

## **1) Support for individuals' marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing in each stage**

### **(Marriage)**

To realize a hope for marriage, comprehensive support is important, in addition to “stable economic basis” and “support for marriage” as mentioned in Key Challenges. Information on marriage and childrearing should be provided in an easy-to-understand and effective way through education and counseling, so that individuals can make a concrete and practical plan for marriage, childbirth, and work-and-childcare balance. Also, awareness of the importance of family and community should be raised through “Family’s day” (the third Sunday in November) and “Family’s week” (one week before and after Family’s day”).

### **(Pregnancy and childbirth)**

It is important to improve an environment where women can become pregnant and give birth safely and at ease with fewer risk of mother’s body and fetus. “The comprehensive childrearing generation support center” should be improved to provide better perinatal and postpartum care and seamless support from pregnancy to childrearing to reduce the burden during maternity leave. It should be a one-stop station, where the public health nurses and specialists can grasp the situation of every pregnant woman, give advice on various needs from pregnancy to childrearing, and prepare support plans as needed.

Also, prohibitive measures against maternity harassment are required so that women can continue to work at ease during pregnancy and after childbirth.

The infertility treatment centers should be improved to provide advice and counseling on infertility and recurrent-pregnancy-loss treatments, and supply subsidies to mitigate the economic burden of infertility treatment.

### **(Childrearing)**

One of the factors of the falling birthrate is significant anxiety about childrearing. Therefore, as mentioned in Key Challenges, various efforts are needed to support childrearing and give consideration to the households with many children under Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing.

Because the reason for not having the ideal number of children is that it costs much money for childrearing and education, it is needed to mitigate the economic burden of childrearing and education; give child allowances and free child education; support the school attendance of high-school students; and reduce education expenses in higher education.

Also it is needed to promote child- and grandchild-rearing by promoting co- or next-door residence of three generations; get help from various entities such as NPOs or companies; and improve the environment where children can grow safe and healthy by improving housing, pediatric medicine and making communities safe.

Other measures include prevention of child abuse and protective care, and support for children in poverty, single mothers/fathers, children with disabilities, NEETs, hikikomori children and orphans.

### **(Education)**

To make a future plan for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing, the young should acquire necessary knowledge and information in a proper stage in life. There is a survey showing that the Japanese have poorer knowledge of suitable childbearing ages than those in other developed countries. To fulfill young people’s hope for having and raising children, it is necessary to provide them with medical and scientific education on pregnancy and childbirth at home, school and community; train school teachers; and provide graduates with such knowledge in occasions of marriage notification submit or the coming of age ceremony. (See Column: “Dissemination and enlightenment on medical and scientific knowledge of infertility treatment, pregnancy and childbirth”)

### **(Work)**

It is important to improve the environment, where people can work whenever and in whatever way if they want to after marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing. It is necessary to promote full-time employment if they wish; provide proper labor conditions; show a role model in which people continue to work while having children; and create jobs in local regions in concert with “local region revitalization policies.”

## **2) Promoting the measures against the falling birthrate by society as a whole**

(Creation of friendly society for marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing)

Warm eyes and helping hand of surrounding people in communities and workplaces can lead to creating a friendly society where people can marry, become pregnant, and raise children at ease.

It is also necessary to spread barrier-free areas; remove obstacles for easy outing of pregnant women and mothers with children; install maternity marks and stroller sign; offer services in stations and shopping streets to encourage mothers and children to go out; and give consideration to persons with children in the public transportation. The administration, shopping streets, and companies should cooperate with each other to offer preferential service to persons with children, thus creating a friendly environment across the country.

(Companies efforts)

Companies should take measures against the falling birthrate in concert with local governments and NPOs to improve the environment where employees can marry and have children while working. They should utilize The Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children, and make the measures transparent by sharing and disseminating both information and advanced cases among companies, for which incentives should be given. (See Column: Extension and expansion of The Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children, and Case studies in companies).

