



# Japan's National Action Plan to End Violence Against Children

## **Inter-Ministerial Committee**

(Cabinet Office, National Police Agency, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

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## 1. PREFACE

### 1.1 GLOBAL TRENDS

Ending violence against children has been widely acknowledged as a challenge that the international community should tackle with a united voice. In 1959, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, while the year 1979 was proclaimed as the International Year of the Child. The same year, a working group was established under the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and began considering the draft of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), with a view to protecting and promoting the rights of children internationally, while taking into account the reality of children around the world living in difficult circumstances such as poverty, hunger, armed conflict, abuse, and sexual exploitation. Subsequently, after a decade of discussions involving a number of UN member states governments, UN agencies and other relevant bodies, the CRC was adopted at the General Assembly.

The need for protecting children from violence was also commonly perceived as a challenge that should be tackled by the international community at the United Nations World Summit for Children in 1990 and the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children in 2002 (held at the UN headquarters). Additionally, in 2006, the UN Secretary-General submitted the UN's first Study on Violence against Children to the General Assembly. The Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted General Comment No. 8 "The Right of the Child to Protection from Corporal Punishment and Other Cruel or Degrading Forms of Punishment" in 2006 and General Comment No. 13 "The Right of the Child to Freedom from All Forms of Violence" in 2011. Furthermore, following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN Sustainable Development Summit held in September 2015, in which Target 16.2 "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children" was declared, UNICEF and relevant international NGOs played a central role in establishing the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPeVAC) in July 2016. These developments indicate that ending violence against children has increasingly become a shared focus of interest and challenge for the international community in recent years.

### 1.2 JAPAN'S EFFORTS

Prior to the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child at the General Assembly in 1959, Japan, in 1951, adopted the Children's Charter and subsequently ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in April 1994. Bearing in mind the spirit of the Convention, Japan has since been committed to promoting and protecting the rights of children, including through the processes of country reviews undertaken by the Committee of the Rights of Child. Japan also ratified the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2004 and the Optional Protocol on the Sales of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in 2005. Such commitments are also clearly reaffirmed in Japan's pledge issued on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the CRC in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, based on the concept of human security, Japan has been carrying out measures for ending violence against children to realize a society in which no one will be left behind", a goal of the SDGs, by incorporating these measures into the SDGs' Action Plan which is Japan's

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/30Anniversary/Pledges/Japan.pdf>

implementation strategy of the SDGs.

In February 2018, Japan declared that it would become a pathfinding country (i.e., participating country) of the GPeVAC, and has since been actively engaged in the activities of the GPeVAC, as a member of the Board, the highest decision-making body of the GPeVAC. In this context, Japan, as a pathfinding country, has formulated a National Action Plan (NAP) to End Violence against Children for the purpose of eliminating violence against children within the country.

### 1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FORMULATION OF THE NAP

In order to protect the rights of children, Japan has been making various efforts, including the enactment of domestic laws as well as the formulation of national basic plans, concrete action plans and guidelines for local governments and schools. Japan has also been promoting general human rights education and awareness-raising activities, including the rights of children, under the Basic Plan on Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-raising developed pursuant to the Act on the Promotion of Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-Raising. Nevertheless, violence against children<sup>2</sup>, including abuse, sexual exploitation, bullying, and corporal punishment, remains a serious social issue. In the process of formulating the NAP, the Japan Committee for UNICEF and Yahoo Japan Corporation conducted an online survey targeting children (the so-called “Children’s Public Comment”), and approximately 70% of responses in the survey showed that they had either been subject to violence themselves or had seen or heard about violence against children.

In light of such circumstances, Japan, building upon the existing and various measures, has compiled a wide range of relevant measures in the NAP aimed at ending all forms of violence against children, with a view to addressing issues, while taking into consideration global trends towards ending violence against children, notably the GPeVAC-led initiative, as well as the opinions of civil society, and the voices of children obtained through Children’s Public Comment. Japan has also developed the NAP with the aim of achieving the SDGs target of “ending violence against children (Target 16.2)” by 2030. It will pursue the achievement of Target 16.2 through reviewing and improving the measures incorporated herein, in cooperation with stakeholders. Furthermore, as a GPeVAC pathfinding country, Japan is committed to further enhancing momentum to end violence against children across the globe and ending violence against children in other countries through disseminating Japan’s practices and efforts in each area within in the NAP.

### 1.4 GPeVAC KEY PRINCIPLES AND INSPIRE

In *Strategy 2016-2020*, GPeVAC sets forth the vision of “a world in which every child grows up free from violence” and the mission “to make societies safer for children and end violence everywhere.” It also presents the principles of “Rights Focused”, “Child Centered”, “Universal”, “Gender Sensitive”, “Inclusive”, “Transparent”, “Evidence Based”, and “Result Oriented”.

Furthermore, INSPIRE<sup>3</sup>, which was formulated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2016

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<sup>2</sup> In GPeVAC’s *Strategy 2016-2020*, violence against children is defined as “all forms of harm perpetrated by an individual or group of people, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity”.

<sup>3</sup> INSPIRE proposes seven strategies of (1) implementation and enforcement of laws, (2) norms and values, (3) safe environments, (4) parent and caregiver support, (5) income and economic strengthening, (6) response and support services, and (7) education and life skills, as well as two cross-cutting activities: *multisectoral actions and coordination*

and developed seven strategies for ending violence against children that are based on numerous pieces of evidence obtained from initiatives conducted by various organizations working to end violence against children, calls for cross-cutting activities.

In implementing the NAP to end violence against children, Japan will attach importance to the aforementioned key principles and INSPIRE.

## 2. PRIORITY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

In order to formulate the NAP, meetings of the Roundtable on Ending Violence against Children and its Working Group consisting of multiple stakeholders, including officials of relevant ministries and agencies, experts, and members of civil society groups, have been held since December 2018 to identify priority issues to be addressed in ending violence against children in Japan. The Roundtable and its Working Group identified “abuse”, “sexual exploitation”, “bullying”, and “corporal punishment” as priority issues and decided to develop the NAP, focusing on these areas.

Violence against children in these areas has been on the rise, which is also evident in the statistics. For instance, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the number of child abuse cases reported to and responded by child guidance centers increased by over 140 times to 159,838 cases, compared with 1,101 cases in FY 2011. The number of offenders arrested for violations of the Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Protection of Children has also been increasing, with 2,812 offenders arrested in 2019. In the area of bullying, the number of acknowledged incidents of bullying at elementary, junior high, and high schools based on the results of the FY 2018 survey was 543,933, an increase of approximately 31% compared with the previous fiscal year. Although corporal punishment in schools is on a downward trend, corporal punishment in the home has become a problem in recent years, with guardians committing child abuse in what they call corporal punishment as part of discipline.

