

Implementation Plan for Education for Sustainable Development in Japan (The Second ESD Implementation Plan) (Provisional translation)

Inter-ministerial liaison committee on ESD

Chapter I. Overview

1. Introduction

(1) Significance of ESD, and the SDGs

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is defined as learning and educational activities aiming to create a sustainable society, with the ultimate goal to ensure bountiful living of mankind for future generations. Since modern society faces climate change, biodiversity loss, resource depletion, deepening poverty, and various other problems resulting from development activities by humans, ESD is designed to encourage us to view these issues as our own challenges, to examine the fundamental causes of the problem, and to motivate us to “think globally and act locally,” thereby creating new values and invoking behavioral transformations that can bring into solutions for those problems. ESD is a concept proposed by the Government of Japan and endorsed by member states in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002. Since then, ESD has been internationally promoted under the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

In September 2015, the United Nations adopted “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” with presenting its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹, which require the integration of the three dimensions—economic, social and environmental—to shift the world onto the path towards sustainable and resilient development. The SDGs embody the goals that the world should share and achieve in the course of seeking solutions for poverty, gender equality, efficient use of energy and resources, decarbonisation, improved working conditions, climate change, and various other challenges that modern society faces. In the present society, where technological innovation has made us materially richer but also facing various challenges, the importance of taking action to achieve a sustainable society has become even more important.

ESD is defined as the education to think our own problems in our daily lives in the context of resolving global issues and to encourage our behavioral transformations. In other words, ESD can be described as the education to foster the competencies needed to realize a sustainable society. If the knowledge, skills and values that learners have acquired through ESD, whether not only in school education but also in other educational activities in all other situations including social education and lifelong learning, evolve into their behavioral

¹ The SDGs are a set of 17 overarching development goals for the entire international community, including developed countries, with a deadline of 2030. It aims to address a wide range of economic, social and environmental challenges in an integrated manner, with the aim of achieving a society where “no one is left behind”.

transformations, it will eventually lead to the achievement of the SDGs to realize a sustainable society. A United Nations General Assembly resolution in 2019 has reaffirmed that ESD is a key enabler to achieving all the SDGs.

The COVID-19 global pandemic highlights the growing importance of fostering socioemotional skills and non-cognitive skills in the course of educational activities. In order for human beings to overcome all sorts of difficulties and accomplish sustainable growth, each and every one of us must transform our own behaviors and then interact with society as well as face and explore the challenges of our society. In this sense, ESD is becoming even more important.

(2) Global efforts and challenges to implement “United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development” and “Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development”

As explained before, how ESD should be has been discussed under the initiative of UNESCO. Under the global framework to promote ESD, the decade from 2005 to 2014 was set as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). In November 2014, on the occasion of the end of the DESD, the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development was held in Japan. The conference adopted “Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development” and decided to launch the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP) from 2015.

According to the GAP, political agreements, financial incentives or technological solutions alone do not suffice to grapple with the challenges of sustainable development. It will require transformations in the way we think and the way we act—a rethink of how we interact with society. To drive such change, the GAP has reaffirmed a critical role that education should play. To accelerate the progress towards sustainable development, the GAP aims to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning.

To strategically foster stakeholder commitment, the GAP has identified five priority action areas where all stakeholders are asked to take action: (i) Advancing policy, (ii) Transforming learning and training environments, (iii) Building capacities of educators and trainers, (iv) Empowering and mobilizing youth, and (v) Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. While efforts towards the specified goal in each priority action area are showing modest progress, the GAP suggests that those efforts need to be further coordinated among different action areas.

(3) Formulation of “Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs” (ESD for 2030)

Based on the efforts under the DESD and the GAP explained in (2), the new framework “Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs” (ESD for 2030) was formulated for the period from 2020 to 2030 and acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly in its 74th session in 2019. ESD for 2030 aims to build a more just and sustainable world through strengthening ESD and contributing to the achievement of the 17 SDGs. This framework is characterized by the following three features.

① Emphasis on education's role for achieving the 17 SDGs

ESD for 2030 is putting emphasis to the role of education in the achievement of the inter-connected 17 SDGs. ESD raises the awareness of the 17 goals in education settings and mobilizes action towards the achievement of the SDGs.

② Focus on the big individual and societal transformation towards sustainable development

The idea of big transformation focuses on individual transformative action required for sustainable development and keeping a balancing between economic growth and sustainable development.

③ Emphasis on Member States' leadership

Demonstrating Strong leadership from Member States is required to mainstream ESD in all activities on education and sustainable development at the country level as a part of their implementation of SDG 4² and all the other SDGs.

