

# **Annual Report on the Declining Birthrate 2022 (Summary)**

**June 2022  
Cabinet Office**

This document is based on the provisions of Article 9 of the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Act No. 133 of 2003), and it is intended to make a report on the general situation of the declining birthrate and an overview of the measures taken to address the declining birthrate.

**This report is submitted to the Diet each year in line with the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate. This is the 19<sup>th</sup> edition.**

<The Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate> (Act No. 133 of 2003)  
Article 9 The government must submit to the Diet each year a report concerning the state of the declining birthrate and an outline of measures it has taken to deal with the declining birthrate.

## **Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate**

### Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

1. Trends and projections of Japan's total population and demographic structure
2. Trends in the number of live births and birthrates
3. Trends in marriage and childbirth
4. Attitudes towards marriage
5. Attitudes towards childbirth and childrearing
6. Prefectural comparison

### Chapter 2 Efforts to Deal with the Declining Birthrate

#### Section 1 Past efforts

Section 2 Current state of and countermeasures regarding the declining birthrate under the impact of COVID-19 (**Special Topic**)

## **Part 2 Implementation Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate**

### Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Creation of an environment in which the marriage and childrearing generation can envisage prospects into the future

Section 2 Responding to needs of diversified childrearing families

Section 3 Promotion of meticulous initiatives appropriate to regional circumstances

Section 4 Creation of a society friendly to marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, children and childrearing

Section 5 Enthusiastic utilization of science and technology results and new resources