Such circumstances have also been confirmed by children themselves. As noted above, around 70% of respondents to Children’s Public Comment indicated that they had either been subject to violence themselves or seen or heard of violence against other children. The most common types of such violence were bullying, followed by abuse, corporal punishment, and sexual exploitation. There was no significant difference in the tendency between genders or age groups.

Given these circumstances, the NAP focuses primarily on the four areas of “abuse”, “sexual exploitation/sexual violence”, “bullying”, and “corporal punishment”, and details current circumstances and specific measures in each area in “4. MEASURES IN THE PRIORITY AREAS” below.

Moreover, the recent spread of COVID-19 has raised concerns about various impacts on children. In terms of violence against children, the risk of child abuse and other forms of violence has increased due to fewer opportunities to watch over children as a result of temporary school closures and people refraining from going outside. There are also concerns about bullying on the basis of COVID-19. Thus, the NAP also refers to efforts taking into account the impact of COVID-19.

## 3. CHILD PARTICIPATION (including Children’s Public Comment)

### 3.1 IMPORTANCE OF CHILD PARTICIPATION

Child participation is one of the most important pillars of the CRC: Article 12 of the CRC stipulates that States Parties shall assure to the child the right to express his or her own views. Additionally, countries are working to ensure various forms of child participation, such as participation in conferences, taking into consideration that children and young people are designated as “critical agents” in achieving the SDGs.

### 3.2 PROCESS OF CHILDREN’S PUBLIC COMMENT

From 28 August to 7 October, 2019, as part of the formulation of the NAP, the Japan Committee for UNICEF and Yahoo Japan Corporation invited public comments from children online (Children’s Public Comment) in relation to the NAP. Following the call for Children’s Public Comment, which was made on the websites of Yahoo! Kids<sup>4</sup>, the Japan Committee for UNICEF, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, as well as social media operated by the Committee and communications technology (ICT) companies, including Yahoo! JAPAN, 933 responses were received (of which 796 were valid). The responses suggested that children recognize violence as a compelling problem and that not all of their voices are heard by adults around them or existing counseling services.

### 3.3 OUTCOME OF CHILDREN’S PUBLIC COMMENT

With regard to an age breakdown, 47% of the respondents were aged 9-11 years; 72% of them were girls, while 15% of them were boys (13% noted, “I don’t answer”). Although girls were dominant among the respondents, it is undeterminable from the survey results whether there are differences between boys and girls in the level of interest in the topic of violence, because, among this age group, girls were more inclined to participate in posting services on the Internet, and no significant difference in the gender ratio was found compared with other services. In response to the question, “Have you or has anyone around you been subject to or witnessed violence?”, 68% of the respondents answered “yes”. When those respondents were asked about the type of violence, the most common type was bullying, followed by abuse, corporal punishment, and sexual exploitation. There was no significant difference in this trend between genders or among different age groups.

Furthermore, when asked in an open-ended question form, what they would like adults to do to end violence, and what they think they can do to help, more than 80% (of valid entries) responded, some of which apparently indicated that the respondents themselves were victims of violence. In terms of messages to adults, many participants said that they would like them to discern children's SOS and that they would like them to listen carefully to children's voices by creating an environment where they can easily ask for help. In response to the question as to whom to consult, some preferred to consult primarily with adults close to them such as family members or teachers, while others noted that they would like to consult with a third party or a specialist. In addition, there were a number of responses indicating that they want adults to teach them about violence, such as “I didn't know that what I was being subjected to was abuse, so I wish I had been taught about it from an early age.” There were also opinions that they would like to see more awareness-raising activities for adults and would like adults to reassess their

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<sup>4</sup> Yahoo! Kids (<https://kids.yahoo.co.jp/>) is a service that was launched in 1997 with the aim of “bringing the fun of Internet to children, the people who will be in charge of the world in the future.” It is used by many elementary school children nationwide, mainly in school classes for learning how to use the Internet to carry out research.



way of thinking about violence without being entrenched in outdated ideas. On bullying, many demanded improvement, noting that they are uncomfortable with answering a school-wide questionnaire. Concerning what children themselves can do, answers included preventing, tackling, and seeking advice about bullying, learning themselves about human rights, and acquiring the ability to solve problems.

The opinions received from children were shared with relevant ministries and agencies, and members of civil society involved in the formulation of the NAP, and the formulation process was carried out based on these opinions. Moreover, when considering relevant measures in the future, the ministries and agencies will take into account the opinions expressed by children.

## 4. MEASURES IN THE PRIORITY AREAS

In light of the voices of children received through Children's Public Comment as well as the current circumstances described below, the Government will ensure that the following specific measures will be implemented, with the aim of achieving SDGs target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

In addition, to enable children to recognize their own rights, the Government will ensure that education and teacher training will be provided in school education in order for children to develop correct recognition and understanding of the importance of their rights.

### 4.1 CHILD ABUSE

#### 4.1.1 Current circumstances

Child abuse seriously violates the human rights of children. It also significantly affects their mental and physical development and the formation of their characters, and adversely affects the nurturing of future generations of Japan. The number of child abuse cases reported to and responded by child guidance centers is on the rise. In FY 2018, 73 children died due to abuse.

##### *4.1.1.1 Cases of child abuse, etc., reported to and responded by child guidance centers, etc.*

Statistics on child abuse are gathered based on the number of child abuse cases responded by child guidance centers all over Japan since FY 1990. The statistics show that the number of child abuse cases responded by child guidance centers has been increasing year by year; there were 1,101 such cases in FY 1990, whereas the number reached 193,780 in FY 2019.

Year	No. of child abuse cases responded to by child guidance centers (last 10 years)	Year	No. of child abuse cases responded to by child guidance centers (last 10 years)
FY 2010	56,384	FY 2015	103,286
FY 2011	59,919	FY 2016	122,575
FY 2012	66,701	FY 2017	133,778
FY 2013	73,802	FY 2018	159,838
FY 2014	88,931	FY 2019	193,780

##### *4.1.1.2 Number of human rights counseling and human rights violation cases pertaining to child abuse*

During 2019, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice received 1,634 reports of cases pertaining to assault against and abuse of children. Of these reports, the human rights bodies initiated investigations into 413 human rights violation cases.

##### *4.1.1.3 Number of arrests for child abuse*

During 2019, the number of arrests for child abuse was 1,972, and the number of persons arrested for child abuse was 2,024 – both recording the highest numbers since statistics began

to be collected in 1999. In terms of the number of arrests by type of abuse, physical abuse accounted for approximately 80% of the total.

#### **4.1.2 Specific measures**

In response to the situation above, Japan will steadily implement the following specific measures and share information with local governments, schools and other relevant parties, from the perspective that all administrative organs should do everything possible to protect children's lives as a first and foremost priority.

