spread of the Covid-19. The students selected rice, retorted foods, vegetables, and snacks, and filled carry cases and bags with food.44

C.2.4. RIGHT TO WORK

Civil society organizations are supporting people who have lost their jobs through providing young people with temporary work and business skills training, providing homeless people with temporary shelter and support for finding new jobs. Some NPOs are providing advisory services to small and medium sized companies for financing and subsidies, or matchmaking between hard-hit industries and industries like agriculture having demand for workers.

C.2.5. INEQUALITY

People who use constant medical care or have disabilities need assistance with accurate information, knowledge and skills, and it is essential to ensure that they have opportunities to receive appropriate medical care and care equipment. Disabled people’s

organizations are proposing the enhancement of social security and the correction of discrimination in the system. For example, the comprehensive support grant for welfare services for the disabled does not cover interpreters who perform tactile sign language, and the framework for medical personnel who are at risk of coronary infection is limited. It is important to reflect the voices of the concerned parties and supporters to improve the quality of support.

The Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality received over 5,700 public comments. Among them, there was a lot of advocacy by the youth, and many voices were gathered, such as those calling for sexual diversity, promotion of STEM education for women, measures against online harassment and selective surname change.

**C.2.6. FREEDOM OF SPEECH / FREEDOM AND ASSEMBLY**

NGO Coalition for Free Expression & Open Information in Japan released “JOINT NGO REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL & POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR) ARTICLES 18, 19 & 21: For the 7th Periodic Review of Japan at the UN Human Rights Committee session”, on 30 September 2020. 45

As COVID-19 pandemic has physically deprived us of opportunities to interact with each other, and furthermore, civic space has become smaller and more suffocating, Japan Civil Society Network on Civic Space (NANCiS) organized an online symposium on 30 November, inviting key CSOs actors active in and out of Japan, a notable independent journalist and lawyers. This symposium was held to discuss how to secure civic space for people who speak up and not be silent, and how we can increase the number of people who are not bystanders but can support each other by connecting with parties who are easily isolated in society and who are violently oppressed and suppressed by their own expression, speech and activities.46

**C.3. MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY OTHER STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

45NGO Coalition for Free Expression & Open Information in Japan URL：https://sites.google.com/view/ncfoj

46Japan Civil Society Network on Civic Space (NANCiS) URL：http://nancis.org/2021/02/07/nancis2nd-anniv20201130/ (Accessed on 02/13/2021)
C.3.1. MEDIA RESPONSE

“Fact Check Initiative” has been launched, with some of the Japanese project and media partners. While building cooperative relationships with the media and professional journalists, this project is working on a project that will allow citizens and professionals from various backgrounds to participate in the fact-checking process. We also aim to create a system that rewards organizations and individuals who contribute to fact-checking rather than volunteering.
D. CHALLENGES AND ASSESSMENT ABOUT COVID-19 AND CIVIC SPACE

D.1 SWOT ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

In December 2016, when the Government of Japan established SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, **10 national targets** and **17 national indicators** for **Goal 16**, and **10 national targets** and **15 national indicators** for **Goal 17** were also decided. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/pdf/ 000241490.pdf](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofa/)

In August 2019, the Cabinet Office prepared 202 indicators for SDGs at local level in Japan. Among them, 16 local indicators were set for Goal 16 and 7 local indicators for Goal 17.
Unfortunately, it is hard to assess how the Government of Japan strives to secure civic space according to the national indicators or local indicators of Goal 16, as most of them are not relevant to actual civic space issues. For example, national indicators for **Target 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels)** refers to the number of participants to trainings on practical criminal justice operations, or a national indicator for **Target 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels)** refer to the annual number of environmental assessments made in major partner countries. Civil society cannot fully assess how the Government secure the access to information, when the sole national indicator for **Target 16.10 (Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements)** is the number of laws and regulations the foreign language translations of which are published.

