

Chapter 6 Building the Foundation for a Comfortable Living

Section 1 Measures to Build Towns Comfortable for Persons with Disabilities and Measures for the Safety and Security of Persons with Disabilities

1. Further promotion of smooth transportation

The overall implementation of the amended Barrier-Free Act and further promotion of barrier-free

In 2006, the Act on Buildings Accessible and Usable for the Elderly and Physically Disabled (Act No. 44 of 1994) (hereinafter referred to as the “former Heart Building Act”) and the Act for Promoting Easily Accessible Public Transportation Infrastructure for the Aged and the Disabled (Act No.68 of 2000) (hereinafter referred to as the “former Transportation Barrier-Free Act”) were integrated and expanded, and now more than 10 years have passed since the enactment of the Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc. (Act No. 91 of 2006) (hereinafter referred to as the “Barrier-Free Act”).

Under this situation, toward the inclusive society taking opportunity of the Tokyo 2020 Games to promote barrier-free across the country, the Act Partially Amending the Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc. (Act No.32 of 2018) was enforced fully in April 2019.

Furthermore, in response to the enactment of the Act on Comprehensive and Integrated Promotion of Various Measures for Realization of a Universal Society (Act No. 100 of 2008) and the momentum for the realization of a symbiotic society triggered by the Tokyo 2020 Games, the Act Partially Amending the Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc. (Act No. 28 of 2020) came into full effect in April 2021. This Act enhances soft components such as improvement of facilities from viewpoints of barrier free minds related on the smooth transportation in addition to hard components.

2. Promotion of barrier-free measures based on the concept of universal design

Based on the Barrier-Free Act, smooth transportation standard has to be applied to new construction of facilities (passenger facilities, trains, road, parking, governmental park, buildings, etc.) and efforts to fit in the standard for existing structures were specified. In addition, based on the Barrier-Free Act, the “Basic Policy on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc.” (National Public Safety Commission, MIC, MEXT, MLIT Notification No. 1, 2020) was revised, and new five-year barrier-free development targets were enforced in April 2021. In addition, the Basic Policy on Transportation Policies based on the Basic Act on Transport Policy (Act No. 92 of 2013) also includes the promotion of barrier-free transport as one of its goals.

Furthermore, in order to encourage a barrier-free conscious attitude, which deepens the

understanding of the public for the promotion of barrier-free development and demands for cooperation, attempts are being made through the hosting of barrier-free lecture classes. In these, people can experience assisting elderly persons and persons with disabilities, and take part in simulated experiences. In addition, a gradual and continuous spiraling up of barrier-free measures is being pursued.

(1) Basic principles

In the 2018 revision of the Barrier-Free Act, it was newly stipulated as a basic principle that according to the measures in the Barrier-Free Act contributions must be made towards achieving an inclusive society and the elimination of social barriers.

(2) Promotion of barrier-free development of public transportation facilities and buildings

The Barrier-Free Act stipulates compliance with barrier-free standards for public transportation, buildings, roads, off-street parking lots and urban parks, and the promotion of barrier-free development in living spaces. In addition, in order to promote integrated efforts of hard and soft measures by public transport operators, the revised Act added a system making it mandatory for them to create hard and soft measures plans each year incorporating facility improvement, passenger support, information provision, educational drills and promotion systems, submit these reports to the Minister of the MLIT, and report upon and make public the state of these initiatives.

(3) Promotion of intensive and integrated barrier-free development in regions

Under the Barrier-Free Act, municipalities shall endeavor to designate smooth transportation promotion areas where it is necessary to implement work to facilitate smooth transportation, and create Master Plan of Barrier-Free. In addition, they shall endeavor to designate smooth transportation promotion intensive areas that require the encouragement of smooth transportation in an intensive and integrated manner, and create Action Plan of Barrier-Free for the areas.

Upon creation of the Master Plan of Barrier-Free and Action Plan of Barrier-Free, the following system is established to reflect the viewpoint of the user.

A. Council system

The council system for implementing consultation concerning the creation of Master Plan of Barrier-Free and Action Plan of Barrier-Free is stipulated in law. The councils consist of elderly persons and persons with disabilities, people of academic experience and standing and others deemed necessary by the municipality. When creating the basic concept, it is also requisite for

the party implementing the specified undertaking to take part in the council.

B. Master Plan of Barrier-Free and Action Plan of Barrier-Free planning proposal system

From the perspective of encouraging the creation by municipalities of a Master Plan of Barrier-Free and Action Plan of Barrier-Free, municipalities with elderly residents or residents with disabilities may put forward their own concrete proposals regarding the details of these.

(4) Responsibility of the State and public in promoting barrier-free development

A. Promotion of public understanding

In the Barrier-Free Act, it is stipulated to be the responsibility of the State to deepen the understanding of the public regarding the promotion of barrier-free development and to seek public cooperation in barrier free implementation, and the responsibility of the public to deepen their understanding of the importance of ensuring the self-sustaining day-to-day and social lives of the elderly and persons with disabilities is also stipulated. Furthermore, in the 2020 revision of the Barrier-Free Act, the appropriate considerations necessary for ensuring the smooth use of facilities for the elderly, disabled, etc. were clearly stipulated as the responsibility of the government and citizens in order to promote barrier-free minds.

B. Introduction of Spiral Up

In the Barrier-Free Act, a Spiral Up concept, in which the contents of specific policies and measures are verified, new policies and measures are taken, and the relevant policies and measures are gradually and continuously developed with the participation of the parties involved in the policies, is positioned as a responsibility to be fulfilled by the State. Based on this idea, State established a council composed of governmental organizations and relevant stakeholders including persons with disabilities, which will ascertain the progress of smooth transportation on a regular basis and strive to evaluate it.

3. Promotion of barrier-free housing

(1) Providing housing considering persons with disabilities in terms of design and equipment

A. Promotion of barrier-free public rental housing

In principle, with regard to all new public housing, Urban Renaissance Agency rental housing, the installation of facilities, etc. according to the physical and mental characteristics of persons with disabilities is considered, and barrier-free design is taken as a standard specification. Efforts are underway to make existing housing barrier free by rebuilding or making improvements to them.

B. Promotion of formation of housing stock considering utilization by persons with disabilities, etc.

The Guideline on the Design of Houses where Elderly Persons Reside (Order of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) No.1301 of 2001) shows the matters to be taken into consideration in the design of houses where people can continue to live even when their bodily functions deteriorate.

(2) House renovation

Special measures are taken in which income tax and fixed asset tax amounts are reduced when certain barrier-free renovation works are conducted for houses where persons with disabilities, etc. reside.