### Chapter 2 Measures at each life stage

Section 1 Before marriage

Section 2 Marriage

Section 3 Pregnancy and childbirth

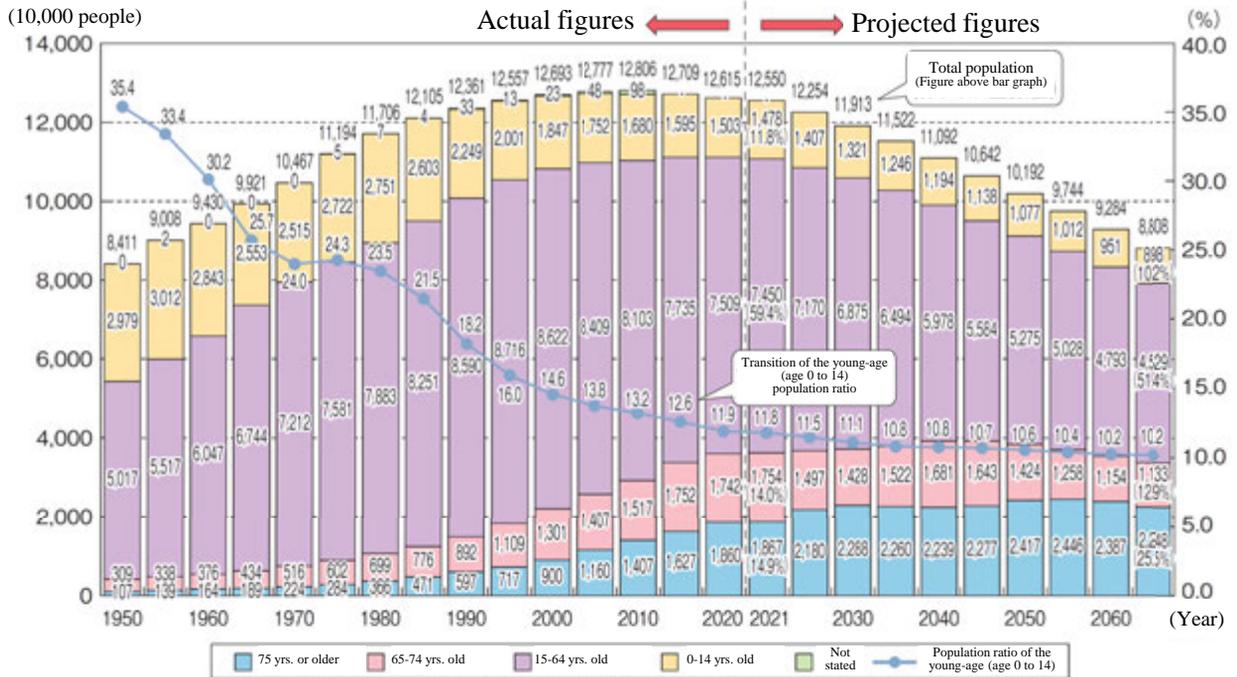
Section 4 Childrearing

## **Topics**

- Initiatives toward child-related policies
- Assistance for the fostering of regional marriage support
- Promotion of males taking childcare leave and participating in housework and childrearing
- Family Day & Family Week
- Childrearing Support Consortium
- Life design support through work and childrearing balance experiences

## Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

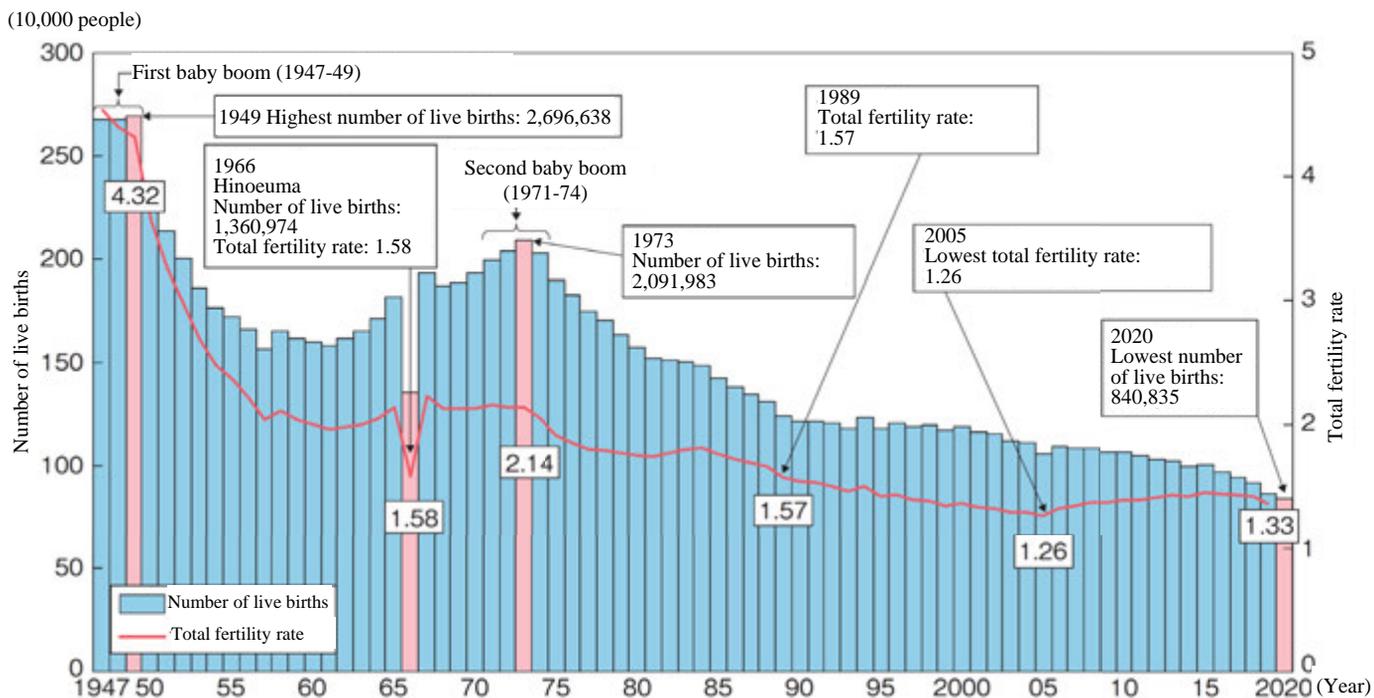
- Japan's total population was 125.5 mil. as of 2021.
- The young-age (age 0 to 14), working-age (age 15 to 64), and those aged 65 or older populations are 14.78 mil., 74.5 mil. and 36.21 mil., respectively, being equivalent to 11.8%, 59.4%, and 28.9% of the total population.



