

II Policy Framework

施策の枠組み等

1. The Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society

The Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society was promulgated and enacted on June 23, 1999. The purpose of this law is to comprehensively and systematically promote formation of a gender-equal society. The Law clarifies five basic principles relating to the formation of a gender-equal society, and stipulates the roles of the state, local governments, and citizens regarding their respective responsibilities.

Five Basic Principles

1. Respect for the human rights of women and men (Article 3)

Formation of a gender-equal society shall be promoted based on respect for the human rights of women and men.

2. Consideration of social systems or practices (Article 4)

Care should be taken so that social systems and practices have as neutral an impact as possible on selecting social activities.

3. Joint participation in planning and deciding policies, etc. (Article 5)

Formation of a gender-equal society shall be promoted based on securing opportunities for women and men to participate jointly as equal partners in the society in planning and deciding policies of the State or local governments, or policies of private bodies.

4. Compatibility of activities in family life and other activities (Article 6)

Formation of a gender-equal society shall be promoted so that women and men can perform their roles smoothly as household members in home-related activities.

5. International cooperation (Article 7)

In consideration of the close relationship between the internal promotion of the formation of a gender-equal society and efforts by the international community, formation of a gender-equal society shall be promoted based on international cooperation.

Responsibility of the State, Local Governments, and Citizens

Responsibility of the State

● The State is responsible for the comprehensive formulation and implementation of policies related to the promotion of formation of a gender-equal society (including Positive Action/Temporary Special Measures*) pursuant to the basic principles on formation of a gender-equal society (Article 8).

* Positive Action/Temporary Special Measures: Positive provision of the opportunities stipulated in the preceding item to both women and men within the necessary limits to redress gender disparities in terms of such opportunities.

● The Government shall establish a basic plan with regard to the promotion of formation of a Gender-equal Society (hereinafter referred to as “Basic Plan for Gender Equality”), in order to comprehensively and systematically implement policies related to promotion of formation of a Gender-equal Society (Article 13).

Responsibility of Local Government

● Local governments are responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies related to the promotion of the formation of a gender-equal society corresponding to national measures, and other policies in accordance with the unique characteristics of local areas, pursuant to the basic principles (Article 9).

Responsibility of Citizens

● Citizens shall make efforts to contribute to the formation of a gender-equal society in all areas of society, pursuant to the basic principles. (Article 10)

2. Basic Plan for Gender Equality

On December 27, 2005, the Cabinet approved the Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality, the second national basic plan based upon the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society.

12 Priority Fields

1. Expand women's participation in policy decision-making processes
2. Review social systems and practices and raise awareness from a gender-equal perspective
3. Secure equal opportunities and treatment between women and men in the field of employment
4. Establish gender equality for realizing dynamic rural areas
5. Support the efforts of men and women to harmonize work with their family and community life
6. Develop conditions that allow the elderly to live with peace of mind
7. Eliminate all forms of violence against women
8. Support lifelong health for women
9. Promote gender equality in the media
10. Enrich education and learning that promote gender equality and facilitate diversity of choice
11. Contribute to the "Equality, Development and Peace" of the global community
12. Promote gender equality in fields requiring new initiatives

The Council for Gender Equality is mandated to monitor the implementation of policies related to the promotion of the formation of a gender-equal society. To promote the Basic Plan for Gender Equality effectively, the Council monitors policies based on the Basic Plan and utilizes the ideas of experts in gender issues and other areas.

Prefectural governments are required to draw up their own gender-equality plans based on the Basic Plan. Municipalities are also expected to prepare their gender-equality plans, based on prefectural plans and also the national Basic Plan. The Cabinet Office provides prefectural and municipal local governments with the information that they may require in order to formulate their plans for gender equality.

Framework of the Basic Plan for Gender Equality

The Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality consists of 3 parts.

Part 1 shows the basic philosophy, structure and highlights of the Basic Plan for Gender Equality. Part 2 sets out 12 important fields and each field has a basic policy direction (through the year 2020) and specific measures (through the end of FY 2010). Necessary strategies to promote the measures for formation of a gender-equal society comprehensively and systematically are shown in Part 3.

A sample of the Plan is as follows.

7. Eliminate all forms of violence against women (excerpt from the Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality)

Goal	Basic policy directions	Specific efforts	Ministers/Agencies responsible for implementation
In order to eliminate all forms of violence against women, create a foundation to eliminate violence against women (for example, by building social awareness), and comprehensively promote a wide range of measures corresponding to the type of violence.	(1) Create a foundation to prevent and eliminate violence against women Promote publicity and awareness activities to create a society that prevents and does not tolerate violence against women. Improve and strengthen correctional and social treatments for offenders to prevent them from recommitting crimes.	A. Ensure thorough social awareness of violence against women (a) Conduct broad awareness activities to raise nationwide awareness through programs such as "Campaign to eliminate violence against women," and "Gender Equality Week." (b) Develop preventive and awareness programs, and implement measures based on such programs from the perspective of prevention, to prevent people from becoming offenders and victims of violence against women. (The rest is omitted.)	(a) Cabinet Office, Ministry of Justice, Related Ministries (b) Cabinet Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (The rest is omitted.)
		B. Improvement of the system (The rest is omitted.)	
		C. Build an environment to prevent violence against women (The rest is omitted.)	
		D. Conduct surveys and research related to violence against women (The rest is omitted.)	

