

Section 1 Fundamental Framework of Measures for the Aging Society

The basic framework of national measures for the aging society is based on the Aged Society Basic Law (Law No. 129, 1995).

The Prime Minister is the chairperson of Aging Society Policy Council and all Cabinet Ministers are appointed as members of the council. They draft the fundamental principles of measures for the aging society, make necessary adjustments to the relationships between related administrative agencies in implementing measures for the aging society, discuss important issues on measures for an aging society, and promote implementation of those measures.

The government is required to formulate an outline of measures for the aging society based on the Aged Society Basic Law. It serves as a mid- and long- term basic yet comprehensive guideline to government measures against the aging society.

As 5 years have passed since the initial Outline of Aging Society Measures was drawn up in July 1996, a second outline was prepared and approved in a Cabinet meeting on December 28, 2001.

As a further 10 years have passed since then, on September 7, 2012 the Outline of Aging Society Measures was approved in a Cabinet meeting for the third time after a drafting by the Aging Society Policy Council.

For comprehensive promotion of measures based on the basic principle of the Aged Society Basic Law, we will promote measures for the aging society based on the following 6 fundamental thoughts:

- Change in ways of thinking about elderly awareness
- Establishment of social security system for securing peace of mind in people's old age
- Utilization of the will and capabilities of

the aged

- Strengthening regional power and effectively stabilizing regional society
- Realization of a safe and peaceful living environment
- Preparation for life in one's 90s beginning at younger ages and realization of generation cycles

Based upon the basic idea and basic social security system reform policy set forth in the Act on Promotion of Social Security Reform (Act No.64, 2012, hereafter "Reform Promotion Act"), at the National Council on Social Security System Reform (hereafter "National Council;" chairperson: Atsushi Seike, Keio University President), discussions were held 20 times between November 2012 and August 2013, and a report was prepared on August 6, the same year.

The "Act to Promote the Reform to Establish Sustainable Social Security System" (Act No. 112 of 2013; hereinafter referred to as "Act for Social Security System Reform Program") which clearly states the overall concept of and methods for the reform of the social security system based on the report of the National Council was enacted on December 5th, 2013.

The "Act on the Use of Numbers to Identify a Specific Individual in the Administrative Procedures (My Number Act)" concerning the "My Number System" was enacted in May 2013. An individual number ("my number") will be assigned to each registered resident and such a resident will be notified of his/her number from October 2015 on. The use of those numbers for the administrative procedures concerning social security, taxes and disaster responses and the issuance of the individual number cards will begin in January 2016.

Principal Initiatives

1 Employment and Pension

Approach to the realization of a society where people can work regardless of age

Article 18 of the “Labour Contract Act” (Act No. 128, 2007) stipulates that a fixed-term labor contract of a worker who has worked for the same employer continuously for five years on multiple consecutive fixed-term labor contracts may be converted to an opened-ended labor contract upon request from the worker. A law which stipulates an exception of this stipulation, the “Act on Special Measures for Fixed-term Contract Workers with Specialized Knowledge, etc.” was enacted in the 187th Diet Session. This act stipulates that, when an elderly worker continues to be employed on a fixed-term labor contract after s/he has attained the retirement age and the employment of the worker is managed in a way specific for elderly workers, such a worker may not be awarded the right to request the conversion of her/his fix-term contract to an open-ended contract for the duration of such employment.

Smooth Implementation of Revised Child Care and Family Care Leave Law

In accordance with the “Act for Partial Revision of the Act for Partial Revision of the National Pension Act” (Act No. 99 of 2012) and the “Act for Partial Revision of the National Pension Act for Strengthening the Financial Basis and Minimum Security Function of the Public Pension System, etc.” (Act No. 62 of 2012) both enacted in 2012, the government institutionalized the permanent state funding for half of the basic pension expenses with the permanent source of revenue created by increasing the rate of the consumption tax to 8 %.

