

“integrated type” are subject to these “Facility-Based Benefits.”

The third point is to enrich support for children and child-rearing in local communities. In order to enrich the various kinds of supports that satisfy the needs of the community not only for households with children who need childcare, but also for all households, each municipal government implements user support services that provide relevant information, advice and other supports so that parents (guardians) can efficiently use services related to education, childcare and child-rearing. Other services, like a community childcare support centers which gives advice about child-rearing so parents can interact with each other, temporary custody, an after-school children’s clubs and others, are also in the new system. These are regarded legally as “Regional child and childcare support services,” and are provided with financial support to strengthen these services.

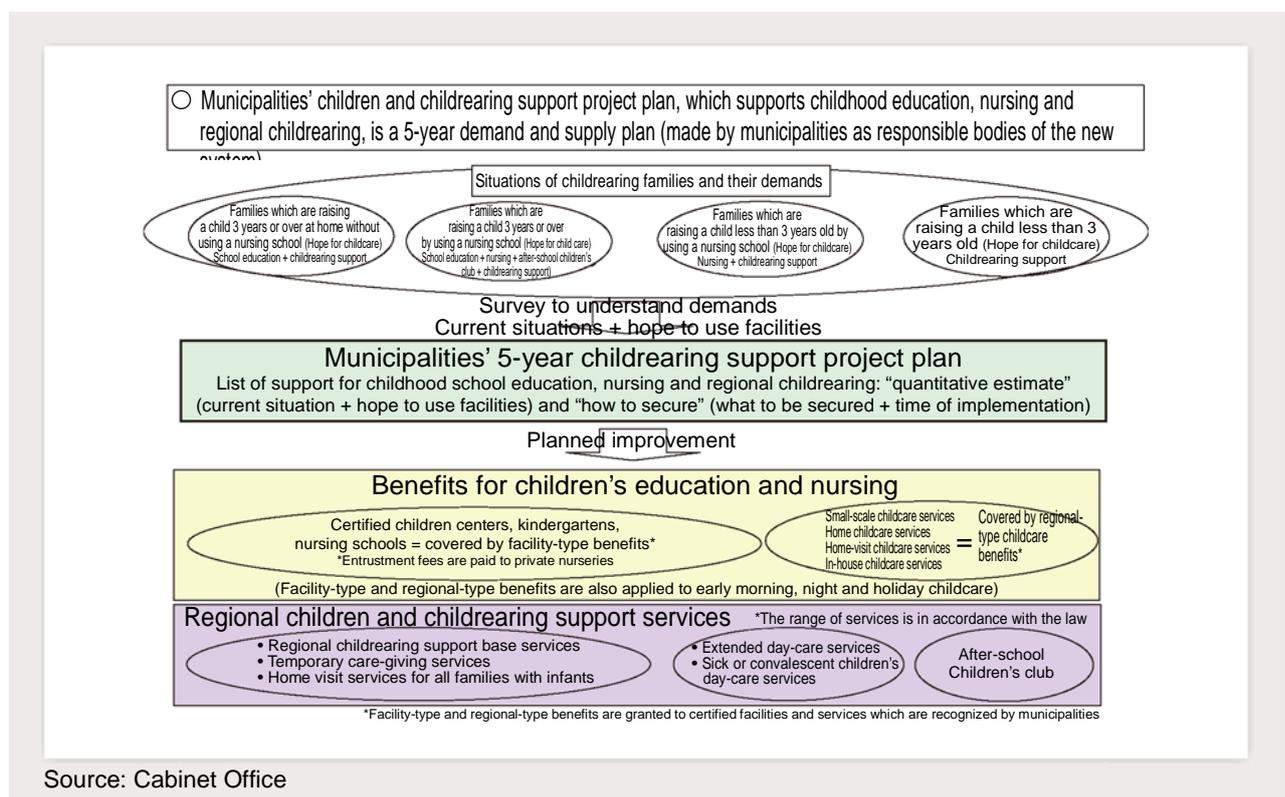
The new system aims toward realizing a society that provides comprehensive, high-quality early childhood education and childcare so as to improve local child-rearing support services, so every child can grow up in good health.

(Implementing Bodies of the New System)

The new system has a multilevel structure in which municipal governments, as a responsible organization, implements provide benefits such as “facility-type benefits” and “Regional child and childcare support services” according to a plan, and which are supported by local governments and the national government.

Hence, municipal governments are conducting a series of surveys in order to understand the needs of early childhood education and childcare and childcare support within a region, and they are working on the formulation of a service plan to establish how to provide what kind of childcare support based upon need (“Municipal Plan for Children and Child-rearing Support”), which is 5-year project from FY 2015. Local governments will formulate a “Prefectural Plan for Children and Child-rearing Support,” namely 5-year project from FY 2015 in which a prospect of the needs, the measures needed to secure it and other issues of each fiscal year are described, according to the data compiled by the Municipal Plan for Children and Child-rearing Support.