In addition, in the Long- Life High-Quality Housing Renovation Promotion Project, support is provided for barrier-free renovation conducted together with renovation work that contributes to the long- life high-quality of housing.

4. Promotion of barrier-free development of buildings

(1) Promotion of barrier-free environment in government buildings

Efforts are being made to secure the improvement standards stipulated in the Preferred Standards on Smooth Transportation for Buildings according to the Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc. (Act No.91 of 2006) (hereinafter referred to as the “Barrier-Free Act”), and improvements are being promoted that enable facilities that can be used smoothly and with comfort by persons with disabilities and all people with safety and peace of mind.

(2) Improvement of accessibility for buildings

In the Barrier-Free Act, standards (Standards on Smooth Transportation for Buildings) relating to entrances, aisles, toilets, etc. are stipulated, and compliance is mandatory for buildings (Specially Designated Buildings) of a certain scale or larger used by large and unspecified numbers of people, or mainly used by persons with disabilities, etc. and efforts for compliance with the standards are mandatory for buildings (Designated Buildings) used by large numbers of people.

Furthermore, in order that persons with disabilities can smoothly use buildings, support measures are carried out for excellent buildings (specified designated buildings), which meet the Preferred Standards on Smooth Transportation for Buildings with the recognition of the competent government agency.

(3) Subsidies, etc. provided by the Barrier-Free Act

In order to promote barrier-free buildings, guidance and advice are provided to the owners of specified buildings based on the Building Transportation Facilitation Standards.

With regard to improvement projects, etc. for the purpose of universal design of public facilities, etc. implemented by local public entities, the MIC added a Universal Designing Project to the Public Works Facilities Proper Management Promotion Business Bonds in FY2018, implementing financial measures for local public entities.

(4) Unification of display method

A. Braille display

In order to promote braille displays for providing information while avoiding chaos regarding methods with which braille signs are displayed, “Guidelines for All People Including Older Persons and Persons With Disabilities – Using Methods of Displaying Braille Sign -- Public Facility” (JIS T 0921), was established. With regard to consumer products, “Guidelines for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities -- Methods of Displaying Braille Sign -- Consumer Products” (JIS T 0923) was integrated to JIS T 0921 in order to improve convenience when using the standards, and JIS T 0921 was revised to “Accessible Design -- Application of Braille on Signage, Equipment and Appliances”.

B. Graphic symbols for guidance (pictograms)

Graphic symbols for guidance (pictograms) for providing information on an object, a concept or a state without using letters or language can be easily understood by elderly persons whose vision has deteriorated, or persons with disabilities, and even foreigners, etc., and thus is an excellent means of providing information compared to characters and languages. Foreign tourists are expected to increase with the hosting of the Tokyo 2020 Games. Thus, in order to make graphic symbols easier to recognize, seven graphic symbols have been changed from the viewpoint of harmonization with international standards, and 15 types of graphical symbols and a Help Mark, which makes it easier for persons with disabilities difficult to recognize from their appearance to call for support around them, were newly added in 2017. In 2019, three types of graphical symbols related to toilets like Western Style Toilet, and symbols of AED (Automated External Defibrillator) and Smoking Room for Heated Tobacco were added.

C. Public toilets, tactile guide map

In order to enable visually impaired persons to utilize facilities and equipment, etc. used by large and unspecified numbers of people, such as railway stations, parks, hospitals, or department stores, etc., safely and smoothly, the following guidelines have been established:

“Guidelines for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities -- Shape, Colour, and Arrangement of Toilet Operation Equipment and Appliances in Public Rest Room” (JIS S 0026), “Guidelines for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities -- Information Content, Shapes and Display Methods of Tactile Guide Maps” (JIS T 0922), and “Guidelines for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities -- Tactile Information -- Basic Design Methods for Tactile Patterns” (JIS S 0052).

5. Promotion of development of barrier-free public transportation and walking spaces, etc.

(1) Barrier-free development of public transportation

A. Promotion of barrier-free public transportation in accordance with laws and regulations

(i) Promotion of barrier-free development of public transportation based on the Barrier-Free Act

Under the Barrier-Free Act, when public transport operators build new passenger facilities such as stations, undertake major improvements or introduce new vehicles, etc., they are obliged to comply with Ministerial Order on Standards on Structures and Equipment for Passenger Facilities and Vehicles, etc. Requisite for Smooth Transportation (Order of the MLIT No. 111 of 2006) (hereinafter “the Standards on Smooth Transport in Public Transportation”). In addition, the revised Barrier-Free Act stipulates that public transportation operators are obliged to provide services such as the operation of personnel in passenger facilities and vehicles that have been developed based on the Barrier-Free Act (compliance with the so-called “soft standards”). In addition, the existing passenger facilities, vehicles, etc. are also required to make efforts to comply with the Standards on Smooth Transport in Public Transportation.

(ii) Improvement of guidelines concerning passenger facilities

The revised version of the Guidelines on Promotion of Smooth Transportation Development by Public Transport Operators (passenger facilities edition) was announced in March 2021, and by indicating in concrete terms the ideal way for improvements, efforts are underway to promote barrier free developments of passenger facilities with user’s perspective in mind.

(iii) Improvement of guidelines concerning vehicles, etc.

The revised version of the Guidelines on Promotion of Smooth Transportation Development by Public Transport Operators (vehicles edition) was announced in October 2020 and March 2021, and by indicating in concrete terms the ideal way for improvements, efforts are underway to promote barrier free developments further with user’s perspective in mind.

In addition, the Passenger Ships Barrier-Free Guidelines were formulated, and indicated the preferred development content as guidelines for making passenger ships barrier free and

enabling their smooth use by all passenger including those with disabilities.

(iv) Guidelines concerning methods of providing services

In March 2021, the Guidelines on Promotion of Smooth Transportation Development by Public Transport Operators (services version) were announced in March 2021, and by indicating in concrete terms the ideal way for improvements, efforts are underway to promote barrier free developments of services with user's perspective in mind.

B. Support for facility improvements and vehicle improvements

(i) Subsidies and loans for improvement of facilities including elevators at passenger terminals such as railway stations

Partial subsidies are being made for expenses required for barrier-free development of railway or tram way stations, etc. in urban railway improvement projects and regional public transport securing, management and improvement projects.

In addition, fiscal loan, and loan system of the Japan Finance Organization for Municipalities for construction improvement projects including the Barrier-free development of subway projects among transportation projects of municipal enterprises are established.