##### *4.1.2.1 Prevention and early detection of child abuse*

(Seamless support from pregnancy to child-rearing)

From the viewpoint of abuse prevention, given the necessity to promptly identify and support child-rearing families who are vulnerable to isolation, the Government provides seamless assistance from the period of pregnancy through the child-rearing period.

Specifically, the Government provides information on child-rearing and assesses the mental and physical condition of infants, toddlers and their guardians as well as their child-rearing environment; on the occasion of health checkups for expectant/nursing mothers and for infants/toddlers, and through the House-call Services for All Households with Infants, which is a program to visit all households with infants under four months old. In addition, the Government provides consultation to and advice on child-rearing to guardians through the Comprehensive Support Center for Child-rearing Families and the Comprehensive Child and Family Services Center, both established in municipalities, as well as through the House-call Services to Support Child Care.

In addition, the Government provides assistance to families to prevent them from being isolated during child-rearing, by promoting the establishment of local child-rearing support sites where parents and children can gather without hesitation, interact with each other, and share their anxieties and concerns about child-rearing.

Furthermore, with the aim of further promoting these measures, a basic law on seamless support from pregnancy to child-rearing, the Act on the Comprehensive Promotion of Measures for Seamlessly Providing Essential Healthcare for Child Development, etc., to Persons in the Stage of Development and Their Guardians as well as Expectant and Nursing Mothers, was enacted in December 2018 and came into effect in December 2019. The Government will continue to carry out these measures.

(Early identification of child abuse)

Under the Child Welfare Act and the Act on the Prevention, etc. of Child Abuse, a person who has detected a child whom it is deemed inappropriately cared for by a guardian shall give notification to the prefectural government, a child guidance center, etc. In particular, it is determined that those who are in a position to detect child abuse easily, including teachers and other staff workers of schools staff, officials of child welfare facilities and medical practitioners, shall endeavor to identify child abuse at an early stage.

In addition, the Government has established and provided the public with information on the "Child Guidance Center Abuse Response Dial 189", which connects to the nearest child guidance center 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, as a consultation and notification service for child abuse.

Furthermore, since 2004, the Government has designated November as "Child Abuse Prevention

Promotion Month” and has been conducting intensive public relations and awareness-raising activities on child abuse issues. The Government will continue to carry out these measures.

#### *4.1.2.2 Response in the event of child abuse*

As noted above, a person who has detected a child whom it is deemed inappropriately cared for by a guardian shall give notification to the prefectural government, a child guidance center, etc.

A prefectural governor, the director of child guidance center, etc. can take temporary custody of a child in order to ensure the child’s safety promptly, protect the child appropriately and understand the child’s situation and environment. The period of temporary custody shall not exceed two months in principle, and approval by the family court is required in cases where it is to be exceeded without the consent of a person who has parental authority, etc.

Moreover, in cases where a person who has parental authority or a guardian, as a guardian, abuses a child or materially fails to perform the duty of custody and where the custody of the child by other guardians materially harms the welfare of the child, a prefectural governor, the director of child guidance center, etc. may take measures to entrust the child to a foster parent, etc. or admit the child into a child welfare facility. In addition, a prefectural governor may, as a follow-up action, provide necessary instructions to, or request necessary reporting from, the heads of child welfare institutions. The Government will continue to take prompt and appropriate measures in the event of child abuse.

#### *4.1.2.3 Protection, family reunification support and self-reliance support for children who have suffered child abuse*

In Japan, as a measure in response to child abuse by guardians, prefectural governments, etc. may entrust a child to a foster parent or admit a child into a child welfare institution. However, it is important to ensure that children who cannot live with their parents can grow up in a homelike environment to the maximum extent possible. Therefore, based on the “principle of prioritizing child-rearing at home,” which was legally stipulated in the amendment of the Child Welfare Law in 2016, the Government is working to find foster parents who can provide a similar environment to a family and promoting foster parent education and special adoption. Prefectural governments provide support to foster parents in the form of consultation and information sharing.

Additionally, for children who need to be cared for in an institution, including due to their strong rejection of home care, the Government provides support to them so that they can be fostered in a good and homelike environment to the maximum extent possible. The Government also supports children with very high care needs to be brought up in the smallest possible number of living units so that they can be adequately cared for.

Furthermore, abuse of children placed in foster families or institutions by foster parents and institution staff is prohibited as “abuse of children for whom admission measures are taken, etc.” Foster families and institutions are also required to take action to prevent violence between the children (including sexual violence).

When children return to their home family after the measures for residential care, etc. are concluded, child guidance centers provide advice and counselling to guardians on how to interact with their children, taking into consideration their home environment. In addition, for a certain period of time after the conclusion of the measures, child guidance centers and relevant local organizations work together to periodically confirm the safety of children, and provide counseling and support to the guardians.

A child who has been taken in a child welfare institution etc. can, if necessary, continue to reside with the foster family, at the institution, etc. and receive the support they need even after turning 18 years old, generally until the end of the year in which they turn 22. Furthermore, the Government will follow the circumstances of children etc. who have left child welfare institutions. Taking into account the outcome of the survey, the Government will put together a support infrastructure that provides continuous and comprehensive assistance to children to encourage them to become self-reliant, including expansion of measures to help them find places to live, further their education, or get a job. The Government will continue to take such measures.

Children who have been admitted into foster homes or other institutions can continue to live with foster families or live in institutions, as needed, and receive necessary support even after they reach 18 years of age, in principle, until the end of the fiscal year during which they turn 22 years old. The Government will establish a continuous and comprehensive support system for children to become self-reliant, including through conducting a follow-up survey on children who have left foster homes and expanding measures to secure their residential place and support their education at higher-level schools or employment based on the results of the survey. The Government will continue to carry out these measures.

#### *4.1.2.4 Changes in measures, including strengthening of the system*

Japan has been strongly promoting the prevention of child abuse and has been constantly reviewing and strengthening its measures, including amendments to laws. Based on the following measures and legal amendments that have been formulated and implemented in recent years, the Government will continue to actively promote these measures.

- (i) Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act and the Act on the Prevention, etc. of Child Abuse (2016)

In 2016, the Child Welfare Act was partially amended to clarify the principle of the law by stipulating that children are the subjects of their rights, that their opinions are respected and that their best interests are considered with the highest priority in order to further strengthen a series of measures from prevention of child abuse to support for self-reliance so that all children can be soundly brought up. The amendment also aims to take necessary measures, including such as the nationwide expansion of the Comprehensive Support Center for Maternal and Child Health (the Comprehensive Support Center for Child-rearing Families), the strengthening of the systems of municipalities and child guidance centers, and the promotion of foster parent entrustment.