One remarkable national indicator in Japan, which can be used in the context of COVID-19, is **16.2.2 Number of cases of deaths due to child abuse, for Target 16.2 (End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children)**. As described in D.2.7 Children and Youth, the safety of children during COVID-19 outbreak is under threat.

National indicators for Goal 16 should be amended in terms of making governmental agencies accountable. Current national indicators for **Target 16.5 (Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms)** and **Target 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels)** only refer to conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause or the number of participants in training courses held in Japan. However, as the Government and subcontracting companies are under criticism for suspicions of shady business dealings such as Subsidy Program for Sustaining Businesses by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), or notorious plans to distribute two cloth masks to every household in Japan, national indicators should be more useful for assessing transparency, appropriation and effectiveness. For example, we would propose “Budget and Expenditures” as national indicators for **Target 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels)**. Those suggested indicators may include questions such as “Is the policy-making process disclosed in the minutes of governmental meetings?” or “Is information disclosure fully implemented through proper procedures?”
E. ACTION PLANS, PROPOSALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

E.1 ACTION PLANS AND PROPOSALS TO CSOS

E.1.1 CSO CAMPAIGN AND ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- CSOs should play the role of empowering those on the periphery of society and reflecting their voices in policy decisions that directly affect their lives.

- CSOs should further strengthen and practice mutual aid, symbiosis, and solidarity, where people help, acknowledge and respect each other across all boundaries and divides.

- CSOs should serve as a nodal point, bringing together various stakeholders into the decision-making.

- CSOs should provide alternative means of connection to society, such as access to the media and the Internet to those who are confirmed with COVID-19, those suspected of being infected, and those subject to self-quarantine.

E.1.2 CSO CAMPAIGN AND ACTIVITIES AT THE (SUB)REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- CSOs should play the role of delivering needed support to people in difficult situations.

- CSOs should develop their capacity to monitor and follow up policies in line with data-driven methods such as indicators and statistics as well as hearing voices from people in need.

- CSOs should exchange situations and advocacy strategies in different countries and regions to identify common advocacy points and organize international mobilizations for global solidarity.

- CSOs should ensure an environment in which everyone can express and exchange their own ideas regardless of their own language, knowledge, and experiences.

E.1.3 CSO ADVOCACY WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INSTITUTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL
• CSOs should include SDGs’ basic principles such as multi-stakeholder engagement, human rights, and SDG16+ into their advocacy activities to the government and public institutions.

• CSOs should follow up their advocacy activities periodically after presenting their policy recommendations to the government and public institutions.

• CSOs should strengthen their capacity to promote engagement to key decision makers such as members of parliaments at ruling parties and key opposition parties.

E.2 PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT – NATIONAL AND LOCAL

• In partnership with international organizations, governments should engage and fund the process of international collaborative frameworks such as the ACT Accelerator and its vaccine partnership, COVAX.

• Japan, as other high-income countries, should expand the openness, transparency and accountability of production and procurement of vaccines and other COVID-19 tools, including supporting the option that India, South Africa and other 9 countries are proposing WTO to waiver COVID-19 related intellectual property rights protection until the end of COVID-19.

• The governments must introduce measures on social distancing and state of emergency with maximum transparency and openness and in compliance with democracy and the legal process.

• The governments must safeguard to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, and misinformation related to COVID-19, and to ensure that all rights, including human rights.

• The governments must compensate economic losses due to state of emergency measures to the maximum.

• The governments should establish economic policies, in the spirit of the SDGs, putting the furthest behind people first and leaving no one behind.

• The governments should establish independent human rights institutions, which are based on universal human rights norms and standards, in accordance with the Paris Principles.

• The governments should measure the progress of national targets and indicators of SDGs, especially Goal 16 (Peace and Justice), periodically, and report it during the
E.3 PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS – (SUB)REGIONAL AND GLOBAL (UN HLPF, APFSD, ASEAN, ETC.)