Source: The results are based on MIC's Population Census up to 2020 (for the census years 2015 and 2020 these are substituted values based on proportional distribution of missing data); and as for 2021, MIC's "Population Estimates" (as of October 1, 2021 (estimates based on the 2020 Population Census)); and as for 2025 onward, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan (the 2017 estimate) for the medium-fertility and medium-mortality projections.

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest second decimal place and shown to the first decimal place. As a result the totals of breakdowns may not add up to exactly 100% in some cases.

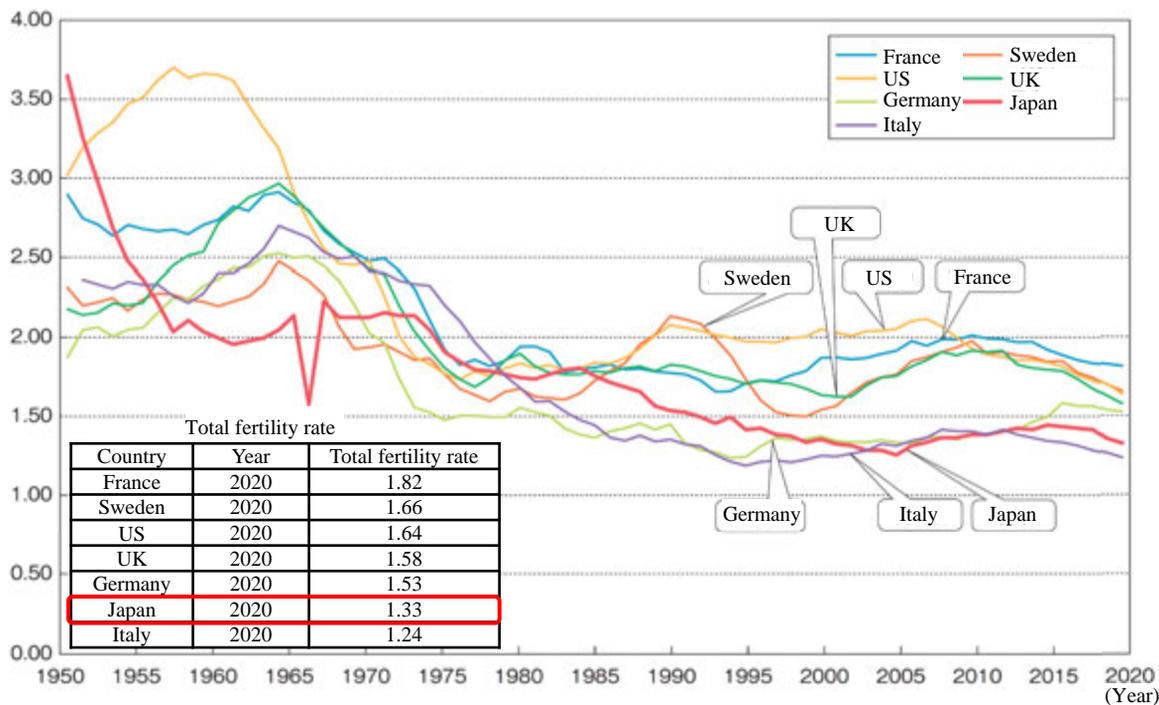
- The number of live births in 2020, which was 840,835, was the lowest on record.  
Note: This figure lies within the range of the future medium-fertility projection (902,281 people) and low-fertility projection (800,467 people) for the total population estimate.
- The total fertility rate in 2020 was 1.33, which was down by 0.03 percentage points compared to the previous year.