With a continued focus on the five priority action areas under the GAP, this new framework mentions the following areas of implementation: Implementing ESD for 2030 at country level, Harnessing partnerships and collaboration, Communicating for action, Tracking issues and trends, Mobilizing resources, and Monitoring progress³.

2. Positioning of the Second ESD Implementation Plan and the Scheme for Implementing the Plan

Under the global ESD framework, Japan has been promoting domestic ESD efforts in accordance with the Plan for Implementing the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), formulated in 2006, and the Plan for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (GAP), formulated in 2016. In 2019 as the last year of the GAP, Japan reviewed the progress and results of these domestic implementation plans. The review concluded that further efforts to enforce policies in cooperation with various stakeholders would be needed and that efforts to share information at home and abroad should be enhanced in such ways as disseminating good practices.

Based on the review findings as described above and the new global framework of the ESD for 2030 as explained 1.(3), this 2nd ESD Implementation Plan has been established to contribute to the commitments by various stakeholders in Japan (the national government, local governments, civil societies, private sector entities, media, research institutes, academic associations, educational institutions including schools, individuals including school teachers,

² Goal 4 “Quality Education”: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

³ The Roadmap (Education for sustainable development: a roadmap), published in November 2020, sets the establishment of country initiatives (in Japan, the development of national ESD implementation plans) as one of the priority implementation areas, as a mechanism for realising ESD for 2030.

and all other stakeholders involved in ESD) in the five priority action areas.

The well-balanced development of three core competencies (knowledge and skills, abilities to think, make judgments and express themselves, and the motivation to learn and humanity) in all learning stages, as shown in the National Curriculum Standards, will contribute to the promotion of ESD. In addition, Japan's promotion of ESD targets at all actors in Japanese society in various situations, in light of Japan's policies to achieve the SDGs, which policies cover the issues on gender equality, the creation of a green community as represented by carbon neutrality by 2050, the promotion of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation (DX), and digitization of social systems. Japan's ESD is required to be implemented together with all these policies due to the necessity to effectively foster builders of a sustainable society. As the country bringing up ESD first, Japan is willing to lead ESD activities worldwide on an ongoing basis in such ways to present good practices to the world.

During the course of enforcing this 2nd ESD Implementation Plan, mechanisms to incorporate various stakeholders' wisdom will be continuously operated through cross-ministry collaboration and policymaking under the initiative of the Interministerial liaison committee on ESD, with advice from expert panels. Moreover, all relevant ministries and agencies will closely coordinate and strive for the dissemination and advancement of ESD in their respective areas, and opinions will be gathered from a wide variety of stakeholders through discussions with the Roundtable Meeting on the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD Roundtable) and Japanese National Commission for UNESCO on how to push forward ESD.

3. Basic Standpoint for ESD

(1) Commitment to achieve the SDGs

The SDGs are a set of the universal goals designed by balancing the three dimensions in the entire world—economic, social and environmental—which are integrated and indivisible. Developed and developing countries must pursue these goals in order to build a sustainable world leaving no one behind. As explained before, ESD is intended to contribute to the successful achievement of all the SDGs. Towards a Decade of Actions to achieve the SDGs by 2030, this 2nd ESD Implementation Plan aligns with the ESD for 2030 and even more positively and clearly declares the contribution to the SDGs. Under this Implementation Plan, Japan will extend measures for learning and human resources development that are conducive to the achievement of the SDGs.

In this context, further partnering should be pursued more broadly, in order to encourage collaborative work by people involving in ESD together with other stakeholders acting towards sustainable development. At the same time, public awareness activities need to be strengthened to convince people that ESD can contribute significantly to the achievement of all the SDGs.

Existing global initiatives for the SDGs include the Paris Agreement on climate change⁴,

⁴ The Paris Agreement is a new international framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions after 2020, superseding the Kyoto Protocol.

the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction⁵, and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development⁶. These initiatives also should be taken into consideration and effectively utilized for promoting ESD.

(2) Enhancing partnership among stakeholders

The ESD for 2030 requires that member states encourage stakeholders participation in respective priority action areas in the context of their domestic SDG framework and assist their networking for mutual cooperation under collaboration strategies. As explained before, Japan's deployment of ESD involves the national government, international organizations including UNESCO and the United Nations University, local governments, civil societies, private sector entities, media, research institutes, academic associations, educational institutions including schools, individuals including school teachers, and all other stakeholders. To link existing networks developed in respective areas, multi-layered networks⁷ should be further developed.

The Government of Japan is seeking to enforce ESD through crossover collaboration by multiple ministries and agencies under the framework of the Inter-ministerial liaison committee on ESD. To help build crosscutting partnerships among stakeholders, dissemination of information about the efforts implemented by respective stakeholders will be enhanced, and information sharing and the creation of opportunities for collaboration. will be promoted..

