

Measures to Address Japan's Aging Society

While the population of Japan is rapidly aging, the government of Japan is implementing various measures to create an “Age-free society in which people of all ages can make use of their motivation and abilities depending on their hope.”

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Since the end of the Second World War, Japan's average life expectancy has continued to increase, and Japan has become one of the leading nations in terms of long life expectancy. As of 2018, the average life expectancy was 81.25 years for men and 87.32 years for women. Life expectancy is expected to reach 84.95 years for men and 91.35 years for women by 2065. The percentage of people aged 65 and over (the percentage of the elderly) has also been increasing and is among the highest in the world. It was 28.4% in 2019 and is expected to reach 33.3% in 2036 and 38.4% in 2065.

To respond to the increasingly aging population in Japan, the Cabinet approved the “Guideline of Measures for Ageing Society” [hereafter, the Guideline] in February 2018. The Guideline lays down basic and comprehensive guidelines for public measures to address the aging society over the medium and long terms. Recognizing that older people are “getting younger in situation of physical age” and are “highly motivated to get involved in society,” the Guideline states, “The

general trend of determining over 65 as ‘Older People’ by their age is no longer realistic. The era has come that people even at 70 and older can demonstrate their ability based on their motivation and talent. Therefore, it will be necessary to develop a social environment in which motivated older people will be enabled to demonstrate their abilities, in conjunction with the idea to ‘support the older people.’”

The Guideline lists the following three basic ideas behind measures for the aging society:

- 1) Review standardization by age and aim at creating Age-free society in which people of all ages can make use of their motivation and abilities depending on their hope.
- 2) Develop a community life base and consolidate a local community where people can imagine their elderly life at any life stage.
- 3) Aim for new measures on aging society by using the innovation of technological achievements.

The Guideline then sets out medium-term guidelines for basic measures in six fields as follows (abbreviated):

- 1) **Employment and Income:** Develop an environment to real-

ize a society where all people can work regardless of their age; Stably operate a public pension system; Support asset formation

- 2) **Health and Welfare:** Comprehensively promote health; Sustainably operate the LTC (long-term care) insurance system; Enrich the LTC services (no one should be forced to leave their jobs for long-term care); Sustainably operate medical care system for older people; Promote measures to support older people with dementia; The way of medical care at the end of life; Promote establishment of framework for supporting local communities by mainly residents

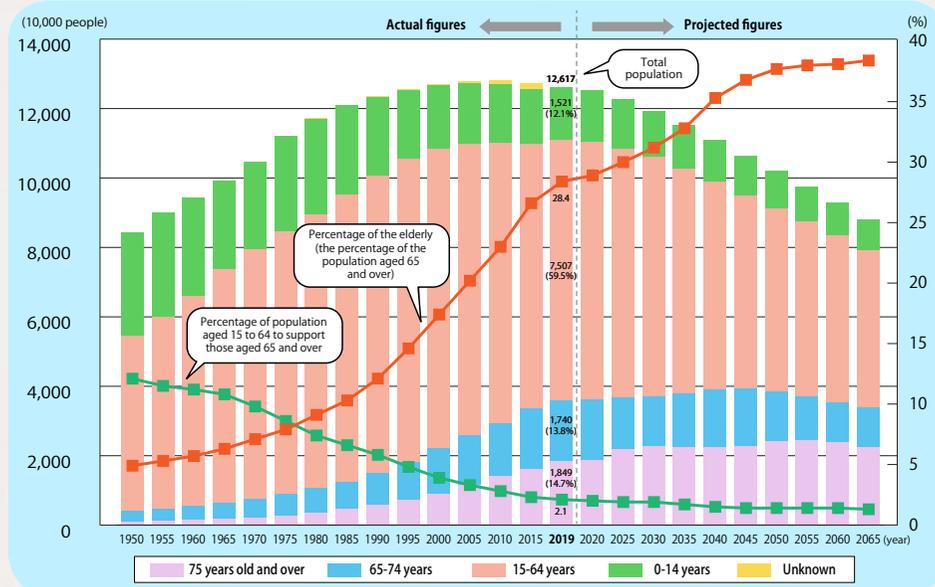
- 3) **Learning and Social Participation:** Promote learning activities; Promote social participation

- 4) **Living Environment:** Secure rich and stable housing life; Comprehensively promote town development for aging society; Ensure traffic safety and Protect from crime and natural disasters etc.; Promote the adult guardianship system

- 5) **Research Development and Contribution to the World:** Utilize advanced technology and activate the market for older people; Promote research and development, and infrastructure improvement; Share knowledge and challenges with foreign countries

- 6) **Promote Success of All Generations:** Promote initiatives to realize a society where people of all generations actively participate in the society by playing their respective role in the aging society

Trends in Ageing Population and Projection for the Future



Source: Annual Report on the Ageing Society (FY 2020)

The government of Japan is implementing a variety of measures in each of the above fields.

Specifically, measures in the field of Employment and Income include the revision of laws, such as mandating employers to make efforts to secure employment up to the age of 70 and the provision of support to companies that hire older people or extend retirement age, to increase employment opportunities for older people.

Measures in the field of Health and Welfare include enhancement of nursing-care related services and human resource development, in order to build a system whereby local residents can receive LTC services in a continuous and integrated manner in their familiar area. In 2019, the Ministerial

Council on the Promotion of Policies for Dementia Care drafted its Framework for Promoting Dementia Care to delay the onset of dementia and develop a society in which dementia patients are able to spend their daily lives in hope.

Measures in the field of Living Environment include support for the creation of barrier-free residences, public transportation and public facilities to achieve an environment in which all people, including older people, are able to live and move freely without stress.

In the field of Research Development and Contribution to the World, Japan exchanged a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of healthcare with the Republic of the Philippines, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Republic of Uganda,

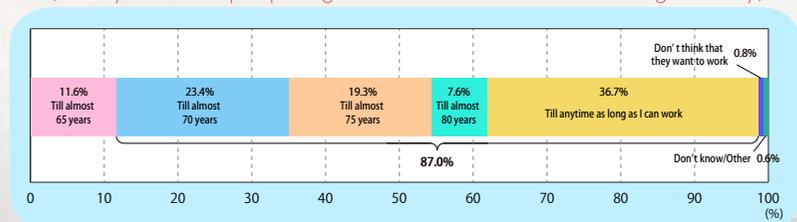
Republic of Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Ghana and Republic of Zambia in 2019. This memorandum is under Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative and the Africa Health and Wellbeing Initiative which is promoted for the development of nursing-care related industries and human resources and the prevention of disease in Asia and Africa.

To establish the Age-free society stated in the basic principles of the “Guideline of Measures for Ageing Society,” the awareness of both companies and citizens is important, in addition to the government measures above. It is also necessary to create a variety of opportunities for mutual support and to expand the ways in which older people are able to actively support society through the promotion of social participation activities for older people regardless of employment form. This constitutes a major challenge for the future. ■

Note: This article has been created with the consent of the Cabinet Office and on the basis of materials published by the Cabinet Office.

Until what age would you like to work with income?

(Survey results for people aged 60 and over who are working currently)



Source: Annual Report on the Ageing Society (FY 2020)