Source: Vital Statistics, MHLW

## Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

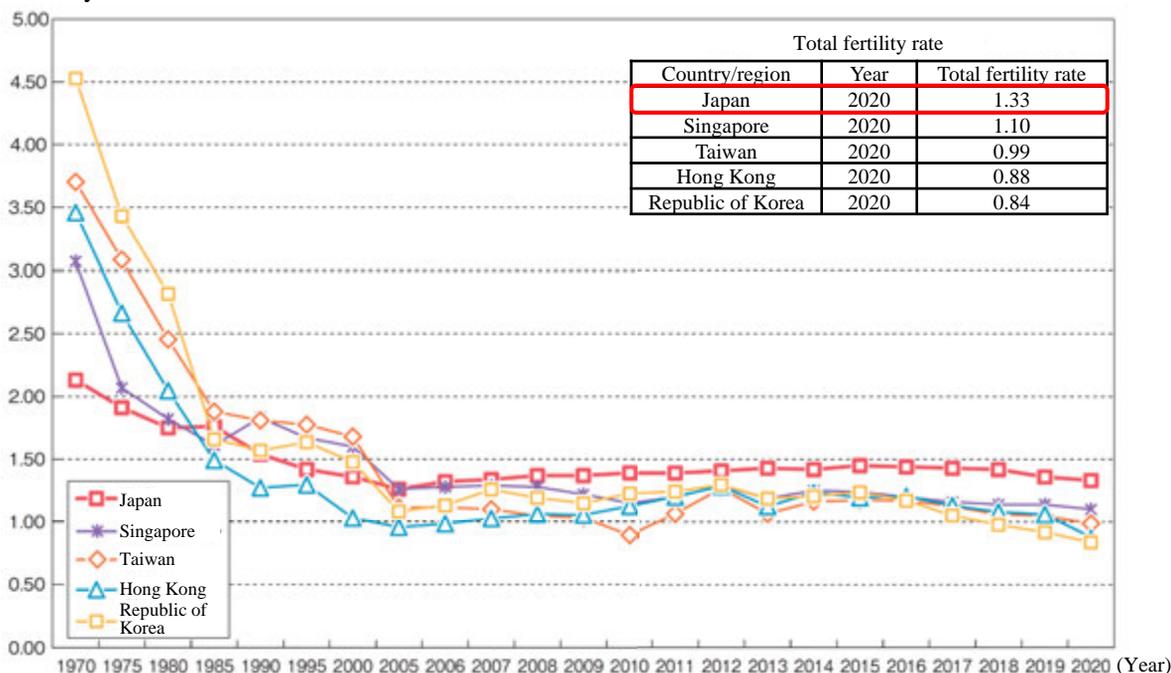
- The total fertility rate in some countries (France, Sweden, the US, the UK, Germany and Italy) declined from 1970 to around 1980 as a whole. In some countries, however, the rate recovered since around 1990. However, in those countries too, the fertility rate started to decline once more from around 2010.



Source: The numbers regarding countries other than Japan were from sources including Demographic Yearbook by the United Nations for the years up to 1959, OECD Family Database for the years between 1960 and 2019, and the statistics in each country for the year 2020. The numbers regarding Japan are based on "Vital Statistics" by the MHLW.

Note: The figures for the rate in France and the US in 2020 are provisional.

- Looking at the transition of the total fertility rate in Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Republic of Korea, among the countries and regions in Asia, all maintained a level higher than Japan as of the year 1970. However, they have shown a declining trend, and today the total fertility rate in these countries and regions falls below the replacement-level fertility rate.