Fig. 1-2-5 Municipal project plans



Prefectures and municipalities have been proceeding with project planning in the “local version of children and childrearing meetings” under the participation of many people concerned. However, in the future, they shall check and evaluate the plans continuously in such meetings, follow-up the implementation situations, and review them as needed.

(Procedures to Use Facilities and Services, and the Role of Municipal Governments)

In the new system, prior to using centers for early childhood education and care, kindergartens and nursery centers which are eligible for the “facility-type benefit,” and prior to receiving services, like small-scale childcare service which is eligible for the “Regional type childcare benefit,” parents (guardians) should apply to the municipal governments to receive certification that a child falls into the proper age classification (over or under three years of age) and once the necessity of childcare is determined, the parent will receive the certification.

When the municipal government receives an application, along with determining the types of certification of a child, if it determines that the child needs childcare, it will determine childcare requirements (the amount of childcare that is provided by the facility-type benefit) and it will issue the certificate that describes such types of certification and the childcare requirement.

The parents who have been given certification will then choose a facility/service provider and make a contract under the guidance of the municipal governments. As the municipal governments are responsible for providing daycare at nursery centers under the new system as well, and are also responsible for securing daycare services at places other than nursery centers (centers for early childhood education and care, Small-scale childcare services etc.), for the time being, they will take care of a range of arrangements for children certified as “in need of daycare,” including facility use adjustment, the introduction of available facilities and service providers, and a request for their children to use facilities. Incidentally, when a parent uses a private nursery center, the parent and the municipal government make a contract.

(Cost Burden)

The new system forms a part of the integrated reform of the social insurance and tax systems. So far, the consumption tax revenues corresponding to the national government have been allocated to the three expenditures for the elderly (basic pension, elderly medical care and nursery care) and now they will be expanded to the four expenditures of social security, including the childcare field (pension, medical care, nursery care and measures against the declining birthrate) by securing financial resources.

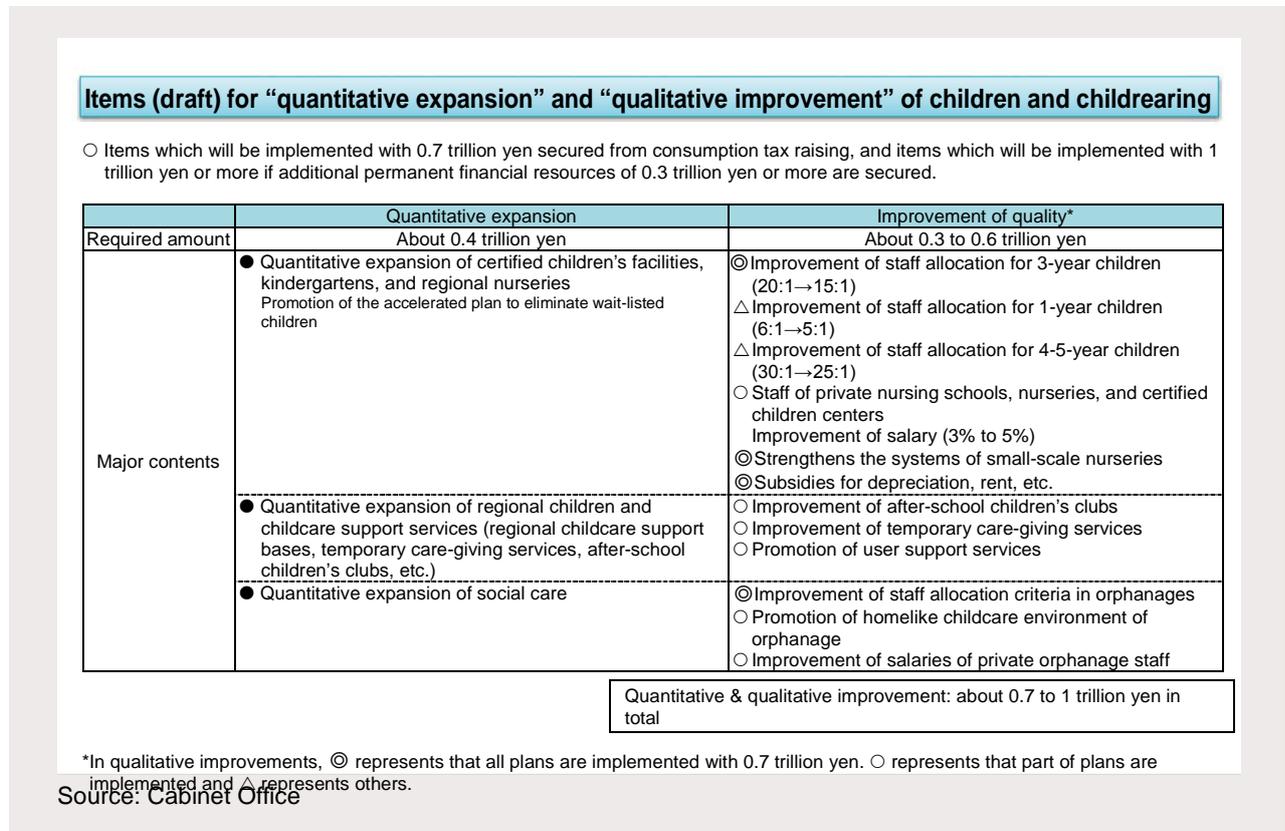
Specifically, of the 2.8 trillion yen (total of nation and local regions) which will be allocated to the enhancement of social security due to the rise in the consumption tax rate to 10% to be implemented, about 0.7 trillion yen will be allocated to the new system so as to enhance further support for early childhood education, nursing and childcare in the regions.