Establishment of a pension system independent of work style and career path

In the report of the National Council and in the discussion on the Bill for Social Security System Reform Program, the extension of the application of the employee insurance to part-time workers was mentioned as an issue to be

addressed. “The Revised Japan Revitalization Strategy - 2014” approved by the Cabinet on June 24th, 2014, stipulates that a study shall be conducted on the expansion of the application of the employee insurance as a means to develop a social security system independent of work style. In accordance with this Cabinet decision, the Pension Sub-Committee of the Social Security Council had an advanced discussion on measures to be taken on this issue.

2 Health, Long-term Care and Healthcare

Implementation of measures to support the elderly with dementia

MHLW formulated the “Comprehensive Strategy to Accelerate Dementia Measures – To Realize Age and Dementia-Friendly Community – (New Orange Plan)” in collaboration with other government agencies. By 2025 when baby boomers become aged 75 and older, The New Orange Plan, along with the measures based on seven pillars, aims to realize a society where persons with dementia can live with dignity in a pleasant and familiar environment as how they hope to be as long as possible. The New Orange Plan provides concrete numerical targets to be achieved for each measure by the end of FY 2017, the interim target year of the strategy, among others.

Improvement of the healthcare system for the elderly

The government increased the income standards for the reduction of premium of the Health care system for the elderly aged 75 and over based on the Act for the Social Security System Reform Program. As a result, the number of households eligible for the 20 % reduction and 50 % reduction increased among low-income households and the economic burden on those households was reduced. In order to reduce the inequity among the generations, the government restored the rate of the patient co-payment of the elderly aged between 70 and 74 set at 10 % as a temporary budgetary measure to the rate stipulated in the law, 20 %, for the people who reach the age of 70 in and after April 2014 (those people whose co-payment rate has been 30 % before turning 70).

Integrated and sustainable provision of home medical and nursing care in the community

In accordance with the “Amendatory Law to the Related Acts for Securing Comprehensive Medical and Long-Term Care in the Community” (Act No. 83 of 2014) promulgated in June 2014, each prefecture established the Fund for Providing Integrated Community-based Healthcare and Long-term Care and supported projects for the improvement of home healthcare.

3 Social Participation and Learning

Social participation and creating life purpose for the elderly

The government supported the social participation activities of community-based organizations for voluntary activities of the elderly including senior citizens’ clubs and those of the elderly organized by prefectural and municipal governments in order to create meaning in their life and improve their physical condition. MEXT, in particular, implemented the “Project for Promotion of Educational Activities on Saturdays,” a project for implementing educational programs systematically and continuously with support of residents including the elderly who have various experiences and skills and private companies, to improve the educational activities for children on weekends in 2014.

Promotion of ICT use to contribute to participation of the elder in social activities.

MIC compiled the “Report of the Smart Platinum Society Promotion Conference” in July 2014 to promote the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for the establishment of a new society model by solving policy issues that arise from the super-aging society.

MIC has taken measures to expand ICT networks around Japan to share and use the information of patients among doctors, nurses and care-workers and to establish healthcare the model of healthcare by ICT to prevent diseases and extend healthy life expectance.

Developing an environment for agents such as citizens and NPOs, etc.

In order to promote activities freely performed by citizens to benefit society, we worked toward the

promotion of use of the expanded tax system for donation and the smooth enforcement and awareness promotion of the Revised Act to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities. In addition, we supplied information about civil activities at Cabinet Office NPO Websites, etc.; we have held the "Council for the Society of Mutual Assistance" to promote activities of mutual assistance by NPOs, etc. that make use of the local ties.

Development of the foundation of lifelong learning

MEXT organized the “National Life Long Learning Network Forum (Main Forum)” in November 2014. The relevant administrative organizations, educational institutions including universities, private organizations including NPOs involved in lifelong learning and private companies participated in the forum. They studied and discussed the development of communities and society in collaboration among various actors, disseminated the results of the study and discussion and strove to network the stakeholders in various areas to promote lifelong learning continuously.

4 Living Environment

Promotion of barrier free designs in the software aspect

In June 2014, the “Study Committee for the Promoting ICT-assisted Pedestrian Mobility Support” began discussing matters toward the construction of a "Universal Society" in which all the people including the elderly, the disabled and foreign tourists can obtain required information on transport and act positively.