(3) Promoting efforts in the priority action areas

This 2nd ESD Implementation Plan presents such planning that will contribute to the commitments by the stakeholders in the following five priority action areas in accordance with the ESD for 2030 agenda.

(i) Advancing policy (integrating ESD in relevant policies)

The national government puts ESD at the center of Japan's education policies and seeks to transform education in Japan through whole-institution approaches.

(ii) Transforming learning environments (implementing whole-institution approaches⁸)

Whole-institution approaches in ESD will afford opportunities for learners to acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for realizing the 17 SDGs and to take

⁵ The Sendai Framework is a set of guidelines adopted at the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture in 2015, aimed at providing a framework for countries around the world to work towards disaster reduction.

⁶ Adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2017, the initiative will be implemented intensively over the decade 2021-2030 to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by promoting marine science.

⁷ Multi-layered networks are a concept that strengthens cooperation between stakeholders by connecting the networks established in each field with further networks in different fields.

⁸ This approach refers to the collaboration of all educational institutions under the principles relating to sustainable development.

action towards sustainable development.

(iii) Building capacities of educators (fostering educators who practice ESD)

Educators should be afforded opportunities to cultivate knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes necessary for achieving the 17 SDGs and implement ESD as action towards sustainable development through whole-institution approaches..

(iv) Empowering and mobilizing youth (Supporting engagement of youth who are highly motivated to transform the society for sustainable development through ESD)

Youth should be given support for cultivating abilities necessary for becoming a player who can lead transformations.

(v) Accelerating local level actions (encouraging the creation of sustainable communities through ESD)

ESD should be recognized as a key enabler to realize sustainability at local levels and as lifelong learning opportunities.

(4) Leading role to promote ESD in the global community

The concept of ESD, which had been initially proposed by Japan, has been developing into worldwide efforts. With this background in mind, Japan is willing to introduce good ESD practices worldwide on an ongoing basis and to play a leading role in ESD activities in the world. In the conduct of specific projects or programs to promote ESD, cooperation with international organizations will be sought to the extent possible and international information sharing will be further developed.

Chapter II: Concrete ESD Efforts

To promote ESD more effectively, this chapter describes main issues that stakeholders should address in the five priority action areas specified in the ESD for 2030. However, this is not intended to disregard efforts in any areas other than the specified priority action areas. In the conduct of ESD, respective stakeholders are expected to think by themselves and take self-driven actions. On the occasion of promoting ESD, some critical issues in modern society including the COVID-19 pandemic and gender equality have to be taken into consideration.

1. Stakeholders' Efforts in the Priority Action Areas

(1) Priority action area 1: Advancing policy

Policymakers take an important role in global transformations needed for sustainable development. To enable educational institutions and other stakeholders to further advance ESD, it is essential that policymakers build frameworks under established policies.

Japan has been making long efforts to develop ESD in an organized and systematic manner. From here on out, relevant ministries and agencies will continuously integrate the principle of ESD in the guidelines to be formulated in the capacity of the national government and ongoingly support stakeholders' efforts in various areas. Such support

includes providing learning materials or assisting their preparation, carrying out public awareness activities, offering information about good practices, and holding policy dialogues.

ESD for 2030 is stressing that individual transformative action is the most significant ESD's key factor for realizing the sustainable society and societal transformation is required to address the urgent sustainability challenges, while balancing economic growth and sustainable development. Therefore, policymakers should willingly incorporate ESD in the efforts to promote SDG-related policies and various other policies associated with the creation of a sustainable society.

<Main stakeholders in this priority action area>

– National and local government (including Boards of Education)

a) Integrating ESD in SDG-related policies

• Positioning of ESD in the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles

The national government's focus on ESD is proclaimed in the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles Revised Edition (Decision on December 20, 2019 by the SDGs Promotion Headquarters). According to the revised Guiding Principles, the roles that educational institutions are expected to play include: contributing to the enhancement of ESD-related activities at home and abroad, further activating the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, and prompting the creation of environments including social education related institutions for learning while providing connections to a variety of cultures in a way to contributing to the SDGs.

• Promoting ESD in the policy areas contributing to the achievement of SDG 4

The Government of Japan will promote ESD activities in various policy areas contributing to the achievement of SDG 4, either in or outside educational institutions. Such activities include: the promotion of health education, the promotion of dietary education, the promotion of safety education, the promotion of human rights education, the promotion of education for international understanding, education that promotes gender equality, education based on the idea of multiculturalism, the promotion of education for foreign pupils and students living and learning in Japan, the promotion of Japanese language teaching for foreigners living in Japan, the promotion of environmental education and collaborative efforts, fostering next-generation leaders in the agriculture sector, fostering industrial human resources in Asia, and public awareness activities to prompt ethical consumption.