In addition, the “Confirmation Note on the Integrated Reform of the Social Insurance and Tax Systems” as well as in the additional resolution to the three acts related to children and childcare points out that about 1 trillion yen is needed in order to enhance both the quality and quantity of early childhood education, childcare and childcare support and require the government to make a maximum effort to secure another 0.3 trillion yen, apart from 0.7 trillion yen secured by a rise in the consumption tax.

The specific use of the budget was coordinated in March 2014 through discussions in the children and childrearing meetings. To meet the quantitative expansion to increase nursery schools, about 0.4 trillion yen would be allocated for the “Acceleration plan for Reducing Wait-listed children”; and to meet the qualitative improvement, about 0.3 trillion yen would be allocated, if the financial resources of about 0.7 trillion yen are secured by the consumption tax increase to 10%, or about 0.6 trillion yen would be allocated if the financial resources of 1 trillion yen or more including the consumption tax are secured. If 0.7 trillion yen is secured for “qualitative improvement,” it would be used for an improvement of treatment (+3%) of workers in kindergartens, nursery schools and certified daycare centers; and improvement of staff-allocation in charge of three year old children (20:1 to 15:1). If 1 trillion yen or more including a raised consumption tax is secured, workers treatment would be increased by +5%; staff-allocation in charge of

one year old children would be improved (6:1 to 5:1); and staff-allocation in charge of 4 and 5 year old children would be improved (30:1 to 25:1).

Fig. 1-2-6 Quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement



Although a consumption tax increase to 10% was prolonged to April 2017, necessary budgets for implementing quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement were allocated in the fiscal 2015 budget, because Children and Childrearing Support was considered to be a priority issue to address in social security policies. The amount was adequate as scheduled for such expansion and improvement to be implemented when about 0.7 trillion yen is secured from the consumption tax increase to 10%.

(User Charges)

The new system stipulates that user charges shall be decided by considering household incomes and other conditions, and that responsible municipalities shall decide user charges within the limit that the nation set forth on the basis of the conventional charges for using kindergartens and nursery schools. Fig. 1-2-7 shows user charges that have been decided by the nation based on the day-care fees of conventional private nursery schools. They have been set: 1) for children whom certified standard education hours are given (level 1 certification), incentives for conventional kindergarten enrollment are taken into consideration, and 2) for children whom certified nursing hours are given (level 2 and 3 certifications), day-care fees based on conventional nursery school operating expenses are taken into consideration. The benefits for level 1, 2 and 3 are the same regardless of the kinds of facilities and operations.

Fig. 1-2-7 Amount of user charges

○ Upper limits of user's burden established by the state [prefectural] based on FY 2015 budget) are as follows:

Children certified for standard education hours (Class 1 certification)

Classification	User's burden
(1) Households on welfare	0 yen
(2) Municipal inhabitant tax-exempt households (Including households exempted from tax on a per income-levy)	3,000 yen
(3) Municipal inhabitant tax on a per income-levy: less than 77,100 yen	16,100 yen
(4) Municipal inhabitant tax on a per income-levy: less than 211,200 yen	20,500 yen
(5) Municipal inhabitant tax on a per income-levy: 211,200 yen or more	25,700 yen

*The burden of users with 3rd-grade students or under, is half for their second child and zero for their third child.

*However, the subsidies are limited within the benefit unit amount.

*In private kindergartens and certified children centers, whose nursing fees of the FY 2014 are lower than users' burdens determined by municipalities, each facility can decide the user's burden based on the current level. (Transitional measures)

○ The burden of single parent households, households with a child with disability, and others (recognized by the head of municipalities that they are particularly poor, or requiring public assistance under Public Assistance Act), is zero for their Class 2 child, and 1,000 yen deduction from the above amount for their Class 3 child.