Numerical Targets (Examples)

1. Expand Women's Participation in Policy Decision-making Processes

- In all fields of society we can expect to see the proportion of women occupying positions of leadership increase to at least around 30% by 2020. To make this possible, the government will have to take the lead over the private sector in actively employing women and will also have to encourage autonomous efforts to set numerical targets and realize deadlines in each area.
- The standard figure for the proportion of women among people recruited by the national government as a whole up to around FY2010 is approximately 30% in terms of successful candidates in Level I recruitment examination in general administrative, legal and economic services (21.5% in FY2005). As regards other examinations, the aim is to raise the proportion of women as much as possible, taking account of the targets set for the Type 1 clerical category examinations and bearing in mind factors such as conditions regarding the recruitment of women in the case of each examination.
- Efforts will be made to encourage employees to take leave for child-rearing, nursing, etc., and the securing of substitute staff, as well as to provide information and to increase understanding of each system. In particular, in the area of child-rearing, efforts will be made to raise the low ratio of male employees who take leave for this purpose, with an eye towards numerical targets (for men the target is 10%; in FY2004 the actual rate was 0.9%) for childcare leave rates in society as a whole.
- National universities will be required to make efforts towards raising the ratio of female teaching staff in line with the target of “raising the ratio of female teaching staff to 20% by 2010” as stipulated in the report of the Japan Association of National Universities. (Ratio of 6.6% in FY1998)

2. Review Social Systems and Practices and Raise Awareness from a Gender-equal Perspective

- The aim is to create universal (100%) awareness within Japan of the term “Gender-equal Society” by FY2010. (52.5% rate of awareness in FY2004)

3. Secure Equal Opportunities and Treatment between Women and Men in the Field of Employment

- The ratio of companies engaged in positive action will be raised to 40% by FY2009. (29.5% in FY2003)
- The ratio of teleworkers homeworkers within the working population will be raised to 20% by 2010. (6.1% in FY2002)

5. Support the Efforts of Men and Women to Harmonize Work with their Family and Community Life

- The aim is to raise the ratios of people taking childcare leave to 10% for men and 80% for women by around FY2014. (Ratios of 0.56% for men and 70.6% for women in FY2004)
- The aim is to achieve a diffusion rate of 25% by around FY2014 for a variety of measures including reduced working hours until the time a child enters primary school. (Rate of 10.5% in FY2004)
- Centering on municipalities with 50 or more children on the waiting list for admission to childcare facilities, efforts will be made to promote a strategy of “zero-waiting list.” This will be achieved by intensive efforts to increase the numbers of children who can gain admittance to kindergartens over the three-year period to FY2007 with the aim of reaching a figure of 2,150,000 children in 2009. (2,030,000 children in FY2004)

7. Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women

- The aim is to obtain virtually universal recognition that the actions of “slapping” (73.4% in FY2003) and “threatening with a clenched fist” (56.3% in FY2003) occurring between married couples constitute acts of violence.

8. Support Lifelong Health for Women

- Raising the rate of participation in sporting activities at least once a week by adult women to 50% by FY2010. (38.5% in FY2004)
- Raising the ratio of those satisfied with pregnancy and childbirth to 100% by FY2010. (84.4% in FY2000)

10. Enrich Education and Learning that Promote Gender Equality and Facilitate Diversity of Choice

- Efforts will be made to achieve the “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),” one of the aims of which is to do away with all disparities between men and women in education by 2015 as agreed at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations held in 2000.

12. Promote Gender Equality in Fields Requiring New Initiatives

- In order to encourage the recruitment of female researchers, individual research organizations will be expected to set numerical targets for the recruitment of female researchers, to strive towards their realization, and to publish figures on the extent to which these targets have actually been achieved. The criteria in this regard will be the target values set out in the report of the Expert Panel on Basic Policy in the Council for Science and Technology Policy. Taking account of the proportion of women in the final stages of doctoral courses in their respective fields, the aim will thus be to achieve a ratio of 25% for female recruitment in the natural sciences as a whole (20% in physics, 15% in engineering, 30% in agriculture, 30% in health and medicine). The government will ascertain and publish details on how individual universities and public research organizations are tackling this issue together with figures on the ratios of female researchers.
- Efforts will be made to encourage the activities of women in fire-fighting organizations and in the future to achieve a figure of at least 100,000 for the number of female fire service personnel throughout Japan. (13,000 in 2004)