- UN agencies should ensure official spaces which CSOs can participate in within the UN policy process.

- International organizations should invite more governments to join the process of international collaborative frameworks such as the ACT Accelerator and its vaccine partnership, COVAX.

- The UN HLPF and (sub)regional bodies should standardize the modality of VNRs and its presentation in a more effective manner to follow up member states' efforts to implement SDGs in the context of COVID-19.

- The UN should encourage member states to present their next VNRs with reflections on their responses to COVID-19, including safeguarding human rights of citizens and residents, and to invite more multi-stake holders to their next VNRs.

- In the situation of emergency like COVID-19 pandemic, UN and multilateral aid agencies should prioritize impact and burden of the pandemic and emergencies rather than country classification of national income per capita on their decision of financial assistance.

E.4 PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCIES (LIKE KOICA, JICA, ETC.)

- Like KOICA did in the Soul Democracy Forum, Development Cooperation Agencies should give financial assistance for CSOs to be able to promote further discussions and build and develop their capacity as well as implement their humanitarian assistance projects.

Unlike its domestic policies and measures on COVID-19, Japan's response on COVID-19 in international cooperation was comparatively rapid and appropriate, especially its multilateral assistance. Japan funded diverse multilateral agencies including WHO, GAVI, CEPI, the Global Fund, Unitaid, UNICEF and UNDP for their activities to control COVID-19 from its general account budget and supplementary budget of FY 2020.
and 2021. Japan also became an original member of ACT Accelerator (Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator).

On the other hand, the start of bilateral aid on COVID-19 was delayed because most of the Japanese aid workers abroad were ordered to come back to Japan to avoid COVID-19, and Japan's bilateral aid lacked its preparedness to tackle pandemic globally. It rapidly developed its policy on bilateral assistance for COVID-19 measures and started its program to provide budgetary support by providing grant aid for low-income and lower-middle-income countries in Africa and emergency loan aid for lower and upper-middle countries in Asia. Japan contracted the agreement of grant aid with 89 countries, and PM Suga pledged that the total amount of bilateral loan aid should be USD 45 billion. A challenge is that neither this grant aid nor loan aid has been sufficiently transparent; we can't get sufficient information from official information of responsible ministries and agencies.

Thus, we raise the following issues as our policy recommendation for the ministries and agencies working on development cooperation agencies.

- JICA should develop a financial channel for civil society in recipient countries of the Global South.
- Sufficient transparency and accountability on bilateral grant aid and loan aid on COVID-19 is necessary. Especially on loan aid, it is necessary to have a dialogue with the civil society organizations of the recipient countries.
- It is necessary to avoid internal competition and duplication between bilateral and multilateral aid and pursue coherence of both financial channels.
- It is necessary to increase GoI's contribution for the multilateral organizations that consist of ACT-Accelerator. Furthermore, Japan needs to take a lead among G7 and G20 countries to invest more, as well as taking a leadership to develop a global financial mechanism to generate ACT-A.
- It is also necessary to appoint an ambassador in charge of global health policy, who should serve Japan's board members of multilateral organizations on health in a stable manner for a longer term (around 3 years).
- Japan should change its policy on intellectual property rights protection in this emergency situation of COVID-19 pandemic and support the proposal of South Africa, India and other 9 countries to waiver IPR related to COVID-19 in World Trade Organization (WTO) and ensure accountability transparency of production and procurement of COVID-19 related tools.
E.5 PROPOSALS TO THE TOKYO DEMOCRACY FORUM 2021

- Respecting the principle of multi-stakeholder engagement and considering the fact that the meaning of “CSO” is expanding, it is preferable to broaden that participants’ targets to enterprise, media etc. in light of the principle of multi-stakeholder engagement.
- Since this forum is essential to monitor situations in targeted country(ies) from viewpoints of SDG16+ and human rights, this forum should be held annually at least connecting the official follow up review mechanisms and relevant CSO forums such as APFSD and APPFSD, and HLPF.
- Equal opportunity to join this conference regardless of mother tongue and/or language capability have to be ensured; If possible, this forum should have translators from English to other local languages.
- Reports should be released in public on the website of TDF.