- (ii) Emergency Comprehensive Measures to Strengthen Measures to Prevent Child Abuse (2018)

In July 2018, in response to the deaths caused by child abuse, the Ministerial Meeting on Measures to Prevent Child Abuse decided on the Emergency Comprehensive Measures to Strengthen Measures to Prevent Child Abuse.

The Emergency Comprehensive Measures called for the formulation of a Comprehensive Plan for Strengthening Measures and the System to Prevent Child Abuse (New Plan), which contains thorough implementation of rules to protect all children, including by conducting on-site investigations when the safety of children cannot be confirmed, clarifying the rules for sharing information between child guidance centers and the police, and strengthening the system and expertise of child guidance centers and municipalities. In addition, the Emergency Comprehensive Measures also called for early detection and early response to

child abuse, such as informing the public about consultation services, the implementation of appropriate temporary protection, appropriate judicial involvement, and securing a place to receive protected children.

As a result, in December 2018, the Comprehensive Plan for Strengthening Measures and the System to Prevent Child Abuse (New Plan) was decided at a ministerial meeting. The New Plan includes increasing the number of child welfare officers at child guidance centers by approximately 2,020 over the four-year period from FY 2019 to FY 2022 and establishing the Comprehensive Child and Family Services Center in all municipalities. The Government will steadily promote this Plan.

(iii) Guidelines for Formulating Prefectural Social Child-rearing Promotion Plans (2018)

In order to systematically promote the entrustment of a child to foster parents, etc., in July 2018, the Government notified each prefectural government of the Guidelines for Formulating Prefectural Social Child-rearing Promotion Plans, requesting them to formulate their own plans that include numerical targets for the rate of the entrustment of a child to foster parents, etc. by the end of FY 2019. Prefectural plans were published in August 2020. The Government will provide necessary assistance to prefectural governments to enable them to steadily implement their plans. It will also carefully follow up on and evaluate the progress in raising the foster care entrustment rate and the situation of children entrusted to foster parents, and verify the modalities of support.

(iv) Fundamental Strengthening of Measures to Prevent Child Abuse (2019)

In March 2019, the Fundamental Strengthening of Measures to Prevent Child Abuse, which includes strengthening the prevention and early detection of child abuse and the prompt and appropriate response when child abuse occurs, was decided at a ministerial meeting.

The decision stipulates the strengthening of cooperation between child guidance centers and the police as well as the reinforcement of the system of temporary shelters, including the strengthening of the staffing system, the improvement of the environment to enable individualized responses, and the establishment of a consultation service/third party committee to protect the rights of children.

Based on these measures, the Government will continue to carry out necessary measures in the budget, including local allocation tax measures.

(v) Amendment of the Child Welfare Act and the Act on the Prevention, etc. of Child Abuse, etc. (2019)

In conjunction with the decision on the Fundamental Strengthening of Measures to Prevent Child Abuse, the Act on the Partial Amendment to the Child Welfare Act, etc. to Step up Efforts to Prevent Child Abuse was submitted to the Diet. The said act was enacted in June 2019 after deliberations in the Diet. The revised act mainly stipulates that:

- a) to protect the rights of children, a person with parental authority must not impose corporal punishment on his/her child in disciplining the child;
- b) to strengthen the system of child guidance centers, prefectural governments shall separate staff members responsible for taking children into temporary custody from those responsible for providing support for the parents of the children, and shall work to evaluate the quality of services provided by child guidance centers;

- c) to increase the number of child guidance centers, prefectural governments shall set out reference standards for the establishment of child guidance centers, and take measures such as the development of facilities and support for securing and training human resources so that core cities and special wards can establish child guidance centers; and
- d) to strengthen cooperation among relevant organizations, staff members of Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers and other institutions shall work to detect child abuse at an early stage in order to strengthen cooperation with measures against domestic violence.

In addition, in accordance with the Supplementary Provisions of the said Act, the Government has begun to review the following issues: the Government's support for the establishment of child guidance centers in core cities; measures to improve the qualifications of those involved in child and family welfare; the way to protect the rights of children; the way to establish procedures for temporary custody and other measures; and the way to establish the provisions of disciplinary right in the Civil Code. The Government will continue the review.

#### *4.1.2.5 Cooperation with relevant organizations*

The prevention of child abuse requires cooperation with a wide range of parties. In Japan, relevant organizations have been working together as described below, and will continue to do so in close cooperation.

In order to ensure the prompt and appropriate protection of children, it is important for the relevant institutions to cooperate with each other while exercising their respective expertise. Therefore, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare has been actively taking measures to protect the life and physical health of children, such as ensuring information sharing between relevant institutions and child guidance centers – including by ensuring that relevant organizations give notice to child guidance centers when they detect a child who is suspected to have been abused and that prior inquiries are made when the notification is given – while maintaining close cooperation with child guidance centers and other relevant institutions, including by, as necessary, encouraging relevant institutions to participate in Regional Councils of Countermeasures for Appropriate Aid or Appropriate Assistance for Children Requiring Aid and Specified Expectant Mother.

In response to child abuse in schools, it is important to cooperate with relevant organizations such as child guidance centers and the police. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology endeavors to ensure that schools and boards of education are fully aware of the purpose of this policy through notifications and training programs.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice provide various means for children to easily access consultation services, including through setting up a toll-free number, “Children’s Rights Hotline”, and distributing “Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letters” (letter papers and envelopes) to elementary and junior high schools nationwide. In addition, the ministry recognizes information on child abuse cases through such consultations; it takes appropriate measures, such as linking the child to temporary custody, depending on the circumstances and in cooperation with child guidance centers, in order to provide the affected child.

The public prosecutor's office, the police, and child guidance centers take measures such as joint

interviews (interviews with representatives) in consideration of the psychological burden on children.

Based on the Emergency Comprehensive Measures, the police have been promoting measures, such as strengthening information sharing with child guidance centers and ensuring response to requests for assistance from child guidance centers.

In addition, in the decisions of the ministerial meetings in February and March 2019, it was determined that the assignment of former police officers to child guidance centers will be promoted and that, in cases where intimidating demands or the use of violence by guardians are anticipated, schools and boards of education will systematically respond to such cases, while immediately sharing information with relevant organizations, including municipalities, child guidance centers and the police, to jointly respond to the cases. In light of these decisions, the Government has been promoting measures to ensure the safety of children as the highest priority through strengthening cooperation with relevant organizations.

