

# Basic Principles of this Program

## 1. Achieving a Society with No Traffic Accidents

Japan is now entering the era of a declining birthrate and super-aging. In order to overcome this unprecedented, significant societal change and build a truly prosperous and vibrant society, it is crucial to ensure the safety and security of the people.

Traffic safety is one important factor for realizing such a safe, secure society, especially given the fact that the number of victims of traffic accidents is much larger than those of natural disasters or crimes.

With this in mind, various countermeasures against traffic accidents have been taken so far and a certain level of success has been achieved. However, since the number of traffic accidents still remains at a high level, the implementation of additional measures is needed.

In light of the significant social and economic losses arising from traffic accidents, we should aim to ultimately achieve a society with no traffic accidents under the principle of respecting human life. Needless to say, a society with no traffic accidents cannot be built in a short time, but it is presently necessary to make new steps toward the eradication of traffic accident tragedies.

## 2. The principle of people first for traffic safety policy

A civilized society must show consideration and kindness to the weak. In terms of traffic, it is necessary to further secure the safety of pedestrians, who are vulnerable in relation to cars, as well as the safety of those especially vulnerable, such as the elderly, the disabled, and children, when they use any type of transportation. Following this basic principle of people first for traffic safety policy, we should implement every possible measure.

## 3. Basic approach to traffic safety measures

Based on these principles, this program sets numerical objectives to be attained within the term of the program and clarifies the measures that should be taken for achieving these objectives for the following respective traffic sectors: (i) road traffic; (ii) railway traffic; (iii) traffic at railway crossings; (iv) maritime traffic; and (v) air traffic.

Specifically, with respect to the three components of traffic society, namely, (a) people, (b) means of transportation including vehicles, vessels, and aircraft, and (c) the traffic environment that serves as the platform of their activity, and while giving consideration to their mutual relationship, the government shall strengthen and improve efforts in the scientific investigation and analysis of traffic accidents, develop more effective policy evaluation systems, set specific performance objectives where possible in formulating various measures, and vigorously promote these measures with the understanding and cooperation of citizens.

With regard to safety measures for the first component, i.e. people, the government shall make efforts to secure safe driving and operation in transportation by improving the knowledge and skills of drivers and operators, raising their traffic safety awareness, enhancing the qualification systems for them,

strengthening administrative guidance and enforcement, improving the control of driving and operation, and ensuring appropriate working conditions. At the same time, the government shall also work to secure the safe passage of pedestrians by raising the traffic safety awareness of pedestrians and intensifying traffic safety guidance. Furthermore, as it is extremely important for each and every citizen in traffic society to reform their attitudes toward traffic safety, the government shall substantially improve education as well as awareness raising activities on traffic safety.

In terms of measures for preventing accidents caused by the second component, i.e. means of transportation, based on the assumption that people can never avoid making errors, the government shall work toward preventing human errors from leading to accidents. More specifically, the government shall improve the safety of the transportation structure, facilities, and equipment through constant technological development, and take necessary measures to ensure that transportation maintains a high level of safety, giving due consideration to the social functions and characteristics of the respective transportation sectors. In addition, frameworks for implementing necessary inspections shall be established and/or strengthened.

In respect to safety measures related to the third component, i.e. traffic environment, the government shall establish road networks with appropriately assigned functions, develop traffic safety facilities, improve traffic control systems, promote effective traffic regulations, provide more and useful traffic-related information, and take measures against aging facilities. When developing the traffic environment, the government, based on the idea of people first, shall develop and implement measures to eliminate the risk of collisions attributable to mixed traffic, including separation of pedestrian walkways from the routes for transportation such as automobiles and railway. In road traffic, in particular, it would be significant to further promote people first traffic safety measures for school routes, community roads, and thoroughfares in urban areas, such as actively developing pedestrian walkways.

Since information plays a critical role in linking these three components of traffic society as well as enhancing the effects of measures for the respective components, the government shall actively promote the collection and provision of information as well as the use of information technology. Also, in order to develop more effective and appropriate traffic safety measures, the government shall improve and strengthen comprehensive investigation and analysis of the causes of traffic accidents, and promote necessary research and development efforts, as the basis for such measures.

Furthermore, in order to save the lives of the injured and minimize the damages when traffic accidents occur, it is essential to reinforce expeditious rescue and emergency medical care activities, and to improve the quality of medical treatment for the injured. In light of enactment of the Basic Act on Crime Victims (Act No. 161 of 2004), the government shall commit to further improve support for victims in the area of traffic safety as well.

Given that traffic safety measures thus extend to various areas, but interrelate closely, it is vital to create organic links between them and implement them comprehensively and effectively. The government shall flexibly adapt these measures to changes in social conditions such as the declining birthrates and aging population and the globalization, as well as to changes in traffic accidents and traffic conditions, while

selecting, upon consideration of their effects, appropriate measures to implement in a focused and effective manner.

In addition, because traffic safety is closely associated with transportation demand and the extent of smoothness and comfortableness of transportation, the government shall also give sufficient consideration to alleviating these factors by restraining the growth of automobile traffic volume. Moreover, when designing the traffic safety measures, the government shall give due attention to roadside land use and road use as well as to disaster prevention against earthquakes and tsunamis.

In order to prevent traffic accidents, it is important not only to promote measures with close cooperation between the national government, local governments, and relevant private organizations, but also to actively encourage citizens' independent traffic safety activities. With this, the government shall drive forward traffic safety activities involving citizens' participation and collaboration by creating a system in which citizens can participate in traffic safety measures of the national and local government from the planning phase onward, encouraging citizens' independent efforts to thoroughly check the road traffic environment, and promoting community efforts that appropriately take into account the characteristics of each locality.

#### **4. Measures against human errors in public transportation**

The fatal derailment of the Fukuchiyama Line (West Japan Railway [JR West]) that occurred in 2005 had a great impact on Japanese society. In all public transport sectors of land, maritime and air transport, all those engaged in traffic administration and transportation services must recognize anew that securing safety is their top priority task, and review ongoing traffic safety measures as well as their own efforts for traffic safety. In this context, we should not merely attribute human errors to individuals. In order to find effective countermeasures, we should find the true culprit behind such errors and make effort to strengthen accident prevention measures from the perspective of improving the corporate structure of transport business and the entire transportation system.