(ii) Grants and loans for improvement of vehicles friendly to persons with disabilities

Partial subsidies are granted for the expenses entailed by the Emergency Measures Projects to Improve the Environment for Foreign Travelers to Visit Japan for introducing low-floor buses, buses with lifts, welfare taxis, and low floor type trams (LRVs), etc.

As low-interest financing systems for developing vehicles for persons with disabilities, fiscal loans and a financing system conducted by the Japan Finance Organization for Municipalities have been established for construction improvement works, including barrier-free initiatives, aimed at municipality bus operations run by local government enterprises and tram way operations. In addition, special measures are taken for the automobile weight tax and the environmental performance tax on low-floor buses, buses with lifts, and universal design taxis, and special measures are taken for the fixed asset tax on LRVs.

(iii) Promotion of barrier-free development of domestic passenger ships under the joint ownership scheme

When construction is carried out that contributes to making the barrier-free facilities of passenger ships more sophisticated and diverse (ships with wheelchair-friendly toilets, elevators and other facilities that improve convenience and safety for persons with disabilities and others), the coastal shipping joint ownership scheme of the Japan Railway Construction, Transport and

Technology Agency are being utilized.

(2) Development of barrier-free walking space, etc.

A. Promotion of welfare town planning

Comprehensive town planning is promoted in various places based on the viewpoint of welfare, including securing smooth transportation of persons with disabilities through the development of wide sidewalks, elimination of differences in levels at the entrance and exits of buildings, installation of elevators at railway station buildings, introduction of falling prevention equipment such as platform screen doors, improvement of acoustic traffic signals, as well as securing places to relax and meet people through park development, and the following measures are conducted in order to support the efforts.

In addition to the above, the following measures are being implemented to support efforts for the development of welfare communities.

(i) Promotion of barrier-free development of towns focusing on passenger facilities of public transportation

In order to enable persons with disabilities to go out without assistance and use public transportation, we are promoting to provide plazas in front of stations, pedestrian decks and paths at transport hubs such as stations, and pedestrian-support facilities such as elevators, escalators to link these directly with roads and buildings.

Furthermore, we are implementing Barrier-free Environment Improvement Promotion Project which promotes development of facilities such as moving walkways and elevators to secure comfortable and safe movement, and buildings that give due consideration for persons with disabilities.

(ii) Improvement of living environment in rural areas

The MAFF provides support for the development of wider sidewalks and reduction of level differences in rural areas through the Grants for Rural Area Development and the Rural Area Development Subsidies.

(iii) Promotion of dissemination awareness-raising activities

The MIC is, in order to support the initiatives of local public entities aimed at realizing inclusive local communities, taking local allocation tax measures for the expenses required by local public entities to promote town planning through universal design and the vitalization of activities carried out by specified non-profit corporations (NPOs). The Ministry is also taking fiscal measures concerning town planning through universal design and health and welfare facility development to provide support in the face of communities with low birthrates and

increasingly elderly populations.

Furthermore, in order to achieve a society with a barrier-free mind, barrier-free classes aimed mainly at elementary and lower secondary school students are offered.

B. Efforts through city planning, etc.

As initiatives for comprehensive welfare town planning in urban planning, roads that take into consideration persons with disabilities, the development of urban infrastructure such as parks, land reallocation, adjustment projects, downtown redevelopment projects and other cross-region urban developments are being steadily carried out. In the urban redevelopment projects, etc., those that introduce certain social welfare facilities, etc. to redeveloped buildings are positioned as Welfare Space Formation Type Projects, and common transportation area maintenance expenses, and parking lot maintenance costs, etc. are subsidized in addition to ordinary subsidies, and premiums on the amount of subsidies for maintenance costs in the case of integrating improvement with social welfare facilities, etc. are provided.

In addition, the additional expenses arising when constructing facility buildings adapted to barrier-free development, etc., are supplemented by a separate quota.

C. Development of barrier-free walking spaces

Based on the Barrier-Free Act, to provide safe and secure walking space in the station plazas and sidewalks that connect stations, government facilities, and hospitals for everybody, including the elderly and persons with disabilities, we are promoting barrier free walking spaces by widening of sidewalks, improvement of uneven or sloped sidewalks, removal of utility poles, textured paving for visually impaired persons and grade separation facilities for pedestrian with elevators.

In addition, in order to achieve the more easily accessible environment, the Basic Policy on Promotion of Smooth Transportation set the following goals by FY2025: (i) to install barrier-free traffic signals on, in principle, every main residential street in priority development zones; (ii) to install acoustic traffic signals and escort zones on the roads which are deemed to be particularly necessary to ensure the safety of the persons with visual disabilities.

D. Barrier-free development of off-street parking lot

In the Barrier-Free Act, barrier-free development of off-street parking lots is stated, and based on the provisions of the Act, Ministerial Order to Determine Standards on the Structure and Equipment of Specified Off-Street Parking Lots Necessary for Smooth Transportation (Order of the MLIT No. 112 of 2006) is implemented to promote barrier-free development.

In addition, in the Basic Policy on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, the goal for

barrier-free development of specified off-street parking lots is stipulated.

(3) Transportation support

A. Promotion of dissemination of welfare taxis, etc.

In order to make the transportation of persons with disabilities, etc. more convenient, dissemination of welfare taxis is promoted by subsidizing part of expenses for the introduction of welfare taxi vehicles by the Community Public Transportation Maintenance Project. In addition, when it is identified that adequate transport services cannot be secured by bus and taxi operators alone, it is possible to use compensated transportation services provided by NPOs, etc.

With respect to persons with disabilities who find it difficult to go outdoors, in the community life support service under the Act on the Comprehensive Support for the Daily and Social Life of Persons with Disabilities, each municipality is implementing a Transportation Support Project that provides services such as dispatching guide helpers in a flexible form, depending on the characteristics of community and user's needs.

B. Standards development of transportation support system

The METI set "Guidelines for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities -- Information Presentation Using Electronic Guiding and Wayfinding System" (JIS T 0901) in order to improve the environment where persons with disabilities can actively participate in society and the economy utilizing IT.

C. Fare and fee discounts for persons with disabilities

On each type of public transportation, discounts on fares and fees are implemented for persons with physical disabilities in possession of physical disability certificates, persons with intellectual disabilities in possession of intellectual disability certificates, and caregivers of these people who need constant nursing care.

On toll roads, discounts are available for persons in possession of a physical disability certificate who drive themselves and for caregivers who are driving a person with severe physical disabilities or a person with severe intellectual disabilities.

With regard to health and welfare certificates of persons with mental disabilities, photographs must be attached to facilitate identity verification and make it easier to obtain assistance for discounts on admission fees to public facilities and fares for public transportation. Furthermore, with regard to the persons with developmental disorders and persons with higher brain dysfunction, the form and judgment standards of the medical certificates were revised.