#### **4.1.2.6 COVID-19**

With the spread of COVID-19, the risk of child abuse and other forms of violence has increased due to fewer opportunities to watch over children as a result of temporary school closures and people refraining from going outside. In response to this situation, the Reinforced Action Plan to Watch over Children has been implemented in all municipalities, with the aim of strengthening a system to detect children with high needs for support at an early stage through mobilizing various local networks and of ensuring a system to watch over children on a regular basis, with Regional Councils of Countermeasures for Appropriate Aid or Appropriate Assistance for Children Requiring Aid and Specified Expectant Mother playing a central role. Specifically, the Regional Councils regularly assess the situation of children eligible for support through telephone calls and visits, and consolidate the results of these assessments to help provide children with support and measures (including temporary custody by child guidance centers) as necessary.

## **4.2 SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ETC. AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

### **4.2.1 Current circumstances**

#### **4.2.1.1 Child sexual exploitation<sup>5</sup>**

Child sexual exploitation, such as the production of child pornography or child prostitution, is an

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<sup>5</sup> “Child sexual exploitation” shall refer to the sexual exploitation of children (meaning, committing a criminal act against a child [i.e., a person under 18 years of age, the same shall apply hereinafter] that sexually victimizes the child for the purpose of satisfying one’s sexual gratification or for the benefit of oneself or a third party, such as child prostitution, as defined in Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Protection of Children [Act No. 52 of 1999, hereinafter referred to as the “Act Against Child Prostitution and Child Pornography”] [the same shall apply hereinafter], the production of child pornography, as defined in Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Act Against Child Prostitution and Child Pornography [the same shall apply hereinafter], and other acts, or committing any act subject to Article 60 of the Child Welfare Act [Act No. 164 of 1947] by operating a business in a form focused on children as sexual objects or committing any similar acts) and acts of encouraging the sexual exploitation of children (brokerages for child prostitution, trafficking in children for the purpose of child prostitution, provision of a place for business in a form focused on children as sexual objects, development of a website for the purpose of providing child pornography, etc.).

Source: “Regarding the Basic Policy for Practices Relating to Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation” (Approved by the Cabinet on March 29, 2016)



extremely heinous act that causes harm to children mentally and physically, and seriously violates their human rights, which should not be forgivable. Even worse, child sexual exploitation is committed by adults, who should protect and nurture children, and, in many cases, child sexual exploitation continues to harm child victims for a long period beyond time and space, via the internet.

The number of offenders arrested for child prostitution offenses, etc. – i.e., child prostitution, causing a child to commit an obscene act (Child Welfare Act), and lewd sexual acts, etc. (juvenile protection ordinances) – has been on the rise in recent years, reaching 2,037 in 2019. The number of offenders arrested for child pornography offenses was 2,116, which was a decrease from the previous year but remained at a high level.

In addition, the number of children who are victims of child prostitution as a result of using social networking services (SNS) has continued to increase.

**Number of offenders arrested for major welfare crimes related to sexual exploitation (2015 - 2019)**

Type \ Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Child prostitution offenses, etc.</b>	1,918	1,936	2,057	2,010	2,037
<b>Act Against Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (child prostitution offenses)</b>	630	701	841	725	696
<b>Child Welfare Act (causing a child to commit an obscene act)</b>	309	244	197	184	134
<b>Juvenile protection ordinances (lewd sexual acts, etc.)</b>	979	991	1,019	1,101	1,207
<b>Act Against Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (child pornography offenses)</b>	1,483	1,531	1,703	2,315	2,116

**Number of child victims of crimes as a result of using SNS (2015 - 2019)**

2015	2016	2017	2018	2018
1,652	1,736	1,813	1,811	2,082

**4.2.1.2 JK business**

In recent years, the so-called “JK business” has caused problems with children being sexually exploited.<sup>6</sup>

Issues related to “JK business” are serious human rights violations that may leave the victims with deep mental and physical damage. It is therefore necessary for the entire government to work to eradicate them.

<sup>6</sup> The number of business establishments engaged in the so-called “JK business” known to the police is 162 (as of December 31, 2019). There were 12 arrested cases and eight offenders arrested for the so-called “JK business”, including managers and customers (also as of December 31, 2019).

#### 4.2.1.3 Trafficking in persons

Trafficking in persons is a serious human rights violation. It requires a prompt and appropriate response from a humanitarian perspective. Although most victims of trafficking in persons, including sexual exploitation such as prostitution, are women and children, anyone can be a victim of trafficking in person regardless of his or her gender or nationality. In addition, in cases where a child under 18 years of age is placed under another person's control for the purpose of exploitation, it is considered trafficking in persons even if means such as violence, intimidation, or fraud are not used. Measures to combat trafficking in persons are of great concern to the international community. The Government has been engaged in measures to prevent and eradicate trafficking in persons and to protect victims in cooperation with the international community.

#### 4.2.2 Specific measures

##### 4.2.2.1 Child sexual exploitation

In April 2017, the Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation was formulated at the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime, chaired by the Prime Minister. The Basic Plan has the following pillars:

- i. Enhancement of public awareness regarding the eradication of child sexual exploitation, development of social awareness, and the strengthening of collaboration with international society;
- ii. Support for children and families to ensure the sound growth of children without victimization by sexual exploitation;
- iii. Promotion of measures to prevent the occurrence and spread of victimization that focuses on tools used for child sexual exploitation;
- iv. Prompt protection of child victims and the promotion of appropriate support;
- v. Strengthening of crackdowns based on the situation of victimization and the rehabilitation of offenders; and
- vi. Strengthening of the foundation for realizing a society where children will never become victims of sexual exploitation.

The Basic Plan sets forth the policies that the Government should implement for the eradication of child sexual exploitation. The Government will strongly promote measures to eradicate child sexual exploitation in cooperation with relevant administrative bodies and business operators.

These efforts include the strengthening of crackdowns on and strict punishment for crimes involving child sexual exploitation,<sup>7</sup> the implementation of guidance to prevent repeat sexual

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<sup>7</sup> Crackdown on crimes of child sexual exploitation as offenses against the Act Against Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, Child Welfare Act, juvenile protection ordinances, etc., shall be strengthened. Regarding child pornography crimes, in particular, the National Police Agency shall encourage joint investigation among multiple prefectural police headquarters so as to strictly apprehend heinous child pornography offenders such as groups of younger child pornography lovers, child pornography sales groups, and groups involving the use of file-sharing software. The agency shall, by gathering and analyzing information on child pornography offenders, identify and protect child victims, and arrest suspected producers to eliminate the source of supply of child pornography.

Efforts shall be made to realize strict punishment for crimes of child sexual exploitation through the aggressive application of the Act Against Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and other relevant laws. (Source: Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation (Approved by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime on April 18, 2017) 5-(iii))

crimes at correctional institutions,<sup>8</sup> the implementation of a sexual offender treatment program at probation offices,<sup>9</sup> and support, etc., for children at child guidance centers and local governments.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, in June 2020, the Policy for Enhancement of Measures against Sexual Crimes and Violence was approved by the Ministerial Meeting on the Strengthening of Measures against Sexual Crimes and Violence. In accordance with this Policy, the three-year period from FY 2020 to FY 2022 has been designated as the “period of intensive strengthening” of measures against sexual crimes and violence, and efforts are being made not only to review criminal law, but also to enhance support for victims, conduct measures against perpetrators, and to strengthen education and awareness-raising.