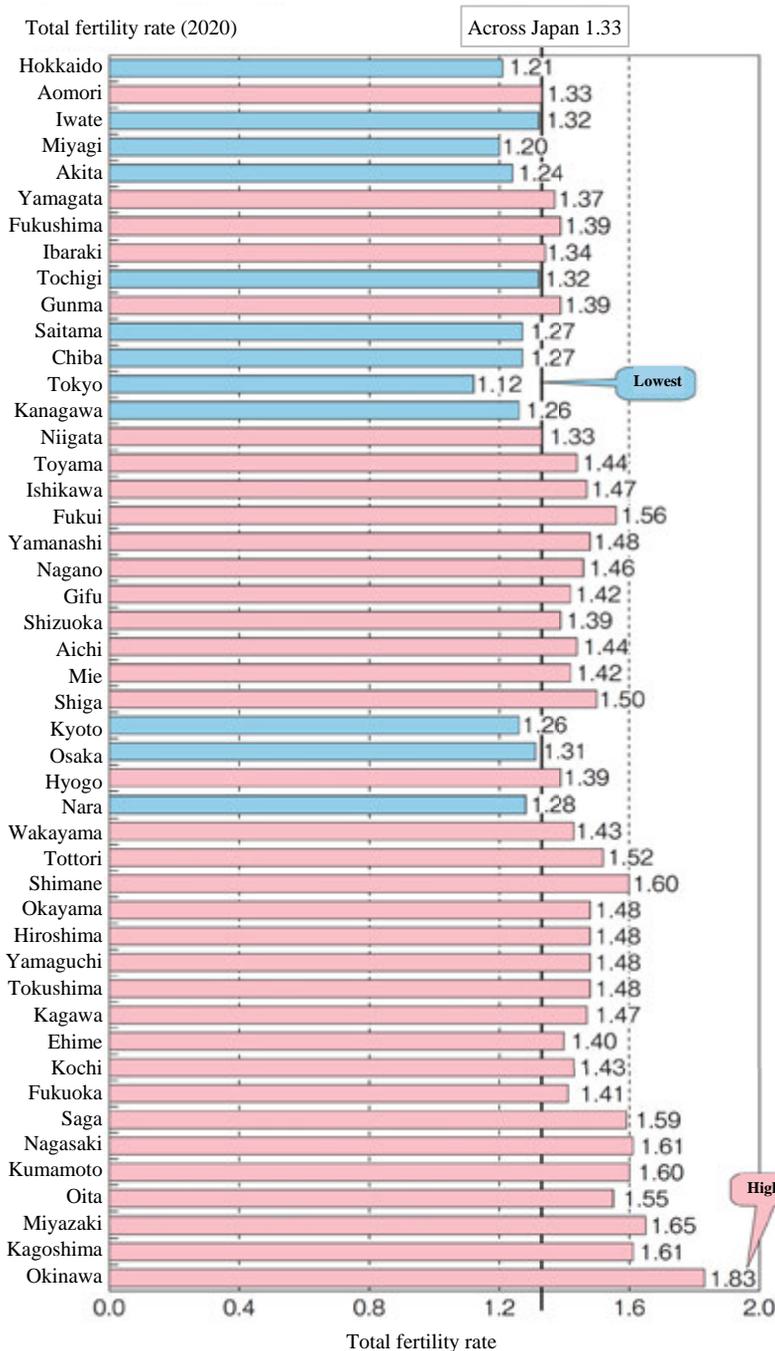


Source: The numbers are cited from statistics in each country and region. As for Japan the numbers are based on "Vital Statistics" by the MHLW.

Note: The figures for Hong Kong in 1970 are 1971's. The figures for Taiwan in 1970 are 1971's, for 1975 they are 1976's and for 1980 they are 1981's.

## Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- The total fertility rate of Japan was 1.33 in 2020. Among the 47 prefectures, the rate was lower in 12 prefectures. Okinawa had the highest total fertility rate (1.83), followed by Miyazaki (1.65). The lowest was Tokyo (1.12), followed by Miyagi (1.20).



