Stopping the trend of declining birthrate is an urgent challenge since the population has been declining rapidly these days in Japan. Further tangible/intangible measures should be taken by considering every steps/situation for rearing children, making all the stakeholders (e.g. individuals, companies, communities) involved in rearing children to “realize a society which is friendly to marriage, pregnancy, children, and childrearing”.

“Special Task Force to Overcome Declining Birthrate” has been held since January 2018 (which is chaired by Mr. Matsuyama, Minister of State for Special Missions of the Cabinet Office) to investigate measures that need to be taken from a wide perspective, regardless of traditional mindset, while taking existing schemes by the government into consideration.

The members of the Task Force were appointed from experts who have experience/knowledge from various backgrounds, such as academia, media, business world, NPOs, and local public bodies. In addition, presenters are invited from external sections. The discussion in the Task Force includes 1) companies providing working place, goods, and services, 2) local entities providing services for the residents, 3) urban policy and infrastructure maintenance.

As for work style reform, it was reconfirmed that the working environment should be improved to achieve better work and family balance. The importance of promoting child care leave by male workers was also emphasized. In addition, town development which is friendly to childrearing was proposed. Finally, it was suggested that people need to think from a different viewpoint, for example, increasing old people who had been “taken care” from others can “take care” families who are in the middle of childrearing.

The outcome of the Task Force is to be summarized as a proposal and the government will implement the contents which are feasible as soon as possible.

Mr. Matsuyama, Minister of State for Special Missions of the Cabinet Office (in charge of declining birthrate) is making a speech at the conference.