#### 4.2.2.2 JK business

With regard to “JK business,” in March 2017, the Government of Japan established the Council

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<sup>8</sup> At penal institutions, inmates that have cognitive distortion or lack of self-control that may result in forcible indecency, rape, or a similar crime, or a crime involving harming the life or body of another person for the purpose of satisfying their own sexual urges, shall be provided with guidance to prevent repeat sexual offenses, consisting of group work based on the method of cognitive behavioral therapy, etc. In order to ensure the effective implementation of such guidance, the system for providing guidance and the method of selecting the inmates to receive guidance shall be improved based on the verification of the effects of past treatment. (Source: Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation (Approved by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime on April 18, 2017) 5-(ix))

Among the juveniles that have been committed to a juvenile training school due to a delinquent act that constitutes sexual delinquency (e.g. gang rape, rape at the scene of a robbery, rape, forcible indecency, public indecency, kidnapping for the purpose of indecency, etc.) or that does not constitute the same but that has been triggered by a sexual motive (e.g. sexually motivated theft or injury, or a violation of the nuisance prevention ordinance, i.e., groping or camera voyeurism), those that have cognitive distortion or lack of self-control that may result in sexual delinquency shall be provided at each juvenile training school with comprehensive guidance to prevent sexual delinquency, which consists of group work or individual guidance using a workbook at the core, combined with guidance on personal relationships, guidance on understanding the victim’s feelings, and sexual education, for the purpose of helping them acquire correct knowledge about sex, enhance their recognition of their own delinquency, and learn how to live an adaptive life without taking to sexual delinquency. Also, as those inmates that require concentrated and intensive guidance shall be transferred to intensive guidance facilities, efforts shall be made to properly conduct a verification of the effects of such guidance and to improve the program based on the PDCA cycle. (Source: Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation (Approved by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime on April 18, 2017) 5-(x))

<sup>9</sup> At probation offices, parolees or persons under probation, with the suspension of the execution of their sentence, that have been sentenced for: a crime of forcible indecency, rape, quasi-forcible indecency, quasi-rape, gang rape, etc., (including attempts at such), or any crime caused or motivated by sexual desire shall be provided with a sexual offender treatment program aimed at helping them learn not to repeat offending such sexual crimes and to improve their criminal inclinations. (Source: Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation (Approved by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime on April 18, 2017) 5-(xi))

<sup>10</sup> When a child guidance center receives a consultation concerning a child that has been harmed mentally and physically due to sexual abuse or child pornography crime, support shall be provided such as temporary custody when his/her safety needs to be secured, assistance concerning a visit to a medical institution to receive specialized medical care, counseling by child psychologists, and admission to a child welfare facility for the child for whom it is difficult to return home, and the case shall be reported to the police after confirming the damage caused by the situation. Also, municipal governments shall fully collaborate and share information with child guidance centers and other related organizations through the Regional Council of Countermeasures for Appropriate Aid or Appropriate Assistance for Children Requiring Aid and Specified Expectant Mother to provide consultation for child victims of sexual abuse or child pornography crimes in a more familiar environment and to provide necessary support. In addition, information about the nationwide hotline number to child guidance centers (189), including the fact that anonymous reporting is acceptable, shall be widely disseminated so that anyone that has spotted a child that seems to be abused can call the child guidance center without hesitation. (Source: Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation (Approved by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime on April 18, 2017) 4-(vii))

of Relevant Ministries for Measures against the Issue of the So-called “JK Business” and Forced Appearances in Pornographic Materials, based on the report of the Specialist Committee on Violence against Women of the Council for Gender Equality, entitled “the issue of so-called ‘JK business’ and forced appearance in pornographic materials,” in order for relevant ministries to implement measures against the issue through cooperation with each other.

In May 2017, the Council of Relevant Ministers formulated the Actions for Proceeding Measures on the Issues of So-called Forced Appearances in Pornographic Materials and “JK Business.” Based on these actions, the Government will promote measures such as further grasping the situation, strengthening crackdowns, etc., strengthening education and awareness-raising, enhancing consultation systems, and strengthening efforts to support protection and self-reliance.

#### *4.2.2.3 Trafficking in persons*

In 2004, the Government established the Inter-Ministerial Liaison Committee Regarding Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons under the Cabinet to promptly and steadily promote close cooperation among the relevant government ministries and agencies and cooperation with the international community in preventing and eradicating trafficking in persons and protecting victims. In 2014, the Committee approved Japan’s 2014 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and decided to organize a meeting of the Council for the Promotion of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons, consisting of relevant ministers. In addition, in 2017, Japan concluded the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Based on the Action Plan, the Government of Japan, with the Council for the Promotion of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons as its core, has been implementing various measures through cooperation among the relevant ministries and agencies, including control of trafficking in persons and protection and support of victims. The Government will continue to make concerted efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons.

### **4.3 BULLYING**

#### **4.3.1 Current circumstances**

Bullying in schools not only infringes on children's right to receive education and has a serious effect on their sound mental and physical growth and development of their personality, but also poses serious danger to their lives or health. Bullying should never be tolerated, and it is necessary to recognize the signs of bullying as soon as possible and respond to it promptly.

##### *4.3.1.1 Situation of problematic behaviors of students such as violence and bullying in elementary, junior high and high schools in Japan*

According to the results of the FY 2019 Survey on Challenges in Student Guidance such as Students’ Problematic Behaviors and Non-attendance conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, through prefectural boards of education and other organizations, the number of violent incidents was 78,787 and the number of acknowledged incidents of bullying was 612,496 – both of which increased approximately by 8% and 13%, respectively, compared with the previous fiscal year. In particular, in elementary schools, the number of violent incidents (43,614 cases in 2019, compared with 10,896 cases in 2013) and the number of acknowledged incidents of bullying (484,545 cases in 2019, compared with 118,748 cases in 2013) increased significantly.

In addition, among the bullying cases, bullying with the use of mobile phones and other devices poses a significant challenge. The number of acknowledged cases of such bullying was 17,924, an increase of about 10% compared with the previous year.

#### *4.3.1.2 Number of human rights counseling and human rights violations cases pertaining to bullying*

During 2019, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice received 10,498 reports of cases pertaining to bullying in schools. Of these reports, the human rights bodies initiated investigations into 2,944 human rights violation cases.