With regard to the fare and fee discounts applicable to persons with mental disabilities in

possession of a health and welfare certificate of persons with mental disabilities or their caregivers, some public transport providers such as railways, buses, taxis and passenger ships already have measures in place, and these have been introduced to airline operators in FY2018, showing that these discount systems are available in all public transport services.

Moreover, instead of presenting a disability certificate, public transport operators are now using transportation IC cards and smartphone applications to verify the identity of passengers when applying for discounts.

D. Exclusion measures from traffic regulations prohibiting parking

A parking prohibited exclusion designation vehicle mark is issued for certain persons with disabilities and they are excluded from the subject of traffic regulations prohibiting parking.

E. Securement of proper utilization of parking spaces for wheelchair users, etc.

The MLIT is promoting the improvement of the system through the sharing of best practices regarding the parking permit system introduced by many local public entities from the viewpoint of ensuring proper utilization of parking spaces for wheelchair users, etc. and promoting dissemination of the system to local public entities that have not yet introduced the system by letting them know about the merits of the system, etc.

F. Promotion of pedestrian mobility support utilizing IC

Towards the goal of creating a universal society in which anyone, including elderly persons, persons with disabilities and overseas visitors can freely and in a stress-free manner use indoor and outdoor facilities, the MLIT is promoting initiatives to support pedestrian movement using ICT.

The Ministry is also improving the environment for open data promotion, etc. toward service creation by public operators and has examined the new methods to effectively collect the data necessary for barrier-free information transfer on facilities and routes.

(4) Promotion of universal tourism and providing barrier-free information

Based on the Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan, universal tourism enabling anyone, including persons with disabilities to enjoy traveling is promoted.

In 2018 the Manual for the Provision of Barrier-free Information at Accommodation Facilities was created and published, while in 2019 the Manual for the Provision of Barrier-free Information in Tourism Areas was created and published. In addition, in FY 2019, tourism information centers implemented pilot projects to enable of providing detailed barrier-free information. In FY2020, surveys and demonstration projects were conducted to strengthen the

support system for barrier-free travel in local communities.

As a part of its efforts to provide barrier-free information about public transport over the Internet, the Foundation for Promoting Personal Mobility and Ecological Transportation operates its Raku-Raku Odekake Net, its online service.

(5) Barrier-free development of parks, waterfront spaces, etc.

A. Consideration in park maintenance

As urban parks are places for relaxation and getting together through sport, recreation and cultural activities, as well as playing an important role in promoting the health and social participation of persons with disabilities it is essential that efforts are made to improve convenience and safety. The Barrier-Free Act stipulates, with regard to specified park facilities such as paths and plazas, resting places, toilets and the like that satisfy certain requirements, the obligation to comply with the standards when newly establishing them, and the obligation to make efforts to comply with the standards regarding existing facilities.

By exempting persons with physical disabilities and their caregivers from entrance fees in the national government parks throughout Japan, efforts are being made to increase opportunities for outdoor activities and mitigate their financial burden.

The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) is pursuing the universal design of the main facilities in national parks such as visitors' centers, pathways and toilets, and promoting the development of people-friendly facilities.

B. Consideration for maintenance of waterfront spaces

Waterfront spaces such as rivers and coasts, as well as parks, are important elements to provide places for persons with disabilities to relax and get together. The formation of good waterfront spaces is promoted through the development of river management facilities related to safety and security on river use. At the same time, barrier-free development of coastal conservation facilities is promoted to create opportunities for people to get closer to the seaside and experience nature in their daily lives.

C. Consideration in port area green spaces and marinas

From the planning stage, the green areas of ports is concerned with smooth access improvement with the surrounding transportation facilities, and in terms of facilities, efforts are provided so that barrier-free development can be implemented. Barrier-free development of marinas facilities is promoted so that persons with disabilities can participate easily and with safety in coastal recreation activities.

D. Consideration in maintenance of forest facilities

Improvement of forest walkways, etc. based on the concept of universal design is promoted in order to accommodate people regardless of age or disabilities as places for mental and physical relaxation and health building.

6. Improvement of traffic safety

(1) Improvement for safe and smooth passage

A. Promotion of community roads improvement

To provide safe and secure roads along which all people including persons with disabilities can walk with a feeling of peace of mind, the Prefectural Public Safety Commissions and road administrators work together on establishing/improving traffic signals, developing sidewalks, and installing traffic control devices to control traffic speed and through-traffic in collaboration with road administrator. They also promote area-wide, comprehensive traffic safety improvements by controlling traffic speed and reducing/restricting through-traffic in the entire target area (called “Zone 30”) with a combination of 30km/h speed limit and other safety measures as necessary.

B. Development of walking space from the viewpoint of utilization

To develop road traffic environments from the viewpoint of various users and promote proper use of such environments, we are promoting involvement of residents in new road development by utilizing results of the Comprehensive Inspection on Traffic Safety.

Moreover, the Rules of the Road (Public Notice of the National Public Safety Commission No. 3 of 1978) state that regular bicycles should not be parked on or around areas where there are studded paving blocks for the visually impaired.

C. Installment of traffic facilities such as traffic signals considering persons with disabilities

Measures are taken to promote the installment and improvement of barrier-free traffic signals and other traffic facilities such as acoustic traffic signals, which tell the status of traffic signals by sound, pedestrian traffic signals which display the remaining time until the lights turn green or red, and pedestrian-vehicle separation signals which separate the crossing times for pedestrians and vehicles to prevent traffic accidents. In addition, the improvement of a Pedestrian Information and Communication Systems (PICS), which sends pedestrian traffic signal information to the smartphones using the Bluetooth and enables extension of green light time by operating from a smartphone, are being promoted.

D. Improvement of a road traffic environment for easier driving for persons with disabilities

In order to ensure that everyone including persons with disabilities drives safely, we are promoting to add more space to the existing road structure, improve visibility, and mitigate drivers' fatigue. Specifically, this involves the improvement of Michi-no-Eki roadside stations, development of additional lanes (lanes for slower traffic), addition of road lighting, installation in washrooms and parking spaces for persons with disabilities in service areas (SA), parking areas (PA) on expressways, and car parking lots, etc.

In addition, according to the Road Traffic Act (Act No. 105 of 1960), when a person holding a license for a motor vehicle to which any condition is attached because the licensee has an orthopedic impairment is driving a standard motor vehicle with a disabled driver sticker displayed on their vehicle, other drivers should not pull over or cut into line except when necessary to avoid an accident.