E.6 ADVOCACY ACTION CALENDAR 2021 AND BEYOND

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November  
| UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP26)  
| UNESCAP: North-East Asia Multi-stakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development Goals  
| G20 Summit, Italy  

December  
| Tokyo Nutrition Summit  

### ANNEX

### ANNEX 1 GOVERNMENT REPORT ON SDGS – ROADMAP, IMPLEMENTATION, VNR, ETC.

- SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (December 2016)
  

- SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (revised in December 2019)
  

- Specific Measures to Achieve the SDGs (December 2016)
  

- SDGs Global Indicators
  

- SDGs Action Plan 2021 (Japanese)
  
  [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/pdf/SDGs_Action_Plan_2021.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3eWPyNiZETLc-CmZ2MkAaopLJ6lgG10SJVDUqGaaREnRw2D2qBZaZ2tA](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/pdf/SDGs_Action_Plan_2021.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3eWPyNiZETLc-CmZ2MkAaopLJ6lgG10SJVDUqGaaREnRw2D2qBZaZ2tA)

- VNR Report Japan 2017
  

### ANNEX 2 GOVERNMENT REPORTS ON COVID-19

- Cabinet Secretariat
  
  
http://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/coronavirus_info_e.html

- Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare
  https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/newpage_00032.html

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  https://www.mofa.go.jp/ca/fna/page4e_001053.html

- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

- NHK (Japan’s public broadcast station)

- Japan COVID-19 Coronavirus Tracker
  https://covid19japan.com/

- COVID-19 Japan Anti-Coronavirus Dashboard
  https://www.stopcovid19.jp/#en

ANNEX 3 OTHER INTERNATIONAL REPORTS ON COVID-19 ON YOUR COUNTRY

- COVID-19 Data Portal - Japan
  https://covid19dataportal.jp/en/

- WHO COVID-19 – Japan
  https://covid19.who.int/region/wpro/country/jp

ANNEX 4 UN HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON YOUR GOVERNMENT – UPR, TREATY BODIES, AND SPECIAL PROCEDURES, ETC. (FROM 2010 TO 2019)

- UPR
• Committee on the Rights of the Child
  Concluding observations (2019) CRC/C/JPN/CO/4-5

• Committee on Enforced Disappearances
  Concluding observations (2018) CED/C/JPN/CO/1

• Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
  Concluding observations (2018) CERD/C/JPN/CO/10-11

• Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
  Concluding observations (2016) CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8

• Human Rights Committee
  Concluding observations (2014) CCPR/C/JPN/CO/6

• Committee against Torture
  Concluding observations (2013) CAT/C/JPN/CO/2

• Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
  Concluding observations (2013) E/C.12/JPN/CO/3

• Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
  Concluding observations (2010) CRC/C/OPAC/JPN/CO/1

• Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography
  Concluding observations (2010) CRC/C/OPSC/JPN/CO/1

ANNEX 5 OTHER REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

【Report on SDGs Progress in Japan】

• SDGs Progress (SDSN)

• Voluntary Local Report (IGES)
【International Monitoring Data and Reports】

- World Inequality Database (WID)
  https://wid.world/country/japan/
- Gender Data Portal, East Asia and Pacific (World Bank)
- Democracy Index (The Economist)
- Human Development Index (UNDP)
- Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)
- Freedom Index (Freedom House)
  https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores
- Rule of Law Index-Japan
  https://www.worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2020/Japan/
- World Freedom Index
  https://www.worldfreedomindex.com/
- Human Freedom Index
- RSF - World Press Freedom Index 2020
  https://rsf.org/en/japan
- Transparency International - Corruption Perception Index

- Global Peace Index

https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/