### **4.3.2 Specific measures**

#### *4.3.2.1 Bullying that constitutes a criminal act*

On the issue of bullying in schools, although the police primarily respect on-site responses from the perspective of educational considerations, in cases where criminal acts are committed, the police take necessary measures while taking into account the opinions of affected children and their guardians as well as responses by schools. Moreover, in cases where it is deemed particularly necessary to have child victims recover from psychological damage, juvenile guidance officers of the juvenile support center, with the consent of their guardians, provide continuous support such as counseling. The Government will continue these measures.

#### *4.3.2.2 Promotion of acknowledging bullying and systematic responses by schools*

On the issue of bullying, the Act for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Bullying in June 2013 and came into effect in September 2013, setting forth the basic principles and systems for confronting the problem of bullying with the support of society as a whole. In October 2013, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology formulated the Basic Policies for the Prevention, etc. of Bullying. In March 2017, the Ministry updated the Basic Policies and formulated the Guidelines for Investigations on Serious Situations of Bullying.

In addition, in the above-mentioned Basic Policies, it is envisaged that in order to prevent bullying of students linked to foreign countries, including those who have returned from overseas, those with foreign nationalities and those with non-Japanese guardians, as well as bullying of students for their gender dysphoria, sexual orientation and sexual identity, schools should promote understanding of these students.

To ensure that responses based on these acts and basic policies are thoroughly implemented, the following measures will be taken: (i) organizing training for managerial personnel such as teachers in charge of student guidance and school principals; and (ii) enhancing bullying-related educational counseling systems through the assignment of school counselors and school social workers so that children can easily consult with them.

#### *4.3.2.3 COVID-19*

Actions that may lead to prejudice or discrimination against persons with COVID-19, persons in close contact with them and their family members, medical personnel involved in countermeasures and treatment of COVID-19, and persons involved in maintaining social functions and their families, etc., should never be tolerated. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will promote the importance of giving due consideration to those affected in order to prevent such prejudice and discrimination through

the provision of guidance based on appropriate acknowledge of COVID-19 and according to children's individual stage of development. The Ministry will also disseminate the "24-hour Children's SOS Dial" on its website and SNS for consultations available to children and guardians who are concerned about bullying and prejudice due to COVID-19.

## **4.4 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

### **4.4.1 Current circumstances**

Corporal punishment in schools is prohibited under Article 11 of the School Education Act, which stipulates that principals and teachers shall not use corporal punishment under any circumstances when instructing students. Corporal punishment is not only illegal, but also has a serious negative impact on the physical and mental health of students, and causes a loss of trust in teachers, etc. and schools.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology requested prefectural and designated city boards of education to conduct a survey in order to ascertain the situation of corporal punishment against students and to ensure the prohibition of corporal punishment. The results of the survey showed that during FY 2018, the number of incidents of corporal punishment in public and private elementary schools, junior high schools, compulsory education schools, high schools (including correspondence high schools), school for secondary education, and special needs schools was 767, and the number of students affected was 1,474. This was a significant decrease compared with the number of incidents of corporal punishment (6,721) and the number of students affected (14,208) during FY 2012.

With regard to corporal punishment in the home, in 2016, it was stipulated in the Child Abuse Prevention Act that a person with parental authority must not discipline a child by imposing corporal punishment exceeding the scope necessary for custody and education in disciplining the child. However, as there were cases in which guardians committed child abuse in what they call was corporal punishment as part of discipline, the Child Welfare Act and the Child Abuse Prevention Act were amended in 2019.

### *Number of human rights counseling and human rights violations cases pertaining to corporal punishment*

During 2019, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice received 442 reports of cases pertaining to corporal punishment. Of these reports, the human rights bodies initiated investigations into 141 human rights violation cases.

### **4.4.2 Specific measures**

#### *4.4.2.1 Corporal punishment in schools*

The Government endeavors to give notifications to the effect that corporal punishment is not only illegal, but also has a serious negative impact on the physical and mental health of students, and causes a loss of trust in teachers, etc. and schools.

In addition, regarding sports club activities, the Government formulated the Guidelines for Instruction at Sports Clubs in May 2013 and the Comprehensive Guidelines for Sports Club Activities in March 2018. Regarding cultural club activities, it developed the Comprehensive Guidelines for Cultural Club Activities in December 2018. These guidelines call on principals and club instructors to manage students' physical and mental health, including prevention of

disabilities and trauma and consideration for a well-balanced school life, and to eradicate corporal punishment and harassment in a thorough manner. In order to ensure that these efforts are thoroughly implemented in schools, prefectures and school operators are to provide support, guidance and correction. The Government will continue to promote awareness of these guidelines and conduct necessary follow-ups.

#### *4.4.2.2 Corporal punishment in the home*

The Government has prepared educational materials to promote child-rearing without corporal punishment and has distributed them at infant/toddler health checkups, nursery centers, etc., thereby notifying guardians of child-rearing without corporal punishment or violent language as well as of opportunities to consult with municipalities, etc. in order for them not to bear the burden of child-rearing alone.

Furthermore, the Act on the Partial Amendment to the Child Welfare Act, etc. to Step up Efforts to Prevent Child Abuse – which was enacted in June 2019 and entered into force in April 2020, in light of the fact that there were cases in which guardians committed child abuse in what they call was corporal punishment as part of discipline – stipulates that a person who exercises parental authority must not discipline a child by imposing corporal punishment in disciplining the child, and prohibits corporal punishment in the house.

Based on these measures, the Government has compiled the brochure “For Child-rearing Without Corporal Punishment: A Society that Supports Child-rearing Together” to explain the scope of corporal punishment and the concept of prohibiting corporal punishment to the public in a comprehensible manner. The Government will continue to engage in awareness-raising activity utilizing this brochure and other means.

It should be also noted that, approximately two years after the enforcement of the aforementioned amendment, the Government is to review the way to establish the provisions of disciplinary right in the Civil Code and take necessary measures.

#### *4.4.2.3 Corporal punishment at institutions, etc.*

The Guidelines for Responses to Abuse of Children Whom Admission Measures Are Taken, etc., which were formulated in March 2009, present various measures to be taken in a comprehensive manner, aimed at the prevention and early detection of abuse of children for whom admission measures are taken, etc., as well as prompt reactions to and the prevention of recurrence of such abuse. The Guidelines also illustrate examples of how the heads of child welfare institutions have addressed corporate punishment incidents.

In addition, the Act on the Partial Amendment to the Child Welfare Act, etc. to Step up Efforts to Prevent Child Abuse, which was enacted in June 2019 and entered into force in April 2020, prohibits corporal punishment by child guidance center directors, foster parents, the heads of child welfare institutions, etc., in addition to the prohibition of corporal punishment at home.