### **[Policy promotion system]**

During the period of intensive efforts against the falling birthrate, the government is to tackle the measures promptly and intensively under the leadership of the Prime Minister. To follow-up the progress, numerical targets for individual measures to be achieved by 2020 have been set. The validation and evaluation of the achievement will be visualized to the public for easy-to-understanding. The main numerical targets are shown in Fig. 1-2-12.

Fig. 1-2-12

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

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

#### Basic goal

Creating a friendly environment/society where people can realize hopes to marry when they want to and the difference between the numbers of children they want to have and actually bear can be reduced.

#### Numerical targets of measures (for the year 2020)

##### Childrearing support

<input type="checkbox"/> Admission capacity of certified nurseries:	<b>2.67 million children</b> (for FY 2017)	(2.34 million in April 2014)
⇒Wait-listed children	<b>Aims to eliminate</b> (for the end of FY 2017)	(21,371 children in April 2014)
<input type="checkbox"/> After-school children's clubs:	<b>1.22 million children</b>	(0.94 million in May 2015)
⇒Wait-listed children	<b>Aims to eliminate</b> (for the end of FY 2019)	(9,945 in May 2014)
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional childrearing support base services:	<b>8,000 places</b>	(6,233 places in FY 2013)
<input type="checkbox"/> User support services:	<b>1,800 places</b>	(291 places in FY 2014)
<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary childcare-giving services:	<b>11.34 million persons in total</b>	(4.06 million in total in FY 2013)
<input type="checkbox"/> Sick and convalescent children:	<b>1.5 million in total</b>	(0.52 million in total in FY 2013)
<input type="checkbox"/> Home visit childcare support services:	<b>All municipalities</b>	(1,225 municipalities in April 2013)
<input type="checkbox"/> Childrearing generation general support centers:	<b>Nationwide development</b>	Percentage of support for expectant or nursing mothers: <b>100%</b>

##### Change in the way of working of men and women (work-life balance)

- Percentage of holiday acquisition by husbands just after childbirth: **80%** (-)
- Percentage of childcare leave acquisition by husbands: 13% (2.03% in FY 2013)
- Percentage of women's continued working before and after the first childbirth: **55%** (38.0% in 2010)

##### Education

- Percentage of people who have medical and scientific knowledge of pregnancy and childbirth: **70%** (34% in 2009). Note: Average in developed countries: about 64%

##### Marriage and regions

- The number of municipalities which are carrying out comprehensive measures against falling birthrate corresponding to each stage of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing: **more than 70%** (243 municipalities) (about 14% at the end of 2011)

##### Measures of companies

- The number of shops participating in a childrearing support passport program: **0.44 million** (0.22 million in 2011)

##### Warmhearted society for marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing

- Percentage of people who think we are heading toward a comfortable society for marriage, pregnancy, children and childrearing: **50%** (19.4% in FY 2013)

■ represents new targets

Source: Cabinet Office

## Revitalization of Local Regions (Overcoming Population Declines and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan)

Our country's population is estimated to decrease more rapidly in the future, with the peak in 2008, but the degree and factors vary in area to area. In the local regions where the birthrate is low and young people are migrating to three metropolitan areas, mainly to Tokyo, the youth population (0 to 14 years old) has been decreasing rapidly and even the number of elderly people is falling. The birthrate is relatively lower in urban areas than in rural areas (See Fig. 1-1-2). The overconcentration of the young into large cities is propelling the decline in the total population in our country. If rural areas wane, the young people's outflow from rural to urban areas will decrease, ending up in deterioration of the both areas.

To cope with the pressing issue, the overconcentration in Tokyo should be resolved, and local regions should make active efforts according to their characteristics to realize the young generation's hope for employment, marriage, and childrearing.

Upon the start of the reshuffled second Abe cabinet on September, 2014, the Minister in Charge of Regional Revitalization was newly appointed, and "Headquarters for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy" was established in the cabinet meeting. Also, based on "Act for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy" (Act No.136 of 2014) enacted in November 2014, "Long-Term Vision for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy" (hereinafter referred to as "Long-term vision") and "Comprehensive Strategy for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy" (hereinafter referred to as "Comprehensive strategy") were established on December 27, 2014 in the cabinet meeting).