With regard to the driving of vehicles by hearing-impaired persons, when semi-mid-sized or standard vehicles are being driven by people with hearing aids that allow them to hear only certain level of noise, they are obliged to display hearing impaired person marks on their vehicles, and other drivers are prohibited from pulling over or cutting into line.

Furthermore, in order that elderly persons or persons with disabilities can park with safety and enough time, the police are developing designated zones (dedicated parking zones for elderly people, etc.) restricted to standard motor vehicles displaying the special mark provided by the Public Safety Commissions of each prefecture.

E. Countermeasures against hybrid vehicles, etc. with quiet running noise

In response to the voicing of opinions that hybrid and electric vehicles make so little sound that people feel danger, the MLIT formulated Guidelines for Measures against Quietness of Hybrid Vehicles. Based on the guidelines, in order that hybrid vehicles, etc. are required to be equipped with vehicle approach reporting equipment and the safety of pedestrians are secured, the partially amended Safety Standards of Road Transport Vehicle (Order of the Ministry of Transport, No. 67 of 1951) was promulgated and came into effect in conjunction with the international standards in which Japan has taken the lead in formulating at the United Nations, and which entered into force in October, 2016.

F. Promotion of ITS and efforts toward realization of automated driving

Based on the recognition that securing transportation in rural areas and addressing professional driver shortages are urgent matters, we are implementing research and development and service development of ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems), such as TSPS (Traffic Signal Prediction Systems), ETC 2.0 for safer and more comfortable transportation for persons with disabilities, etc., and making efforts in the development of advanced automated

driving systems and provision of automated driving services for persons with disabilities, etc.

(i) TSPS (Traffic Signal Prediction Systems)

By providing drivers with advance information on traffic signals, etc. at the time of arrival at intersections with traffic signals, comfortable driving is encouraged and the prevention of traffic accidents involving sudden stops and starts is being pursued.

(ii) ETC2.0

ETC2.0 is a system that will contribute greatly to the promotion of ITS, as it has much more advanced functions than previous ETC systems. Using the roadside units installed on expressways nationwide, we are promoting initiatives for safe and smooth traffic, including the provision of information on region-wide traffic congestion. In addition, traffic accident countermeasures are taken to ensure safety of living roads by utilizing big data such as speeds, routes and a sudden braking information collected from the roadside units.

(2) Enhancement of protection consciousness for pedestrians, etc.

For drivers, in order to raise protective awareness regarding pedestrians including persons with disabilities, driver education, guidance by driving safety supervisors, and other publicity awareness raising activities are promoted in corporation with related organizations and bodies. For persons with disabilities, detailed traffic safety education is promoted by utilizing captioned videos and holding of participation-, experience-, and practice- type traffic safety classroom, etc. adjusted to level of disability.

(3) Certification of type of electric wheelchairs

According to the Road Traffic Act, those using disabled persons' wheelchairs, which use motors conforming to certain standards, are considered to be pedestrians; nine types were authorized as corresponding to the standards in FY2020.

(4) Consideration for those who wish to obtain a driver's license

The prefectural police have installed slopes, elevators, etc. at the driver's license center of each prefectural police department. A driving safety counseling service (formerly known as "driving competency counseling service") is established where persons with physical disabilities consult with experienced personnel about obtaining a driver's license.

In addition, when it is recognized that the disabilities of persons with physical disabilities do not pose a risk of interfering with their ability to drive safely, by attaching conditions to their driver's licenses depending on their physical state, it is possible to for them to take a driving

skill test using a vehicle brought by the test-taker and remodeled for persons with disabilities, etc. In addition, designated driving schools are being guided to implement training using trainee's own vehicles, and to install vehicles that can be used in training, equip them with components, and improve their facilities.

Furthermore, in order to improve convenience for those with intellectual disabilities wishing to acquire a driver's license, the police take a variety of measures such as adding Japanese syllabary characters to Chinese characters in the written test questions.

7. Promotion of disaster and crime prevention countermeasures

(1) Disaster prevention countermeasures

A. Basic policy of disaster prevention countermeasures

Partial revision of the Basic Act on Disaster Management

After the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, the importance of measures during disasters for persons requiring special care such as elderly persons, persons with disabilities and infants became evermore vital. Therefore, in 2012, the government revised the Basic Act on Disaster Management (Act No. 223 of 1961) to promote participation of diverse entities such as elderly persons and persons with disabilities and incorporate their opinions into local disaster management plans. Accordingly, the Act stipulates that persons consisting of voluntary disaster management organizations or persons with relevant knowledge and experience should be added to the members of the Local Disaster Management Councils.

Subsequently, in 2013, the second round of amendments was made in which it was made mandatory for municipalities to draw up lists of people among persons requiring special care who need special support during disasters, and standards were set that should be met by evacuation centers where it is expected that mainly persons requiring special care will be forced to stay in.

Then, based on the Final Report of the Sub-Working Group on Evacuation of the Elderly, etc. in the Wake of Typhoon Hagibis, Etc. (December 24, 2020; hereinafter referred to as the "Final Report"), the Act was amended again in 2021 to set the obligation for the mayors of municipalities to make efforts to prepare an individual evacuation plan for each person who needs support for evacuation, including information on the person who will provide support for evacuation and the place to evacuate, in order to ensure the smooth and prompt evacuation of people who need support for evacuation.

B. Promotion of countermeasures for persons requiring special care

After the amendment in 2013, the Initiative Guidelines for Evacuation Support of Those Requiring Aid in Evacuating was formulated and published, providing specific procedures for

the preparation and usage of lists of residents in need of assistance in evacuation. Moreover, the obligation for efforts in developing a proper living environment in evacuation centers was stipulated and the Guidelines on Initiatives to Secure a Good Living Environment at Evacuation Centers were formulated and published.

In FY2016, the Guidelines on Operating Evacuation Centers, Guidelines on Securing and Maintaining Toilets, and the Guidelines on Securing and Operating Welfare Evacuation Centers were published.

Furthermore, based on the amendment in 2021, the Initiative Guidelines for Evacuation Support of Those Requiring Aid in Evacuating were revised in May 2021 to add specific procedures for the preparation and utilization of individual evacuation plans. In addition, based on the Final Report, the Regulations for Enforcement of Basic Act on Disaster Management (Prime Minister's Office Order No. 52 of 1962) and the Guidelines on Securing and Operating Welfare Evacuation Centers were revised to promote direct evacuation to welfare shelters.

When communities and companies, etc. conduct various emergency drills, they implement evacuation practice taking extra care for persons requiring special care, and raise awareness of disaster prevention.