Children certified for nursing (Class 2 certification: 3 years old and over) (Class 3 certification: less than 3 years old)

Classification	User's burden		User's burden	
	Standard nursing hours	Short nursing hours	Standard nursing hours	Short nursing hours
(1) Households on welfare	0 yen	0 yen	0 yen	0 yen
(2) Municipal inhabitant tax free households	6,000 yen	6,000 yen	9,000 yen	9,000 yen
(3) Tax on a per income-levy is less than 48,600 yen	16,500 yen	16,300 yen	19,500 yen	19,300 yen
(4) Tax on a per income-levy is less than 97,000 yen	27,000 yen	26,600 yen	30,000 yen	29,600 yen
(5) Tax on a per income-levy is less than 169,000 yen	41,500 yen	40,900 yen	44,500 yen	43,900 yen
(6) Tax on a per income-levy is less than 301,000 yen	58,000 yen	57,100 yen	61,000 yen	60,100 yen
(7) Tax on a per income-levy is less than 397,000 yen	77,000 yen	75,800 yen	80,000 yen	78,800 yen
(8) Tax on a per income-levy is more than 397,000 yen	101,000 yen	99,400 yen	104,000 yen	102,400 yen

*When a child with Class 2 certification reaches 3 years old, Class 3 certification is applied to the user's burden.

*The burden of users with pre-school children who use specified education/nursing facilities is half for their second child and zero for their third child.

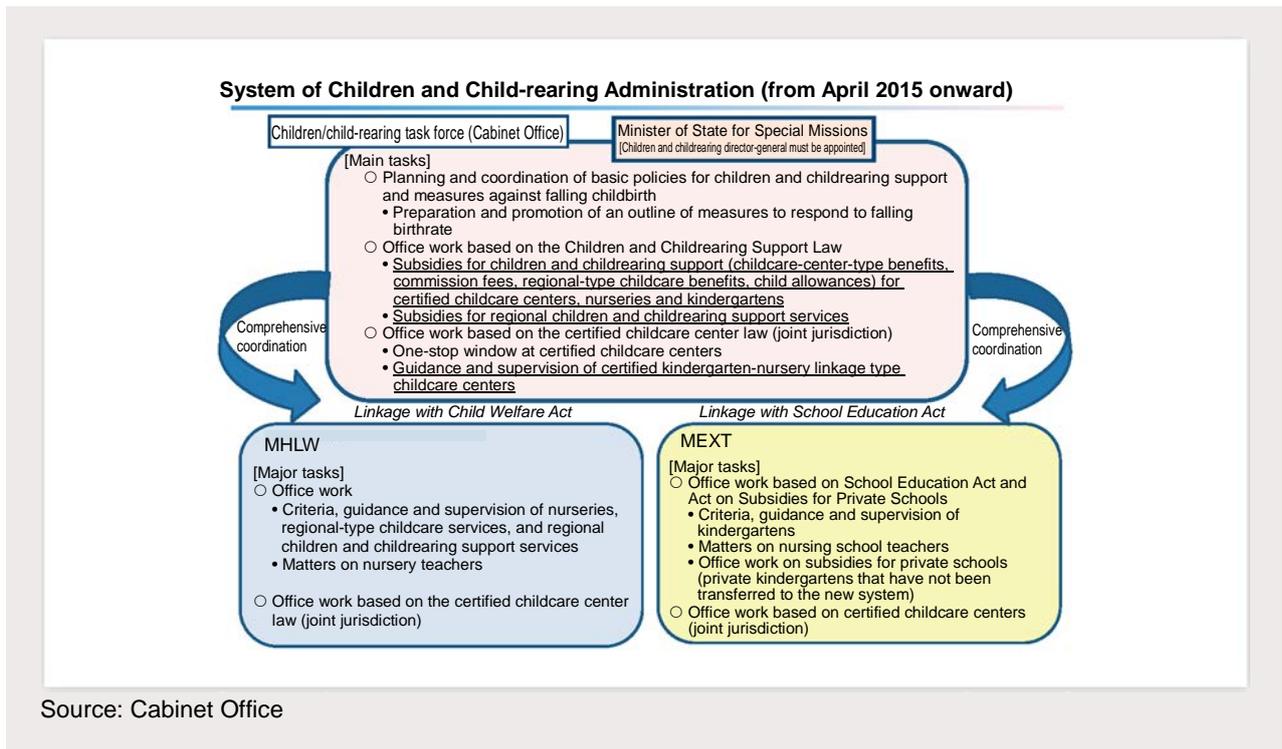
*However, the subsidies are limited within the benefit unit amount.

Source: Cabinet Office

(Implementation System)

Along with the enforcement of Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing on April 2015, Children and Child-rearing Administration have been installed in the Cabinet Office. Under the Director-General, the Minister of State for Special Missions, the headquarters make comprehensive planning and coordination of the measures against the declining birth rate and the children and childrearing support policies, from the standpoint of unifying various policies of administrative branches. They also play a central role to provide financial support for childrearing, including benefits and child-care allowances, based on the Children and Childrearing Support Law, and co-manage the system of certified children centers with MEXT and MHLW.

