

V Building Foundations for a Comfortable Living Environment

1 Measures for an Urbanism in Which It is Easy for Person with Disabilities to Live

In order to build a life environment concerned with "universal design" and where it is easy for anyone to comfortably live, "barrier-free" transformations of the following living spaces are being encouraged: housing, buildings, public transportation, pedestrian spaces, etc. The establishment of "barrier-free" status in these structures within set areas and the unified and continuous "barrier-free" transformation of routes linking them together are being encouraged.

Carefully-considered disaster measures concerning various aspects of disaster prevention—paying special attention to people who need assistance during a disaster—are being developed: diffusion of disaster prevention knowledge, information supply at the time of a disaster, methods of evacuation, etc.

While crime prevention measures addressing the concerns of persons with disabilities are being developed, measures to lessen the difficulties they might encounter when dealing with the police and to prevent accidents and crimes committed against persons with disabilities are being developed.

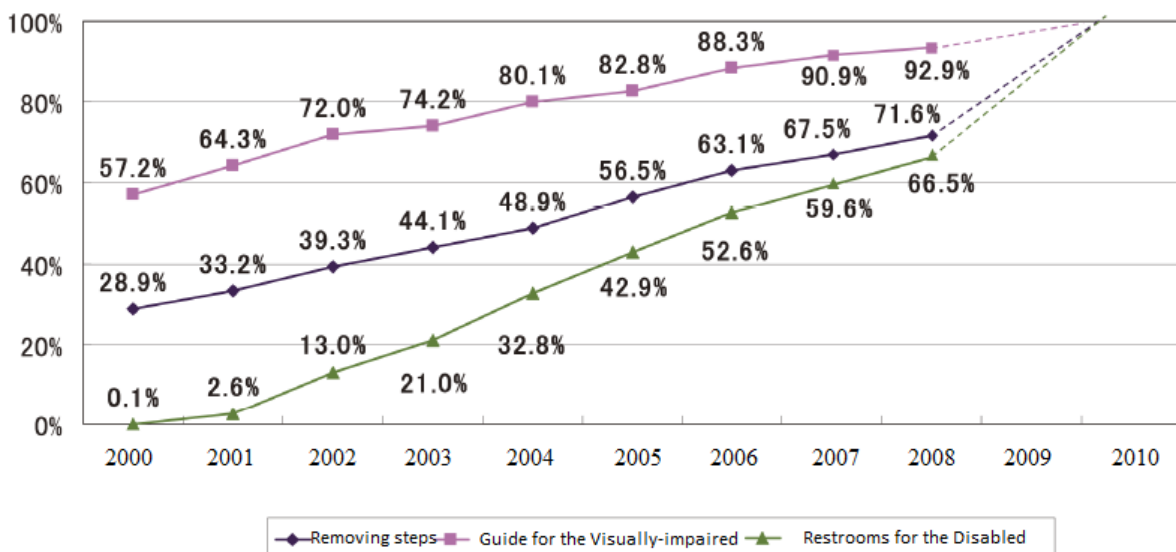
【Main Measures, etc.】

- In order to build a supply of housing accessible to persons with disabilities, the "Elderly Housing Design Guideline" demonstrates an effort to create, from the moment of design, housing in which a person may continue living even as their physical capacities diminish. The expansion of housing adapted to persons with disabilities is also being encouraged.
- Regarding the purchase of advanced "barrier-free" housing, a support system encouraging the purchase of superior-quality housing by reducing home-loan interest rates during the first ten years (in the case of especially advanced "barrier-free" housing, during the first twenty years) was established through independently administered home-finance support structures in the framework of securitization programs. Also, as of February of 2010 the first ten-year interest rate reduction is to be enlarged (from 0.3% to 1%) as a part of the "Emergency Economic Measures for Tomorrow's Relief and Growth" (measure to be enforced by the end of fiscal 2010).
- Concerning the housing of persons with disabilities, in the tax system revision of fiscal 2009, in cases where a predetermined amount of "barrier-free" renovation work is done,

exceptional, income tax-reducing measures are prolonged (in the case of mortgaged lodgings). Along with tax-reducing measures, a new tax deduction measure was also created, which allows a fixed income tax deduction in cases where a predetermined amount of "barrier-free" renovation work has been done in cases where no mortgage has been taken. In addition to that, the fiscal 2010 tax system revision prolongs the fixed assets tax reduction system concerning housing where persons with disabilities live in cases where a predetermined amount of "barrier-free" renovation work has been done.