Prefecture	2020 (Final) (a)	2019 (Final) (b)	2005 (Final) (b)	Change (a)-(b)
Hokkaido	1.21	1.24	1.15	0.06
Aomori	1.33	1.38	1.29	0.04
Iwate	1.32	1.35	1.41	▲ 0.09
Miyagi	1.20	1.23	1.24	▲ 0.04
Akita	1.24	1.33	1.34	▲ 0.10
Yamagata	1.37	1.40	1.45	▲ 0.08
Fukushima	1.39	1.47	1.49	▲ 0.10
Ibaraki	1.34	1.39	1.32	0.02
Tochigi	1.32	1.39	1.40	▲ 0.08
Gunma	1.39	1.40	1.39	0.00
Saitama	1.27	1.27	1.22	0.05
Chiba	1.27	1.28	1.22	0.05
Tokyo	1.12	1.15	1.00	0.12
Kanagawa	1.26	1.28	1.19	0.07
Niigata	1.33	1.38	1.34	▲ 0.01
Toyama	1.44	1.53	1.37	0.07
Ishikawa	1.47	1.46	1.35	0.12
Fukui	1.56	1.56	1.50	0.06
Yamanashi	1.48	1.44	1.38	0.10
Nagano	1.46	1.57	1.46	0.00
Gifu	1.42	1.45	1.37	0.05
Shizuoka	1.39	1.44	1.39	0.00
Aichi	1.44	1.45	1.34	0.10
Mie	1.42	1.47	1.36	0.06
Shiga	1.50	1.47	1.39	0.11
Kyoto	1.26	1.25	1.18	0.08
Osaka	1.31	1.31	1.21	0.10
Hyogo	1.39	1.41	1.25	0.14
Nara	1.28	1.31	1.19	0.09
Wakayama	1.43	1.46	1.32	0.11
Tottori	1.52	1.63	1.47	0.05
Shimane	1.60	1.68	1.50	0.10
Okayama	1.48	1.47	1.37	0.11
Hiroshima	1.48	1.49	1.34	0.14
Yamaguchi	1.48	1.56	1.38	0.10
Tokushima	1.48	1.46	1.26	0.22
Kagawa	1.47	1.59	1.43	0.04
Ehime	1.40	1.46	1.35	0.05
Kochi	1.43	1.47	1.32	0.11
Fukuoka	1.41	1.44	1.26	0.15
Saga	1.59	1.64	1.48	0.11
Nagasaki	1.61	1.66	1.45	0.16
Kumamoto	1.60	1.60	1.46	0.14
Oita	1.55	1.53	1.40	0.15
Miyazaki	1.65	1.73	1.48	0.17
Kagoshima	1.61	1.63	1.49	0.12
Okinawa	1.83	1.82	1.72	0.11
Across Japan	1.33	1.36	1.26	0.07

Source: Vital Statistics, MHLW

## Special Topic:

### Current state of and countermeasures regarding the declining birthrate under the impact of COVID-19

#### 1. Spread of COVID-19

#### 2. Trends in marriage and childbirth and changes in perceptions of marriage and childrearing under the impact of COVID-19

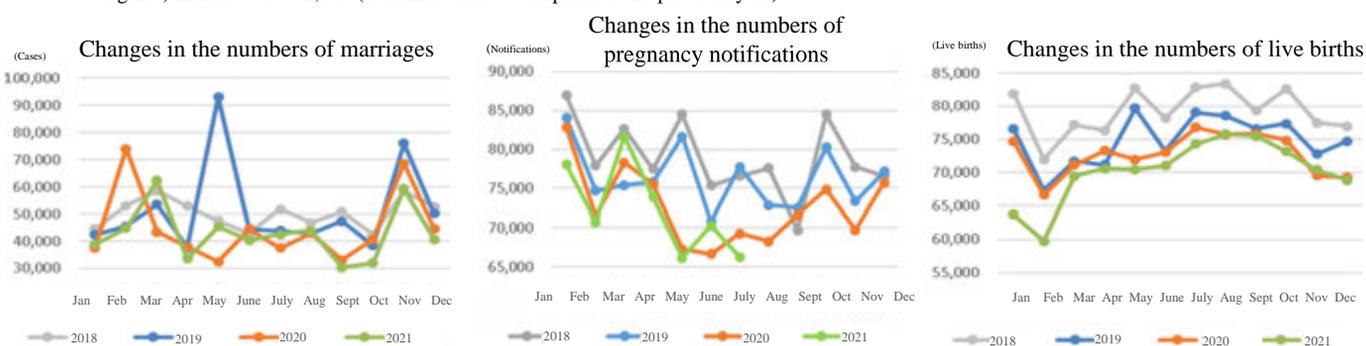
- As the impact of COVID-19 continues a decline in the number of marriages and pregnancy notifications similar to in FY2020 is observable.