Fig. 1-2-8 Children/child-rearing task force



Source: Cabinet Office

Section 3 New Efforts for Countermeasures to Declining Birthrate [Special Edition]

To overcome a population declining problem, “Long-Term Vision for Overcoming Population Declines and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan” and “Comprehensive Strategy for Overcoming Population Declines and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan” were formulated in December 2014, and New Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate was decided in March 2015 in the cabinet meeting, thus new efforts have been proceeded to stop the declining birth rate. The newly formulated Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate and the regional revitalization policy are closely co-related, and should be proceeded hand-in-hand to fulfill the hope of young people for marriage, child birth, and childrearing. This section describes the both policies.

Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate

An Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (hereinafter referred to as “Outline”) based on the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate is a guideline to tackle the declining birth rate from a comprehensive and long-term perspective. The Outline was formulated twice in June 2004 and January 2010 (the latter was titled “Children and Childrearing Vision”).

Because the Outline formulated in January 2010 was supposed to be reviewed in about five years from the establishment, and because the Basic Policies 2014 stipulates that a new Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate shall be formulated within 2014, “a review meeting for formulating a New Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate” consisting of experts was held in November 2014 under the Minister of State for Special Missions (in charge of measures against declining birth rates). The review meeting held a public hearing to obtain the opinions from people concerned and general public, and summarized in March 2015 “proposals toward formulation of a New Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate.” The proposals were seriously taken, examined and adjusted by the government from the comprehensive standpoint, and formed into a new Outline on March 20, 2015. The new Outline and the concept of its background are described below.

[Introduction]

The currently developing low birth rate has a great influence on individuals, communities, industries and the nation, so serious that it could shake the very foundation of Japanese social economy. According to the estimation of Population Projections for Japan (January 2012) of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, if the current birth rate persists as it is, Japan’s population will be about 87 million in 2060 (two thirds of the current population); people 65 years old or older will account for about 40% of all; and the ratio of the productive population (15 to 64 years old) versus the elderly population (65 years old or older) will be 1.3 to 1. According to the estimation of National Land Grand Design 2050 - Formation of Convection Promotion Type National Land (MLIT, July 2014), if the population decrease progresses as it is, the population will be less than half of the current population in more than 60% of residential areas in 2050, 20% of which will be ghost towns. Especially, the productive population decline (15 to 64 years old) will dwarf the economy and market scale and lower the economic growth, giving a great impact on industrial activity. According to one estimation, the population will decrease by about one million (about more than 1%) in every year in the 2040’s onwards. If the productivity growth rate remains low as it is, it would be difficult for Japan to continue a positive economic growth as a whole economy.

In contrast, France and Sweden have taken continuous long-term measures (family support measures) against declining birth rates, achieving the recovery to 2.0 of the birth rate that had declined before (see Fig. 1-1-19). Declining birth rates can thus be overcome.

The slower we take measures against the low birth rate, the greater the influence on the future. We need to tackle immediately and intensively to change the trend because it takes a long time to produce actual effects. The measures against the declining birth rate should be proceeded perseveringly from a long-term perspective. Also we need to build a friendly society that values marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing.

[Basic concept]

The new Outline includes the following 5 items as fundamental concepts.

Fig. 1-2-9

Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (summary)

- Aiming to build a friendly society for marriage, pregnancy, children, and childrearing -

Basic concept - New phase of measures against the falling birthrate -

- (1) Review of entire society and further improvement of measures to make marriage and childrearing easy
- (2) Setting of basic targets toward society where individuals fulfill their hope for marriage and having children
*Keep in mind that specific values and pressure should not be forced against individuals' decisions
- (3) Refined response by combining "seamless support for each stage of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing" and "efforts of regions and companies as a whole society"
- (4) Designates the future 5-years as "an intensive effort period", defines important tasks, and inputs policies effectively and intensively
- (5) Distributes large resources to children and promotes continuous and comprehensive measures from the long-term perspective

Source: Cabinet Office

(1) Rethink about society as a whole and enrich the measures against the falling birthrate more than ever to create an environment friendly for marriage and childrearing.

- So far the measures against the falling birthrate were promoted by focusing mainly on childrearing. Beyond the conventional framework, additional supports for marriage and education should be newly provided to enrich the measures against the falling birthrate. Also it is necessary to rethink whether systems in every sector in society is providing a friendly environment for marriage and childrearing.

(2) Set a fundamental goal toward a friendly society where individuals can realize their wish to marry and have a child.

- In light of the proposal from the review meeting, basic objectives of the measures against the falling birthrate have been defined as environmental improvement and creation of a friendly society, where people can fulfill their hope and marry when they want to, thereby reducing the difference between the ideal number of children and the number of live births. If an environment where people can realize their hope for having and nurturing children safely is created, and the number of children is increased as desired, the objectives to prevent the falling birthrate will be satisfied. Needless to say, because marriage and childbirth depend on individuals' decision, other people should not push their sense of value or apply pressure.