Each prefectural police department is making attempts to spread knowledge about persons with disabilities during disasters and to promote the development of support systems for persons with disabilities, etc. through routine visits to facilities housing persons with disabilities.

C. Measures for facilities used by persons requiring special care, etc.

With regard to measures against sediment-related disasters at facilities used by persons requiring special care, the development of sediment-related disaster prevention facilities is being implemented to maintain social welfare facilities. In the event of severe flooding or landslide disasters, disaster prevention measures would be taken as soon as possible. At the same time, administrators of facilities for persons requiring special care, which are included in the local disaster prevention plans of municipalities, are required to prepare evacuation plans and conduct evacuation drills to ensure smooth and rapid evacuation of facility users.

Furthermore, in the sediment-related damage nationwide disaster drills local residents play a lead role and with the cooperation of facilities for persons requiring special care, and evacuation drills and so on are implemented in a focused manner to meet the circumstances of the regions.

In addition, in order to enable the safe and swift evacuation of persons requiring special care, in addition to attempts to develop and strengthen disaster information systems, in preparation for the advent of floods, tsunamis, high tides and sediment-related disasters the

provision is promoted of detailed information in the form of disaster maps that specifically show the sites of previous disasters and danger, how to obtain information, evacuation centers and routes, and every effort is being made to raise awareness of disasters.

D. Countermeasures against flood damage

Enormous physical efforts are required in order to enable people to return to normal everyday life after flood damage, and since it also entails the placing of a tremendous burden on persons with disabilities, infrastructure improvements to prevent repeated disasters is steadily promoted, and the measures to support smooth and prompt evacuation such as hazard maps are integrally conducted.

In addition, in order to promptly and accurately convey river information such as rainfall and water levels to local public entities and community residents, information is provided in real time through the Internet, and terrestrial digital broadcasting, etc., and danger is warned of by emergency alarms, etc.

E. Fire safety countermeasures

In fire-fighting institutions, etc. throughout the country, through a nationwide Fire Prevention Campaign, thoroughness in fire safety measures for specific fire prevention objects is being pursued as a prioritized objective. An appropriate evacuation guidance system is ensured in small-scale society welfare facilities, etc. where persons with disabilities, etc. reside, and the necessary fire safety countermeasures are thoroughly taken, including the promotion of intensive corrections against violations of the Fire Service Act.

F. Calling 119 without speaking

As for the system (Net 119 Emergency Report System), which can make smooth emergency report without speaking by utilizing smartphones, etc., the standard specifications, etc. were compiled by the Fire and Disaster Management Agency in 2017, and their introduction to local fire service departments has been promoted. Efforts to familiarize the system to persons with disabilities and encourage them to use it are also being made in cooperation with the MHLW.

G. Main types of support for persons with disabilities in the event of earthquake disasters

Among the measures taken for disaster areas and victims in connection with the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Kumamoto Earthquake, the following measures are being taken as part of the support efforts for persons with disabilities.

(i) Reduction of usage burden, etc.

(a) Regarding measures for with users

It has been decided that if municipalities exempt the burden of users of disability welfare services related to the affected persons with disabilities, etc., the State will provide financial support for the full amount of the users' financial burden.

(b) Regarding provision of disability welfare services

- It has been decided that when victims, etc. are accommodated, and Personnel Placement Standards and Facility Equipment Standards are temporarily not filled, including cases in which capacity is exceeded, etc., remuneration will not be reduced.

(c) Dispatching of nursing care staff, and acceptance of evacuees, etc.

- In each facility, etc., when there was a shortage of nurses the dispatching of nursing staff, from different places of business, was conducted under the coordination of the State or Prefectures, etc.

(d) About resumption support of disability welfare services, etc. in disaster areas

- A government subsidy project was implemented to cover the expenses required for restoration projects, support for facilities for persons with disabilities affected by the earthquake was resumed, and restoration support, etc. implemented.

(ii) Mental care

With regard to mental care in the Great East Japan Earthquake, mental care centers were set up as an activity base in the prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, where teams composed of nurses, mental health social workers and certified public psychologists, etc. cooperated with health centers and municipalities, and through consultation and visiting support provided professional mental care. Since FY2018 reinforcement of cooperation between mental care centers, enhancement and reinforcement of efforts to construct a support system for evacuees outside Fukushima prefecture, and the enhancing of support for supporters, and promotion of specialized training and survey research have all been underway.

With regard to mental care in the Kumamoto earthquake, the MHLW used the Disaster Mental Health Information Support System (DMHISS) straight after the earthquake and conducted collation of information and the coordination of personnel dispatching with the DPAT (Disaster Psychiatric Assistance Team), that was dispatched on the day of the earthquake at the request of Kumamoto Prefecture. In addition, the Kumamoto Institute for Traumatic Stress was established and meticulous professional mental health care is carried out.

(iii) Provision of information on support for persons with developmental disorders

In the Information and Support Center for Persons with Developmental Disorders at the National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities, since the Great East Japan Earthquake, and every time when a large-scale disaster occurs, in order to provide smooth

support for people with developmental disorders, information such as points to keep in mind at the time of support is provided toward the people coping with in the affected area.

(iv) Securing school attendance opportunities/ financial support for school attendance, etc.

The MEXT provides financial support to preschool children and students who have been affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and face economic difficulties in attending school due to financial reasons. The ministry also requests each Prefectural Board of Education and prefectural government to accept those children in schools managed or supervised by them. The measures above have been taken following the Kumamoto earthquake and other disasters as well.

(v) Handbook for teachers

In the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the National Institute of Special Needs Education created the Handbook for Teachers who Support Children with Developmental Disorders after the Great East Japan Earthquake and is distributing it to relevant institutions and published it on its own website.

After the Kumamoto Earthquake the Institute re-uploaded its handbook as information relating to Kumamoto on the top page of its website, and made a renewed effort to make it widely known.

(vi) Ascertaining the situation of infants, pupils and students

Following the Great East Japan Earthquake, the MEXT and the MHLW requested the boards of education and children with disabilities welfare supervising sections of prefectures to take the following measures: (1) to ascertain the situation of the affected infants, pupils and students with disabilities and provide them with support; (2) to collaborate in education and welfare, an example of which is that if a board of education or school finds infants, pupils or students in need of support, the board or school should inform the Children with Disabilities Welfare Supervising Section of a municipality after confirming the intention of the parents or guardians; and (3) to publicize the fact that a consultation service is available for support of children with disabilities.