The Government will continue to promote awareness of these measures.

## **4.5 CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND RELATED MEASURES IN OTHER AREAS**

### **4.5.1 Violence in sports**

As enshrined in the Basic Act on Sport, sports are performed for the purpose of sound development of mind and body, retention and promotion of health and physical strength,

cultivation of the spirit, etc., and are thus incompatible with violence.

On 5 February, 2013, following the revelation of an incident in which violence had been committed during sports instruction, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology issued the message titled “Eradication of Violence in Sports Instruction.”

In addition, in April 2013, the Task Force on Improving the Quality and Capacity of Sports Coaches was established under the State Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (in charge of sports). On the “modality of sports instruction befitting to a new area,” the Task Force set forth that “coaching befitting to a new area” is a “social activity that takes responsibility for the future of athletes and sport itself” and proposed specific challenges to be addressed in the future.

Accordingly, based on the recognition that it is important to promote the personal growth of athletes and others without corporal punishment or violence, which threatens the value of sports, in sports coaching situations, the Japan Sports Agency has developed a model core curriculum for training good coaches who possess such qualities and abilities. In April 2019, the Japan Sport Association introduced this curriculum in the Program for Nurturing Certified Sports Instructors, which has been conducted throughout Japan.

Furthermore, following various misconduct cases in recent years in different National Sports Federations (NFs), which have led to the defamation of the sports world due to dysfunctional governance and other factors, the Sports Agency adopted the Governance Code for National Sport Federation Members in June 2019 and the Governance Code for General Sport Organizations in August 2019. These Governance Codes set out the principles and norms with which these federation members and general sport organizations should comply. They also stipulate the implementation of compliance education for sports leaders and organization officials, etc., as well as the establishment of a reporting and disciplinary punishment mechanisms. The Sports Agency will work to ensure that the Governance Codes are thoroughly understood by all, and will conduct necessary follow-ups.<sup>11</sup>

#### **4.5.2 Development and support for children and young people**

Based on the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People, the Government of Japan formulated the Outline for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People in 2016, which set forth basic policies concerning measures for development and support for children and young people. Building upon the Outline, the Government has since been carrying out relevant measures. The Outline is to be reviewed approximately every five years, and the Panel of Experts for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People held discussions on the direction of the review of the Outline from April 2019.

On April 6, 2021, the Government of Japan formulated a new “Outline for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People”, based on the report of the panel released in December 2020. The basic policies of the new Outline include: (i) Sound Development of All Children and Young People; (ii) Supporting Children, Young People, and Their Families Who Are Facing Difficulties; (iii) Assistance for Children and Young People Who Will Carve Out a Creative Future; (iv) Development of Social Environments for the Growth of Children and Young People; and (v) Training and Support for Human Resources Who Will Be Responsible

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<sup>11</sup> The Japan Sports Agency has been raising awareness of UNICEF's Children's Rights in Sport Principles, which include the protection of children from violence in sports.



for Supporting the Growth of Children and Young People. The Government of Japan will continue to take measures to end violence against children based on the Outline and the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## 5. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

- 5.1 As described above, WHO's INSPIRE, which specifies seven strategies to end violence against children, calls for cross-sectoral efforts. As a framework for promoting such cross-sectoral efforts, GPeVAC itself is managed by multi-stakeholders. Therefore, in the process of developing the NAP, a diverse range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, foundations, researchers, experts, and children, were involved in the Roundtable on Ending Violence against Children and its Working Group.
- 5.2 In implementing the NAP, the Roundtable on Ending Violence against Children and its Working Group, which are multi-stakeholder frameworks, will be maintained, and each ministry, agency and stakeholder will ensure that their respective measures and efforts are carried out. It is also important for local governments, private organizations, civil society, etc. to make efforts to end violence against children. In the future, it is aimed to promote cooperation among relevant government ministries and agencies, as well as between relevant government ministries/agencies and relevant actors. Furthermore, the Roundtable on Ending Violence against Children will evaluate, monitor and review the NAP. In reviewing the NAP, the Roundtable will continue to hear opinions from a wide range of children and endeavor to take these voices into account.
- 5.3 Specific plans are as follows:
- 5.3.1 The Roundtable on Ending Violence against Children or its Working Group, which is a multi-stakeholder framework, will annually evaluate and monitor the implementation of the NAP.
- 5.3.2 The above evaluation and monitoring will be carried out based on the latest version of the data included in the NAP, bearing in mind the achievement of SDGs Target 16.2. In doing so, the indicators and statistical items used by international organizations such as WHO, UNICEF, and GPeVAC will also be referred.
- 5.3.3 The NAP will be reviewed approximately after three years, taking into account the results of annual evaluation and monitoring.

# Japan's National Action Plan to End Violence Against Children

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Overview of Partial Amendment of the Child Welfare Act and the Act on the Prevention, etc. of Child Abuse (2016)

Emergency Comprehensive Measures to Strengthen Measures to Prevent Child Abuse (2018) [Japanese]

Guidelines for Formulating Prefectural Social Child-rearing Promotion Plans (2018) Summary/Full version [Japanese]

Fundamental Strengthening of Measures to Prevent Child Abuse (2019) [Japanese]

Overview of Amendment of the Child Welfare Act and the Act on the Prevention, etc. of Child Abuse, etc. (2019)

#### 4.2 Sexual Exploitation, etc. and Sexual Violence

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Actions for Proceeding Measures on the Issues of So-called Forced Appearances in Pornographic Materials and "JK Business" (2017) Summary/Full version [Japanese]

Policy for Enhancement of Measures against Sexual Crimes and Violence (2020) Summary/Full version [Japanese]

#### 4.3 Bullying

Basic Policies for the Prevention, etc. of Bullying (2013) [Japanese]

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[Overview of Amendment of the Child Welfare Act and the Act on the Prevention, etc. of Child Abuse, etc. \(2019\)](#)

[For Child-rearing without Corporal Punishment: A Society that Supports Child-rearing Together \(2020\) \[Japanese\]](#)

[Guidelines for Instruction at Sports Clubs \(2013\)](#)

[Comprehensive Guidelines for Sports Club Activities \(2018\)](#)

[Comprehensive Guidelines for Cultural Club Activities \(2018\)](#)

#### 4.5 Other Areas

[Reports of the Project on Developing Model Core Curriculum for Training Coaches \(2014, 2015\) \[Japanese\]](#)

[Governance Code for National Sport Federation Members \(2019\) \(Summary/Full version \[Japanese\]\)](#)

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[Children's Rights in Sport Principles \(UNICEF\) \(2018\)](#)

[Outline for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People \(2016\) \[Japanese\]](#)

[National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights \(2020-2025\) \(2020\)](#)