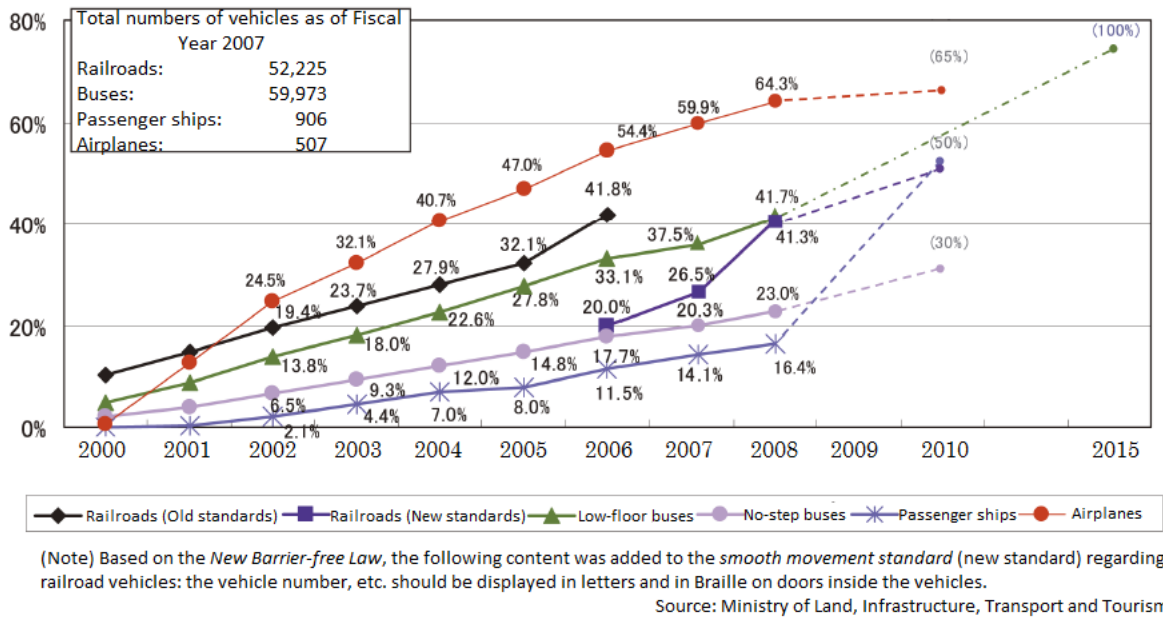
- The Law for Developing the Construction of Special Buildings that Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly are Able to Smoothly Use (the "Heart-Building" Law) and the Law for Promoting Barrier-free Transport for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (the Public Transport Barrier-free Law) were combined and enlarged into the Law for Promoting Barrier-free Transport and Facilities for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (the New Barrier-free Law). The creation of a "barrier-free" environment in public institutions is being pursued, based on the Basic Policies for Smooth Movement (2006, notice #1, Public Safety Commission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, transport and Tourism), a basic guideline of the steps that managers need to follow when establishing any new facility taking as a goal the move towards "barrier-free."