### **(Long-Term Vision for Overcoming Population Declines and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan)**

"The long-term vision," showing our country's population and a future image, aims to raise a shared awareness of population declining among all people, and indicates a future direction to be addressed. To tackle an urgent issue of the falling birthrate, it highlights three key points: 1) correction of overconcentration in Tokyo, 2) realization of young people's hope for employment, marriage and childrearing, and 3) solution of local problems according to their characteristics.

In "the future direction to be addressed," the long-term vision emphasizes the "Japan's dynamic society should be kept toward the future," posting that countermeasures should be taken to stop the declining population.

It shows that if the young people's hopes are realized, the birthrate will rise to about 1.8, and that if it recovers up to a population replacement level (2.07) in 2030-2040, the total population will be maintained at about 0.1 billion in 2060, and thereafter the population will be steady in 2090.

### **(Comprehensive Strategy for Overcoming Population Declines and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan)**

"The comprehensive strategy" summarizes future 5-year objectives, basic direction, and specific measures beginning from 2015, and the attached paper of "action plans (a process chart for each measure)" includes "objectives to be achieved through each measure" and "urgent efforts to be made in 2015 and 2016 onwards."

#### **[Basic objectives]**

The comprehensive strategy lists five basic objectives; each has a policy package which sets the specific goals and the key performance indicators (KPI) to be achieved up to 2020. The basic objectives indicate the measures against the falling birthrate, including young people's economic stability, change in the way of working, and seamless support for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and childrearing, thus aiming at "realization of young people's hope for marriage, childbirth, and childrearing."

The following are targets to be achieved by 2020:

- 40% or more feel that a society where young people can easily marry, become pregnant, give birth, and raise children has been achieved (19.4% in 2013)
- The rate of continued employment of women before and after the first child birth is 55% (38% in 2010)
- Performance index of the young who wish to marry is 80% (68% in 2010)
- Performance index of married couples who have achieved the planned number of children is 95% (93% in 2010)

### **[Policy packages]**

Based on the comprehensive strategy, the country has prepared support policies called “policy packages,” under which local regions can formulate and implement “a local version of the comprehensive strategy.” The basic objectives list KPIs to be achieved by 2020, and the following four main policies to enable the young generation to fulfill their hope for marriage, childbirth and childrearing.

#### <Main policies>

- (1) Young generation’s economic stability
  - a) Promotion of measures for young people’s employment and regular employment acceleration project
  - b) Promotion of comprehensive measures for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing in each stage in concert with the Outline of Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate
- (2) Seamless support for pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing
  - Improvement of “The comprehensive childrearing generation support center” to provide perinatal care
- (3) Improvement of children and childrearing support
  - Improvement of children and childcare (smooth, continuous operation of the children and childrearing system; construction of mechanisms, in which childrearing cost is borne by the whole society including contribution of employers; step-by-step reduction of educational expenses toward free-child education by obtaining financial resources; construction of mechanisms to help the households with many children; and support for co- or next-door residence of three generations)
- (4) Coordination of work and living (work-life balance) (change in the way of working)
  - Review of long working hours and survey of job transfer (acquisition of childcare leave; reduction in overtime work; acquisition of paid annual holidays; support for companies to reduce long-working hours and disseminate such models; increase of various regular employees by limiting workplaces and jobs; review of the way of working including the survey of job transfer)

### **(Support for Local Governments)**

The regional revitalization policy intends to encourage local governments to solve the local issues according to their characteristics. The country always provides them with information, human resources, and funds so that they can promote the strategies independently on their own responsibility.

The FY 2014 supplementary budget included a grant of 420 billion yen of urgent livelihood support for regional residents. The grant consisted of 250 billion yen for regional consumption stimulation and preceding regional revitalization (170 billion yen). The former was to support the households with many children, and the latter was for the measures against the falling birthrate. The FY 2015 budget also included a grant for regional financial measures. To help the local government formulate and promote a comprehensive local version strategy, the country has been improving regional economic analyses, and dispatching national public officers, university researchers, or employees of private companies to assist mayor of municipality under “the Local Revitalization Staff Programme” and appointing counselors serving at the front under “the regional revitalizing concierge system.”