(2) Crime Prevention Measures

A. Access to police

Persons with disabilities face special difficulties in the satisfying of normal needs regarding crime prevention, they face a heightened danger of becoming involved in crime or accidents,

and feel a strong sense of anxiety. The police launched a smart phone application for 110 services, which is a nationwide uniform system enabling emergency calls using messaging. They also provide useful information about community safety and security through routine visits, etc.

B. Prevention of crime and accident damage

As a measure to alleviate the sense of anxiety among persons with disabilities arising from the possibility of becoming a victim of crime or accidents, routine visits to homes and workplaces serve to let the persons with disabilities consult with the police and the police to respond to their wishes. The police are also striving to provide the requisite information about local crime, the frequency of accidents, crime prevention knowhow and other information required to secure safety.

In collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies and related organizations, the police are developing and disseminating high-performance devices for installation in homes as a part of crime prevention measures against invasion crimes.

C. Promotion of crime prevention measures at support facilities for persons with disabilities, etc.

Following the mass murder incident that occurred at the support facility for persons with disabilities in Sagami City, Kanagawa Prefecture, the MHLW issued a notification entitled About Securing of Safety Related to Crime Prevention in Social Welfare Facilities in July 2016. It shows a specific checklist of items concerning measures for crime prevention and emergencies on an everyday basis, and has been thoroughly notified to each facility so that they make the necessary efforts.

In addition, budgetary measures have been taken in order to subsidize facilities and equipment to secure safety against crime, and the creation of a system for securing safety is being encouraged.

Section 2 Measures to Enhance Information Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

1. Improvement of Information Accessibility

(1) Comprehensive support

As part of the community life support service, the Persons with Disabilities IT Support Center is operated as a comprehensive service base of IT-related measures, and personal computer volunteer training and dispatching, and so on, are conducted in order to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to make use of information telecommunications technology.

The MIC held a Workshop aiming for an Inclusive Society with Digital Usage and published a Report on it in April 2019. The report recommends that we should realize an inclusive society with digital usage where all people irrespective of age, disability, sex, nationality can live a fruitful life by benefitting from the convenience of becoming digital users. This report mentions the examination of the mechanism of Digital Usage Supporter through which persons with disabilities or the elderly can learn how to use ICT equipment. Based on this report, the ministry will promote initiatives such as the self-diagnosis of accessibility of ICT devices and services by companies, the use of ICT devices and services with consideration for information accessibility, and digital application supporters who can help the elderly and persons with disabilities learn how to use ICT devices and services.

(2) Research and development of equipment and systems that take into consideration persons with disabilities

Promotion of the research and development of information communication devices and systems that take use by persons with disabilities into consideration is a field with low profitability despite its extremely high public benefit and social usefulness. It is important, therefore, to promote the improvement of research and development systems, and research and development, etc., in national research institutions, as well as to support research and development conducted by private enterprises and others. Discussions aimed at improving accessibility of smartphones and tablets are continuing at ISO/IEC-JT 1 of the International Standardization Organization, and Japanese manufacturers are also participating. In FY2018, the Guidelines for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities-Information and Communications Equipment, Software and Services-Part 4: Telecommunications Equipment, which were established as the Japan Industrial Standard (JIS) for information accessibility, were revised to assure and enhance accessibility in smartphones and other such equipment.

(3) Promotion of standardization on information accessibility

The Guidelines for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities-Information and Communications Equipment, Software and Services (JIS X 8341 series) were established as the Japan Industrial Standard (JIS) for information accessibility. In parallel with the development of standards domestically, and as a step toward shared international guidelines for information accessibility, proposals to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for the “Common Guidelines,” “Personal Computers,” and “Office Equipment” in the JISX8341 series were made and international standards were established. In 2018, in order to improve consistency with international standards, the JIS Standard for telecommunications equipment was revised.

(4) Promotion of barrier-free development of websites, etc.

Each ministry and agency is working to enhance the digital provision of government information on its websites, in light of the Japan Industrial Standard (JIS X 8341-3) concerning web content, in order to make the websites easier to use for all people, including elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

In the MIC, the Public Site Operational Guidelines for All were formulated and the web accessibility evaluation tool was ensuring and improving web accessibility.

2. Development and dissemination of information communication systems supporting social participation

(1) Promotion of implementation of electronic voting

Electronic voting in Japan is permitted for introduction in the elections of members of parliament and heads of local public entities.

The MIC, in March 2020, reviewed the technical conditions of electronic voting systems which can lead to realize electronic voting by using general-purpose device such as a tablet, and it is engaged in providing the necessary information to local public entities.

(2) Promotion of teleworking

Teleworking is a flexible work style that makes effective use of time and place by utilizing ICT. There are expectations that teleworking will contribute to expanding employment opportunities for women, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and so on. The government decided to promote the development of the environment for further dissemination of teleworking awareness-raising, and its wider utilization. Since 2017, related ministries and organizations collaboratively set July 24, the day when the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Games was scheduled to be called, as Telework Day to let telework take place all over the country. As it is necessary to establish a new way of life and to make it possible to maintain both the prevention of the spread of infection and the maintenance of socioeconomic activities in a sustainable manner, the initiative in 2020 was implemented as a continuous call for the promotion of telework and the strengthening of information provision, etc., without limiting the period.

3. Enhancement of information provision

(1) Promotion of research and development related to information provision

A. Support for private research and development

The MIC is providing support to those who conduct research and development of

communications and broadcasting technologies to develop communication and broadcasting services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities, and it is also providing subsidies and information to entities that provide or develop communication and broadcasting services for persons with physical disabilities through the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology.

B. Development of an easy-to-use telephone

Telecommunications carriers take various measures so that persons with disabilities can enjoy trouble-free use of the telephone, including development of welfare telephone equipment such as telephones with a volume control function, and installation of public phone boxes that are wheelchair accessible.

(2) Improvement of information provision systems

A. Improvement of information networks

The Japan Federation of the Visually Impaired is engaging in an Instant Braille News Provision Project to enter immediately newspaper and other such information so that it can be received as braille data at braille libraries and other such institutions nationwide, and so that visually impaired persons can obtain information over the web while in their homes. In addition, braille and audio book information, etc., are provided by the Sapie comprehensive network for information on visual impairment that is operated mainly by the Japan Braille Library, a social welfare corporation.

The Information Network of Persons with Disabilities (NORMANET) engages in the collection and provision of information of all types that are useful to participation in society by persons with disabilities and support for information exchange. In order to make it easy for persons with disabilities to access information, NORMANET is taking steps toward a multimedia system that provides simultaneous, integrated text, voice, and image information. It is also building up Disability Information Resources to collect and store disability, health, and welfare research information from inside and outside Japan and to provide that information over the internet.