■ Chart 14 The barrier free system in travel facilities (From the "Report on the Enforcement of Smooth Movement")



Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

Chart 15 The transition to the "barrier-free" system in public transportation (From the "Report on the Enforcement of Smooth Movement")



- In order to realize a "barrier-free heart" society where every citizen would recognize the difficulties encountered by the elderly and persons with disabilities as their own problem and would actively collaborate to enable their participation in society, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism organizes "barrier-free" demonstrations tied in with the general classes of primary and secondary schools.
- The National Police Agency and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism developed the "omnibus town vision" to support municipal administrations and programs of related persons that aim to create an urbanism that gives full credence to the social significance of buses. The practical quality of bus travel is increasing through the introduction of no-step buses, lift-equipped buses, etc., as well as the installation of bus stops oriented towards persons with disabilities and other types of people in danger on the roads. By the end of fiscal year 2009, fourteen cities have been designated as "omnibus towns."
- The National Tourism Agency, in order to develop tourism based on "universal design" ideas, put together the guidebook *For Building an Environment that Anyone Can Enjoy*, explaining how travel products and travel systems should be and how to adapt tourist destinations to "universal-design" theory. The Agency is working on the diffusion and comprehension of this guidebook through the organization of symposiums. Also, in fiscal

- year 2009 the Agency created a "checklist" to be used when planning and creating travel products in which the elderly and persons with disabilities can easily participate.
- In January of 2008, as a concrete guideline for making "barrier-free" happen, the Guideline for Building Smooth-movement Municipal Parks was assembled. In fiscal year 2009 the "task force for emergency support measures for the safety and security of municipal parks" was founded. This task force encourages the "barrier-free" transformation of municipal parks.
 - Publicity and information regarding hearing-impaired markers are being distributed in police departments. Meanwhile, in collaboration with relevant organizations police departments are working to improve the comprehensiveness of instruction at the time of obtaining licenses so that the hearing-impaired can safely drive their cars; the police are also working on safety education concerning matters that drivers need to pay attention to when in the vicinity of hearing impaired.
 - In April of 2009 the Law Partially Amending the Road Traffic Law was created (law #21 of 2009), and from April of 2010 a system of reserved parking spaces for older drivers, etc., will be introduced. This system will facilitate parking for the elderly and the persons with disabilities: only standard-sized cars driven by older people or persons with disabilities displaying the reserved parking sign issued by metropolitan and prefectural public safety commissions are allowed to park or pull into these parking spaces reserved for older drivers.
 - The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism organized a council made up of specialists to work on measures related to the reduced noise of hybrid cars, etc. Also, in January of 2010 the Ministry established the "Hybrid Cars Silence Measure Guideline." Meanwhile, the Ministry is informing carmakers about these measures and is working at its timely application.
 - In fiscal year 2009, meetings of municipal administration leaders were organized in thirteen places around the country, where they exchanged points of view. Through these meetings, municipal programs regarding people who need assistance in the event of a disaster were put forward: overall evacuation support plans, for example. Meanwhile, an "investigative group related to evacuation measures for people who need assistance in the event of a disaster" was created; by assembling an anthology of examples of advanced programs throughout the country, the greater municipal programs were promoted.

- Based on the fire disaster that occurred in March of 2009 in a nursing home in Shibukawa, Gunma Prefecture and seeing that automatic fire alarms were not mandatory in small social-welfare establishments with sleeping facilities, in the supplementary budget of fiscal year 2009 the state provided a large quantity of household-use fire alarms to all regional public organizations as an emergency economic measure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication. The state is also making sure that the installation of the alarms becomes part of fire prevention guidance and safety education. Putting these alarms into practical use and the maintenance of fire prevention security measures by every fire department in the country—including evacuation drills—in the type of institutions mentioned above is encouraged.

2 Measures to Secure Information and Communication for Persons with Disabilities

In order to correct the discrepancies in opportunities for persons with disabilities to use information and communication technology, research and development concerning information and telecommunications equipment and systems that respond to the needs of persons with disabilities have been promoted. Meanwhile, there are also efforts under way to distribute such equipment and systems: an accessibility guideline was created, the compliance with JIS and international standards was improved along with the accessibility of web sites, etc.

The diffusion of information to persons with disabilities is being enhanced through the promotion of telework, the strengthening of the information network, the upgrading of the system that provides information through the production of video materials with subtitles, etc, and the promotion of subtitled broadcasting, etc. Meanwhile, the framework of communications support for persons with disabilities has been strengthened through the promotion of sign language and Braille transcription, as well as through the standardization of pictures and communicative symbols.