Note: The number of marriages (prompt figures) in 2021 was 514,242 (a decline of 4.3% compared to the previous year); the number of marriages in 2020 was 537,583 (a decline of 12.7% compared to the previous year).

Note: The aggregate number of pregnancy notifications between January and July 2021 was 507,075 (a decline of 0.8% compared to the previous year).

- Looked at on a monthly basis the number of live births in January 2021 declined by 14.6% compared to January 2020 and in February 2021 by 10.3% compared to February 2020, subsequently returning to more or less the level of the previous year or below it. There is a need to closely observe the mid-to-long-term trends.

Note: The number of live births (prompt figures) in 2021 was 842,897 (a decline of 3.4% compared to the previous year); the number of live births (prompt figures) in 2020 was 872,683 (a decline of 2.9% compared to the previous year).



- In the midst of changing living environments, a comparison with prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (December 2019) shows that:

- Among those in their 20s and 30s in addition to increased anxiety over “maintaining lifestyle and annual income,” “work,” and “marriage and family,” those in their 20s are increasingly anxious about “interpersonal relationships and social exchanges” and those in their 30s about “rearing and educating children.”
- While with regard to the degree of interest in marriage around 60% of those in their 20s and 30s responded that it was “unchanged,” a trend is observable in which those unmarried people in their 20s are becoming more interested in marriage than those in their 30s.
- With regard to housework and childrearing time, between about 20% to 40% of both males and females responded that it has “increased” (the proportion responding “increased” among females was close to double that of males). On the other hand, with the popularization of telecommuting flexible ways of working in the midst of childrearing have become feasible, and it appears that this has become an opportunity to rethink the sharing of housework and childrearing within families.

#### 3. Main initiatives in countermeasures against the declining birthrate in response to COVID-19

##### (1) Marriage

- Prioritized support (raising subsidy rates) for improvements to the content of the assistance offered under the Newlyweds Lifestyle Support Program, utilization of AI by local governments for the sophistication of matching systems, and improved visibility of childrearing support information using apps and SNS, etc.

##### (2) Pregnancy and childbirth

- Implementation of telephone and online consultation support and health guidance for expectant and nursing mothers, and support to change infant health checkups to individual checkups, etc.

##### (3) Childrearing

- Special temporary payments to childrearing households
- Support for infection prevention measures at nursery centers, kindergartens etc. or community programs for child and childrearing support, etc.

#### 4. Support for marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

(1) Marriage: marriage support through entirely online service from registration to introduction

(2) Pregnancy and childbirth: preparation of an environment in which childbirth and childrearing can be done with peace of mind using online services in districts where there is a lack of pediatricians, obstetricians and gynecologists

(3) Childrearing: online distribution of support information for the childrearing generation, support for those moving to rural areas and ensuring children’s learning

## Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Creation of an environment in which the marriage and childrearing generation can envisage prospects into the future

1. Development of an employment environment in which the young generation can maintain prospects for the future
2. Support for those wishing to marry
3. Development of an environment in which both men and women can balance work and childrearing
4. Support for the reemployment of women who have left work due to childrearing, and support for participation in community activities
5. Encouragement of male participation in housework and childrearing
6. Reforms in both working styles and lifestyles

Section 2 Responding to needs of diversified childrearing families

1. Support regarding childrearing (financial support, mitigation of mental and physical burdens etc.)
2. Support for households with large numbers of children and multiple birth children etc.
3. Seamless support from the stage of pregnancy through to the childrearing stage
4. Diversification of childrearing providers and inter-generational help