(3) Meet individual needs by combining the seamless support for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing in each stage and the community- and business-wide efforts.

- The low birth rate is caused by complicated factors: never married, late married, the first childbirth at older age (see Figs. 1-1-4 to 1-1-7), long working hours (see Fig. 1-1-16), a feeling of isolation and large burden during childrearing. So, it is required to support individuals seamlessly in each life stage, and the administration, communities and businesses need to tackle the measures against the low birth rate as a whole.

(4) Set up a period for intensive efforts and to make a commitment to the policies.

- The slower we take measures against the low birth rate, the greater the influence on the future. If we intensively tackle the issue at once, the trend in the falling birthrate can be changed. Therefore, we should define the future 5-years as “a period for intensive efforts for preventing the falling birth rate,” review the effects of the past policies, specify the top priority issues, and input the policies into the measures effectively and intensively through selection and concentration.

(5) Promote continuous, comprehensive measures against the falling birthrate from the long-term perspective.

- In France, Sweden and other countries where the birth rate has been recovered (see Fig. 1-1-19), continuous and comprehensive measures (family support policies) have been taken over a long time, and the family-related expenditures against GDP is about 3% or more (see Fig. 1-1-20). A simple comparison cannot be made due to the difference in the rate of citizens’ burden, but by referring to their measures, we should secure/increase financial resources necessary to carry out the long-term measures against the falling birthrate. Especially, “in-kind benefits” need to be increased to improve childrearing support.
- It is also important to convert the social security system to an across-the-generation type in order to provide all generations with a sense of relief and understanding toward childcare support. The tax system should be reviewed to include the childcare support and give consideration to the measures against the falling birthrate.

[Key challenges]

The Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate includes the following 5 key challenges.

Fig. 1-2-10

Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Summary)

- Creation of a friendly society for marriage, pregnancy, children, and childrearing – (continued)

Important tasks

1. Further improvement of childrearing support measures

○ Smooth implementation of “the new children and childrearing support system”

- “Quantitative and qualitative improvement” by securing financial resources
 - Planned improvement of childrearing support facilities and programs according to the situations of urban and regional areas
- ⇒ Enforced from April 2015: “quantitative expansion” by securing childcare facilities, and “qualitative enhancement” by improving nursery teachers treatment
- ⇒ Improves user support services, regional childrearing bases, temporary childcare-giving, and various childcares according to regional situations
- ⇒ Further effort for “qualitative improvement”

○ Reducing Wait-listed children

- “Plan for accelerated Reducing Wait-listed children” and “securing nursing teachers”
- ⇒ Improves certified children centers, nurseries and kindergartens to accept more children. Secures nursery teachers by improving their treatment and develops human resources.
- ⇒ Aims at complete Reducing Wait-listed children by FY 2017

○ Breakthrough of “the barrier on the 1st grade school children”

- “Comprehensive after-school children plan”
- ⇒ Increases the capacity of after-school children’s clubs to accept 300,000 children by FY 2019, the rule of which has been changed to accept up to 6th graders from up to the 3rd graders

2. Realization of young people’s hope for marriage and childbirth

○ Stabilization of economic base

- Stabilization of young people’s employment
- ⇒ Development of legislation to promote young people’s employment measures
- Promotion of economic assistance for young generations by older generations

⇒ Establishment of free tax systems for lump-sum gifts for education, marriage, and childrearing
- Mitigation of economic burdens of the young and low-income earners

○ Support for marriage

- Support for marriage by municipalities and chambers of commerce and industry
- ⇒ Support for municipalities and chambers of commerce and industry, which create and promote opportunities for young people’s encounter, etc.

3. Consideration to multiple child families

○ Mitigation of burdens of childrearing, nursing, education and housing

- ⇒ Expands free and preferential use of kindergartens and nurseries

○ Promotion of preferential treatment for multiple child families by municipalities, companies, public transportation, etc.

- ⇒ Promotes support for multiple child families under “a childcare support passport program”, which supplies advantageous service for those taking their children

4. Change in the way of working of men and women

○ Change in men’s awareness and behavior

- Correction of long work hours
- ⇒ Development of legislation to reduce long work hours
- Management’s awareness change in conducting personnel evaluation, etc.