【Main measures, etc.】

- Local livelihood support groups administer "IT support centers for persons with disabilities" that act as bases for all services of IT-related organizations with the goal of expanding the use of information and communication technology by persons with disabilities. A "task force on comprehensive development of IT for the persons with disabilities" was created, comprehensively and uniformly enforcing measures related to IT such as the training and dispatching of "PC volunteers."
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications organized the "Study group on Ensuring/Improving Accessibility in the Public Sector." In December 2005, this study group issued an application model, called "operational models to improve accessibility of public websites," for the concrete maintenance and improvement of web accessibility. In fiscal year 2010, a revision of this application model is scheduled, based on the standardization movement of recent years.
- An "Action Plan to double the telework population" was drawn up, aiming to increase the number of teleworkers by 20 percent by 2010. This was a measure by the government as a whole to promote the expansion of telework.

- In fiscal year 2009, "Naiiv Net," an online inventory system of Braille data, books in Braille and audio books managed primarily by the social-welfare association Japan Braille Library, was combined with "Biblio Net," a network distribution system of books in Braille and audio books, to form "Sapie," a new comprehensive information network for hearing- and visually-impaired people that offers more familiar information about books in Braille, audio books, etc.
- In January of 2009, based on the deliberations of the Cultural Council Copyright Subcommittee, a report was put together to take immediate and sufficient measures to secure access to information for persons with disabilities. In March of the same year, a proposition to revise the copyright law containing the content of this report was put together and submitted to the regular session of the 2009 parliament. This law was voted and passed on June 12th, 2009 and went into effect on January 1st, 2010.
- The Criminal Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Justice distributed a revised version of the DVD entitled "If You become the Victim of a Crime...," which explains the system of protection and support for crime victims provided by public prosecutors offices to crime victims, their families and the general public in an easy-to-understand way, to all public prosecutors offices.
- Based on the "Law to Facilitate the Usage of Communication and Broadcast Systems by Persons with Physical Disabilities and to Enhance Their Convenience for Persons with Physical Disabilities," the independently-administered National Institute of Information and Communication Technology offers assistance toward the expenses of producing subtitled programs, etc. In fiscal 2009, 12,510 subtitled programs, 667 sign language programs and 55 audio-description programs were subsidized. A provisional 430 million-yen allocation is earmarked for the scheduled subsidies in the budget of fiscal ~~year~~ 2010. Also in fiscal 2010, translating the voice and other sounds into sign language will be added to the list of subsidiaries.
- Based on a proposal in the March 2007 report on the "Research in relation to broadcasting for the visually or hearing impaired in the era of digital broadcasting," the "Guideline to propagate the broadcasting for the visually or hearing impaired" was established in October 2007. It sets out the target numbers for subtitled and audio-descriptive broadcasting from fiscal 2008 to fiscal 2017. It was also decided to increase the range of programs that can be broadcasted with subtitles according to the guideline as formulated in 1997; the goal is to provide subtitles for all of them. Regarding programs with audio descriptions, the goal is

10% of eligible programs of NHK General, five key private broadcasters, etc. In the case of NHK Education, the goal is 15% of its programs.

- The establishment of institutions providing information for hearing-impaired persons that provide such services as producing and lending video cassettes with subtitles or sign language, dispatching sign language interpreters and lending broadcast reception apparatus is being promoted across the country. Since fiscal 2009, digital image production apparatus that insert subtitles have been posted in institutions that provide information for hearing-impaired persons across the country, thus enhancing the supply of visual information for hearing-impaired persons at the local level.
- Police departments in all prefectures are working at securing videos with super-imposed subtitles to be used during workshops, as well as providing sign language interpreters for persons with hearing-impaired. Also, in order to guarantee smooth communication between police officers and persons who encounter difficulties expressing their intentions with words, "communication support boards" made of illustrations and written words were supplied by cooperative groups; by October of 2008 all police stations and patrol cars in the country had been equipped with those boards.

■ Chart 16 Transition in the percentage, by over subtitled, audio-descriptive, and sign language programs vis-à-vis all broadcasts (analog)