The Act Partially Amending the Copyright Act (Act No. 30 of 2018), which includes provision for limitations on rights related to the enhancement of opportunity for persons with disabilities to access information, came into effect. The limitations on rights recognized in this Act, which enable the transliteration or other such preparation of books for the benefit of visually impaired persons without the permission of copyright holders, have been clarified to extend the range of persons with disabilities who can provide transliteration and so on to include persons with severe limb and trunk dysfunction or other such disabilities. Actions

covered by the limitations on rights were also extended to newly include the sending and receiving of email and other such actions. The organizations and other such bodies that can, without the permission of copyright holders, prepare transliterations and so on of books for the benefit of persons with visual impairment or other such disabilities have been extended to newly include parties that satisfy certain requirements even when not designated as such by the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs.

B. Promotion of Improvement of Reading Environment for Visually Impaired Persons, etc.

In July 2020, the MEXT and the MHLW formulated the Basic Plan for the Promotion of the Improvement of the Reading Environments for Visually Impaired Persons, etc., in order to comprehensively and systematically promote measures for the improvement of the reading environment for them. In addition, a notice was issued to local governments and related organizations to encourage them to implement measures based on the purpose of the “Act on Promotion of the Improvement of Reading Environments for Visually Impaired Persons, etc. (Act No.49 of 2019).

C. Information provision in government publicity

The Cabinet Office is publishing the spoken public relations CDs and the public relations magazines in Braille and in large letters as government publicity in order to provide information on important measures of the government to persons with visual disabilities. They are being distributed to National Association of Institutions of Information Service for Visually Impaired Persons, Japan Federation of the Visually Impaired, schools for special needs education, public libraries, local public bodies, and so on.

D. Production of captioned videos and braille version brochures, etc.

The MOJ provides public prosecutors offices nationwide with DVDs that explain their system for the protection and support of crime victims in an easy-to-understand manner for the crime victims, their families, and the general public. On the DVDs, explanatory text is superimposed and all the videos are captioned so that hearing impaired persons can use them. Brochures for crime victims and others have been prepared in braille versions as well as CD versions with voice recordings of the same contents for distribution to braille libraries and public prosecutors offices nationwide to provide information to persons with visual disabilities.

The human rights bodies of the MOJ have created awareness-raising videos concerning various human rights issues. At the same time, they have also prepared captioned video versions as well as consciousness-raising pamphlets and other such materials containing Uni-Voice bar codes so that the materials can also be used by persons with hearing impairment

and visual disabilities.

E. Consideration in national elections

The following arrangements necessary for persons with disabilities to vote are made: Provision of braille candidate roster and registered political party roster in polling places, etc., measures to indicate the type of election in braille on ballots, provision of candidate information by braille version as well as by voice versions on cassette tape and compact disc, and so on, installation of wheelchair ramps at polling places, provision of braille writing equipment, and so on. Furthermore, as a measure for political broadcasting, the inclusion of sign language interpretation and captions is allowed.

(3) Promotion of television broadcasts with captions, explanations or sign language, etc.

The widespread adoption of television broadcasts with captions, explanations, sign language and so on is a crucial issue in terms of persons with visual and hearing disabilities participating in society by acquiring information through television broadcasting. Due to the revision of the Broadcast Act (Act No. 132 of 1950) in 1997, it is stipulated that broadcasters are obliged to make the effort to provide as many programs as possible with captions and explanations.

The MIC formulated the Guideline on Information Accessibility in the Field of Broadcasting in 2018, which stipulates objectives to be achieved by FY2027. Based on this guideline, broadcasters are encouraged to take measures to expand broadcasts oriented to persons with visual and hearing disabilities. However, the creation of captions for live broadcast programs in particular is difficult because of the large required workforce and high labor cost. Given this and other issues involved, a demonstration project for the practical application of an automated subtitling system with voice recognition technology is implemented.

For the benefit of persons with hearing disabilities, the MHLW aims to establish facilities for provision of information to persons with hearing disabilities in every prefecture that have libraries of videos containing captions (sign language) and engage in producing and loaning of instructional materials for the dissemination of sign language, dispatching sign language interpreters, loaning information equipment, and so on. They are promoting the improvement of these facilities.

(4) Measures to Improve the Discrimination of Types of Bank of Japan Notes

The format of Bank of Japan notes (so-called bills) is to be renewed from the viewpoint of universal design as well as strengthening the counterfeit resistance, and to be issued from the first half of FY2024. The Ministry of Finance has taken consideration from various points of view for visually impaired persons to differentiate note types easily through activities, such as

hearing opinions from the concerned parties and investigating the status of measures taken overseas. This outcome is reflected in new Bank of Japan notes so that people can easily differentiate note types by looking as well as touching.

4. Enhancement of communication support systems

(1) Communication support by sign language and braille transcription, etc.

In the Community Life Support Project, Communication Support Projects are conducted under which sign language interpreters, etc., are dispatched or assigned for persons who have difficulty in communicating due to hearing, language function, voice function, visual impairment, and other disabilities, and sessions are held to train braille translation or reading volunteers, summary transcribers, sign language volunteers, and sign language interpreters. Starting in FY2018, training to develop communication facilitators for the support of persons with aphasia has also been implemented and from FY2019, they have been also sent.

The prefectural police are using educational movies with sign language interpreting and with Japanese subtitles for persons with visual disabilities and to hire sign language interpreters. In order to provide for trouble-free communication between police officers and persons who have difficulty communicating in words, communication support boards have been deployed to every police box, patrol car, and other such facilities, and they are being used.

In the MHLW, a telephone relay service that places operators to support sign language interpretation and written character interpretation so that persons with hearing disabilities can call by themselves has been implemented since FY2017. In addition, to implement a telephone relay service as public infrastructure, the Act on Facilitation of the Use of Telephones for the Persons with Hearing Impairments, etc. (Act No. 53 of 2020) was enacted on December 1, 2020. Preparations are underway to start the telephone relay service as a public infrastructure in July 2021.

(2) Pictorial symbols (pictograms) for communication support and accessible meeting

The Japan Industrial Standards Committee (JISC) established a standard for pictorial symbols titled “Design Principles of Pictorial Symbols for Communication Support” (JIS T 0103) to assist people who have difficulty communicating by letters and spoken language to communicate accurately their intentions and demands to the other party and to be understood correctly by them. Also, JISC established a standard of consideration items for meeting organizers: Considerations and Apparatuses for accessible Meetings (JIS S 0042), so that persons with disabilities can easily participate in conferences.