⇒ Considers an evaluation method for supervisors who support childrearing subordinates
- Holidays for men to raise a child just after childbirth

⇒ Promotes introduction of companies’ holiday systems to encourage childrearing

○ “Work-life balance” and “Women’s success”

- Improves work environment and promotes various ways of working
- ⇒ Promotes flex-time and telework
- Supports women’s continuous employment and career-up

⇒ “Law to Promote Women in Workplace”

5. Reinforcement of measures according to regional situations

○ Measures taking advantage of regional “strong points”

- Supports regional measures by “the grant for regional effort reinforcement against falling birthrate”
- Nationwide publication of advanced examples

○ Measures linked with “regional revitalization”

- Measures through cooperation between the country and districts

Source: Cabinet Office

(1) Further improvement of childcare facilities

In the drastically changing childrearing environment due to the growing number of nuclear families and dual-income households, diversified ways of working, and fading cooperation among communities, the most important are to further improve children and childrearing support, respond to various needs of the childrearing families, and ensure children's sound growth. Strong support for the childrearing generation will lead to fulfilling their desire to have children, and provide the young generation with a hope and

dream of marriage, child birth, and childcare. So, Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing should be operated smoothly, and quantitative expansion and qualitative enhancement should be promoted to ensure child education, nursing, childrearing, and Reducing Wait-listed children according to the regional situations and citizens' needs.

<Examples of specific measures>

- The “Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing” should be implemented smoothly to expand child education, nursing and childcare support quantitatively (Reducing Wait-listed children and offer of careful childcare support), and enhance qualitatively (staff allocation and improvement of treatment). Municipalities should, according to their plans, situations and citizens' needs, improve the support system, support projects, regional childrearing support bases, and various ways of nursing such as a temporarily custody, extended day care and sick children's care. For these purposes, necessary financial resources of 1 trillion or more, including about 0.7 trillion yen coming from the revenue of the consumption tax, should be properly secured. (For Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing, refer to Section 2 in this chapter).
- “The plan for accelerated elimination of wait-listed children” should be promoted. To eliminate wait-listed children to meet women's desire to work, the day care facilities should be improved through regional-type childcare projects to accept about 200,000 children during 3 years from 2015 and 2017. For this purpose, “a nursery teacher securing plan” should be promoted to hire additional 69,000 by improving labor conditions and developing human resources.
- “Comprehensive after-school plan” should be carried out. To break “the barrier against primary-school first-grade children” of dual-income families and to nurture human resources who will bear the next generation, after-school children's clubs for 300,000 children should be provided by the end of 2019 to eliminate wait-listed children. Such clubs should be integrated with after-school children's classrooms.

(2) Improvement of an environment where young people can fulfill their hope to marry and have a child

The major causes of the falling birthrate are a rising age in the first marriage and first childbirth and increasing never married people (see Figs. 1-1-4 and 1-1-7). The rate of the never married is higher in non-regular men workers: the never married rate of regular men workers in the first half of their 30s is 36.1% while that of non-regular men workers is 70.5%. The reasons why men and women of 25 to 34 years old remain single are: “there are no suitable person to marry” (46.2% of men, 51.3% of women), “need not to get married” (31.2% of men, 30.4% of women), “do not want to lose free and easygoing lifestyle” (25.5% of men, 31.1% of women), and “short of money for marriage” (30.3% of men, 16.5% of women) (source: the 14th basic survey on childbirth trend of National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. Three items were selected from among all questions).

In the same survey, 60% of all say the reason for not have the ideal number of children that “it takes too much money for childrearing and education,” especially 83.3% of wives less than 30 years old replied so, and 76.0% of wives at 30 to 34 years old replied so. The age and physical reason that they want to have a child but do not want to give birth at older age has been increasing along with the rising age of wives.

Although about 90% of the 18-34 year old never married want to marry, they cannot fulfill the hope by the above reasons. Especially, the young do not have the ideal number of children for an economic reason and those in their 30th or over do not the ideal number of children for an age and physical reason, either. Therefore, it is necessary to stabilize young people's economic basis, support their hope for marriage, and create a friendly environment for marriage and child birth.

<Example of specific measures>

- To stabilize young people's economic basis, it is necessary to promote young people's employment by taking measures against non-regular employment; enforcing a tax-free system on lump-sum gifts given for education, marriage and childrearing so that the older generation can help the younger generation; and lightening the economic burden on the young and low-income earners. (See Column: Tax-free system involved in the gift tax imposed on lump-sum gifts for marriage and childrearing).
- Supports for local governments and Chamber of Commerce and Industry which offer various supports for marriage (see Column: “Case study of marriage support projects by local governments”).

(3) Improvement of an environment where people can have three children or more, by giving further consideration to households with many children

About 45% of married couples hope to have three children or more. The survey of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research shows that about 30% of women who were born in 1955 have three children or more while about 15% (estimation) of women who were born in 1975 have the same number of children. In the survey, 71.1% of all say as the reason for not have the ideal number of three children or more that it costs too much money for childrearing and education. Thus, an economic reason is the biggest not to have the third child or subsequent. The government has been supporting the households with three children or more to mitigate the burden of education and nursing fees (half the amount for the second child; free for the third child), and has been increasing the amounts of child allowances for the third child and subsequent children. As a whole society, more efforts are needed to improve the environment where people can have three children or more by lightening various burdens of childrearing, nursing, education, and housing, and by giving consideration to households with many children.