Protection from malicious trade

“The Council of the Networks Protecting Elderly and Disabled Consumers” consisting of associations of the elderly and the disabled and administrative organizations met in June 2014. The participants of the meeting agreed to “disseminate information actively to protect elderly and disabled consumers from troubles arising from such trade.”

Promotion of disaster prevention measures

As the sediment-related disaster in Hiroshima City caused by heavy rainfall in August 2014 and other sediment-related disasters revealed

problems in the evacuation systems against sediment-related disasters, the “Act for Partial Revision of the Act on Promotion of Sediment Disaster Countermeasures for Sediment Disaster Prone Areas” (Act No. 109 of 2014) came into effect in January 2015. The revision requires the description of the names and locations of the facilities where people require special assistance (disabled, elderly, etc.) in sediment-related disaster hazard areas in the local disaster management plans of municipalities.

5 Vitalization of Markets Responsive to the Aging Society and the Promotion of Investigation and Research

Reinforcement of the foundation of the healthcare and long-term care services to eliminate concerns of the elderly and help them to enjoy life

As measures to solve the problems of the shortage of healthcare and long-term care workers and uneven specialty and areal distribution of doctors, we have established the community medical service support centers (in 43 prefectures by FY 2014) and promoted team healthcare. We have increased the number of medical students by 1,444 since FY 2008, including the increase by 28 in FY 2014.

Promotion of innovation in the healthcare-related areas

The “Act for Promotion of Healthcare Strategy” (Act No. 48 of 2014) and the “Act on the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development” (Act No. 49 of 2014) were enacted on May 23rd, 2014, and promulgated on May 30th, 2014, to establish the Headquarters for Healthcare Policy and the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development, an organization to implement and support research and development in the healthcare area and the development of the environment for the research and development, respectively.

Then, the Headquarters for Healthcare Strategy (hereinafter “Headquarters”) was established with the Prime Minister Abe as the chairperson and the other Cabinet members as members on June 10th, 2014. The Cabinet approved the “healthcare strategy” which stipulated the measures to be taken by the government comprehensively for the long run on cutting-edge research and development in healthcare and creation of new industries on July 22nd,

2014. The Headquarters approved the “Plan for Promotion of Research and Development in Healthcare” prepared in accordance with the Healthcare Strategy for the centralized and systematic promotion of the measures to be taken by the government for the promotion of research and development in healthcare, development of an environment for the research and development and dissemination of the result of the research and development on the same day.

Investigation and research concerning training courses for elderly drivers

Investigative research regarding training courses for elderly drivers (in order to rationalize the courses and to improve their contents) had been scheduled for the two years between FY 2013 and 2014. In FY 2014, based on the result of the investigative research in FY 2013, we planned a draft curriculum of the courses for elderly drivers and operated trial courses following the draft curriculum; we also held discussions with scholars on a draft concrete system concerning the courses for elderly drivers..

6 Foundation-building by All Generations in Response to the Super-aging Society

The application of women’s abilities in employment and work

In order to arrange an employment environment in which workers are not discriminated against by gender, the maternity of working women is respected, and women can utilize their abilities to the fullest, we conducted guidance and awareness activities regarding equal treatment of men and women according to the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (Act No. 113, 1972, hereinafter referred to as the “Equal Employment Opportunity Law”). We also assisted so that employers and workers can peacefully and swiftly reach a settlement when disputes arise. We promulgated the Ordinance for Enforcement of the Revised Equal Employment Opportunity Law including the revision on the scope of measures which could be considered as indirect discrimination, enforced it from July 2014 on and disseminated information on the contents of revision.

Overall promotion of measures for child care support

We promoted comprehensive support to children and child care in accordance with the guidelines, including the details of measures to be taken and numerical targets to be achieved in the five-year period between FY 2010 and FY 2014 for the realization of a society which supports children and childcare, in accordance with Article 7 of the “Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate” (Act No. 133 of 2003). The Cabinet approved new guidelines for measures to cope with a society with declining birthrate on March 20th, 2015.