Section 3 Promotion of meticulous initiatives appropriate to regional circumstances

1. Support for local governments' initiatives regarding marriage and childrearing
2. Promotion of initiatives connected with regional revitalization

Section 4 Creation of a society friendly to marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, children and childrearing

1. Building up of social momentum for supporting those wishing to marry and caring for the childrearing generation
2. Improvement of facilities and environment to make it easier for pregnant women, mothers and children to go somewhere.
3. Effective diffusion of information concerning marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, children and childrearing

Section 5 Enthusiastic utilization of science and technology results and new resources

1. Encouragement of the utilization of scientific and technology results such as ICT and AI etc. in the fields of marriage support and childrearing

Detailing in main the measures taken in FY2021 regarding the specific state of implementation of measures relating to the declining birthrate in line with the framework of the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate (decided by the Cabinet on May 29, 2020).

## Chapter 2 Measures at each life stage

Section 1 Before marriage

1. Support for life planning
2. Development of an environment to support life events of the younger generation

Section 2 Marriage

1. Stable economic basis
2. Support for comprehensive marriage support initiatives by local governments etc.
3. Work style reforms to assist life plans

Section 3 Pregnancy and childbirth

1. Support from before pregnancy
2. Seamless support from the pregnancy stage through to childrearing
3. Development of an environment in which women can become pregnant and give birth safely and in peace of mind

Section 4 Childrearing

1. Child and childrearing support
2. Financial support for childrearing and mitigation of educational costs
3. Work style reforms to balance work and childrearing
4. Development of an environment in which both men and women can balance work and childrearing, promotion of female advancement
5. Encouragement of male participation in housework and childrearing
6. Diversification of childrearing providers and inter-generational help
7. Support for households with large numbers of children and multiple birth children etc.
8. Housing support, town planning paying consideration to childrearing and supporting children's healthy growth
9. Development of an environment in which children grow up healthily, safely and in peace of mind
10. Support for children and families in diverse situations including children with disabilities or living in poverty, and one-parent homes
11. Building up of social momentum for supporting childrearing throughout the whole community
12. Appropriate utilization of ICT and AI in the childrearing area

## Initiatives toward child-related policies

Introduces the sequence of the main considerations conducted regarding child-related policies in FY2021, particularly items with a high relevance to countermeasures against the declining birthrate.

## Assistance for the fostering of regional marriage support

Introduces an outline of the Marriage Support Volunteer Fostering Model Program, which was formulated upon consideration of methods to nurture an array of supporters including retired and elderly people in order to further improve the marriage support given by local governments. Also introduces a speech given to Organization for Community-based Marriage Support Activities (NPO) by Yoko Itamoto, who was the Chair of the Planning Committee at the time the above program was formulated.



## Promotion of males taking childcare leave and participating in housework and childrearing

As examples of the promotion of males taking part in housework and childrearing, introduces, among others, the Dad's University initiative being pursued by Gifu City in Gifu Prefecture as a part of its Joint Childrearing City Gifu Project, aimed at helping to alter male perceptions and equip them with practical skills.



## Family Day & Family Week

Introduces the proceedings of the Family Day Online Forum 2021 held in November 2021, and the message from Seiko Noda, Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, that was distributed on the specially created Family Day and Family Week website.



## Childrearing Support Consortium

Introduces the content of the 6th and 7th Childrearing Support Consortiums distributed online in FY2021.

Theme of 6th Consortium: "Balancing Infertility Treatment and Work"

Themes of 7th Consortium:

"Thinking about the Declining Birthrate and Decreasing Population Problem";

"Improving Uptake of Childcare Leave by Males"



## Life design support through work and childrearing balance experiences

Introduces an initiative taken by Kyoto Prefecture that conducts experience-based learning in which university students and new company employees and so on visit homes where children are being reared, and are provided with opportunities to think for themselves about their own life designs.