<Examples of specific measures>

- Mitigating various burdens of childrearing, nursing, education, and housing; making childcare fees free in kindergartens and nursing schools for the third and subsequent children; giving priority to the households with the third and subsequent children to use nursing schools; and considering housing policies for the households with many children.
- Giving more consideration to households with many children through a childrearing passport project or reduction in public transportation fees. Thus all members of the society should give consideration to them.

(4) Changing the way of working of men and women

One of the causes of the falling birthrate (see Fig. 1-1-17) is fewer hours of men's involvement in housework and childcare (see Fig. 1-1-18). Because 17.0% of men in their 30's work 60 hours or more per week (see Fig. 1-1-16), it is crucial to change the way of working and consciousness. Creating an environment, where parents can nurture children while working in various lifestyles, will enable them to fulfill their hope for having children without choosing either work or childcare, which will bring them economic stability.

So, it is necessary to change executives' and managers' consciousness so as to reduce long-work hours and review personnel evaluation systems; make it easy for men to take a childcare leave from immediately after childbirth; change men's consciousness and behavior; and promote a "work-life-balance" and "women's participation and advancement in the workplace."

<Examples of specific measures>

- Creating corporate culture in which "IKUBOSS" (entrepreneurs and managers who can give subordinates due consideration to their work-life balance) and "childrearing" are respected, by changing the way of working; reducing long-work hours; promoting paid childcare leave; and changing executives and managers consciousness for personnel evaluation systems. Also ensuring the acquisition of men's childcare leave from immediately after childbirth (including a company specific holiday system and annual paid vacation system for childcare) to promote men's housework and childrearing.
- Promoting a flex time system to help parents balance work and family-life; prohibiting disadvantageous treatment for the reason of childcare; ensuring a smooth return from a childcare leave; supporting fixed-term and non-regular employees; and promoting telework.
- Promoting women's participation and advancement in the workplace by improving the legal framework; assisting women to work continuously before and after pregnancy and childbirth regardless of regular or non-regular; and helping them to be reemployed during childrearing.

(5) Strengthening efforts according to regional situations

The causes and situations of the falling birthrate are different between urban and rural areas (see Fig. 1-1-2). Marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing are essential for people's life. To tackle measures against the falling birthrate effectively, it is important that communities should take the initiative according to the actual situations. So, they should take advantage of their strong points in support efforts by utilizing Grants for Enhanced Regional Measures for Falling Birthrate, and rolling out their pioneering case studies around the country. Because the measures against the falling birthrate are very

important for revitalization of local regions, the measures and the local region revitalization policies should be combined closely in cooperation with the central and local government.

[Detailed measures against falling birthrate]

In addition to the above key challenges, the Outline stipulates that the measures shall be promoted comprehensively and intensively from the long-term perspective in order to:

- 1) Support individuals’ marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing, and
- 2) Promote the measures against the falling birthrate in a whole society

The above are two pillars of policies.

Fig. 1-2-11 Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Summary)
- Creation of a friendly society for marriage, pregnancy, children, and childrearing – (continued)

Promotion of refined measures against declining birthrate

1. Support for each stage

- **Marriage**
 - Information provision for a life plan
⇒ Provides information and counseling on marriage, childcare, life plans, education and career development, etc.
- **Pregnancy and childbirth**
 - Improves “childrearing generation support centers”
⇒ Improves one-stop centers which provide comprehensive counseling and seamless support from pregnancy to childrearing
 - Mitigation of burdens during maternity leave
⇒ Income compensation with maternity allowances and exemption of social insurance premiums
 - Improves postpartum care
⇒ Formulation of postpartum care guidelines
 - Prevention against maternity and paternity harassments
⇒ Dissemination and reinforcement of guidance to companies
 - Improves perinatal care
- **Childrearing**
 - Mitigation of economic burden ⇒ stepwise implementation of free child education
 - Promotes 3-generations co-residence, neighborhood residence and pediatric care
 - Improves regional safety ⇒ Protects children from accidents and victimization by crime
 - Supports children with disorders or in poverty and families with a child with disability
⇒ Support for children with disorders and single parent families, anti-poverty programs, child abuse prevention, etc.
- **Education**
 - Provides medical and scientific knowledge of pregnancy and childbirth ⇒ describes in textbooks and trains school teachers
- **Work**
 - Promotion of regular employment and improvement of labor conditions
 - Presentation of role models
⇒ Presentation of role models, such as working/not working while childrearing or playing an active role in regions
 - Job creation linked with “regional revitalization”

2. Promotion of measures against falling birthrate by society as a whole

- **Creation of warmhearted society for marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing**
 - Dissemination of maternity marks and stroller sign
 - Nationwide development of a childrearing support passport program
- **Measures of companies**
 - “Visualization” of companies’ measures against falling birthrate and support for work-life balance, and information sharing of advanced examples
⇒ Formulation of action plans based on The Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children
 - Incentives through commendation and “Kurumin” mark

Source: Cabinet Office