When various documents helpful for the achievement of SDG 4 are to be formulated under the name of the Government of Japan, the concept of ESD should be incorporated to the possible extent.

b) Positioning of ESD in education policies

• Positioning in the Third Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education

The Third Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education formulated in 2018 requires that

the national government endeavor to enhance activities of UNESCO Associated Schools⁹ at elementary, secondary and higher education levels, which Japan casts as one of the hubs for advancing ESD, in order to widely make known and share good ESD practices nationwide and to help schools practice and disseminate ESD and interact with one another.

- Practicing ESD based on the National Curriculum Standards

Looking into the National Curriculum Standards that has been phased in since fiscal year 2020, its foreword and general provisions bring up the fostering of “builders of a sustainable society” through the realization of curriculum open to society. In pursuit of a sustainable society, the Government of Japan ensures that ESD will be steadily implemented in school curricula based on the National Curriculum Standards, working with the Board of Education and others.

- c) Practicing ESD in the context of policies associated with global issues

- Positioning of ESD in policies associated with global issues

In the Act on the Promotion of Environmental Conservation Activities through Environmental Education (“Environmental Education Promotion Act”) enacted in 2003 and amended in 2011 (under the co-jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and the Ministry of the Environment), the perspectives of ESD are emphatically proclaimed. The Fifth Basic Environment Plan based on this Act advocates the concept of “Regional Circular and Ecological Sphere” (Regional CES, aiming at achieving local SDGs), which embodies the future to be realized through the approach of integrated improvements on environment, economy and society to aim at building sustainable communities. This Environment Plan states that leaders responsible for building sustainable communities should be fostered based on the concept of ESD.

To enforce the Environmental Education Promotion Act and the basic plan based on the Act, the Government of Japan will continuously endeavor to disseminate and advance ESD. In the course of fostering leaders for the Regional CES (aiming at local SDGs) as our desired future, ESD approaches should be actively utilized, which will help the prevalence of ESD.

- d) Promoting ESD at global level

- Coordination with foreign countries to promote ESD

The Government of Japan promotes ESD jointly with foreign countries. Such joint efforts include cooperation with the US through bilateral environmental policy dialogues¹⁰,

⁹ Associated Schools are schools that practice peace and international cooperation in order to realise the UNESCO principles set out in the UNESCO Charter. At present, there are more than 11,000 UNESCO schools in more than 180 countries and territories around the world, with 1,120 schools registered in Japan (as of November 2019).

¹⁰ This was a bilateral dialogue on the environment held in 2015 between Japan's Environment Minister Mochizuki and United States Environmental Protection Agency

cooperation with China and South Korea through the framework of trilateral education ministers meetings, cooperation with member states of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), cooperation with ASEAN countries and African countries, and strategic overseas deployment of Japanese style education¹¹.

- Education support in developing countries

To contribute to the promotion of ESD in developing countries, the Government of Japan will aid in their efforts to foster leaders responsible for their future and growth, to nurture human resources to promote ESD in school education in developing countries, and to develop educational materials in cooperation with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other organizations.

- Promoting ESD with international organizations

To encourage each country's domestic efforts to promote ESD, the Government of Japan will back up UNESCO, which is a leading agency for SDG 4, by means of contribution to its trust funds. In the education area, the Government of Japan will cooperate with the United Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to achieve the SDGs and to promote ESD.

The United Nations University is carrying out the ESD Programme (acknowledgment of Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCE¹²), and the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net¹³)) and some other programs for achieving the SDGs in an integrated manner. The Government of Japan will cooperate in these programs and assist the activities to achieve the SDGs based on education or research in sustainability areas, in close coordination with universities in Japan and abroad.

(2) Priority action area 2: Transforming learning environments

To encourage learners to become a leader who can initiate activities giving rise to transformations towards sustainable development, learning environments at educational institutions need to be transformed. It is imperative that education providers and institutions themselves implement ESD-centred learning and teaching methods as an

Administrator McCarthy. Issues discussed included, in particular, mercury, climate change, air quality management in the Asia Pacific region, environmental education, decontamination, children's environment and health, and environmental impact assessment.

¹¹This refers to Japan's unique educational system and educational activities, such as elementary and secondary education, which aims to nurture balanced "solid academic ability", "richness in mind" and "healthy body", and the technical college system, which provides practical and advanced education for future engineers. Since 2008, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and others, has been operating an online platform "EDU-Port Japan" to promote its overseas expansion.

¹² Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) is to create networks of organisations and groups engaged in ESD in a local community to work together to implement ESD more effectively.

¹³ A network of environmental graduate schools in the Asia-Pacific region administered by the United Nations University.

organisation, and build systems that enable learners to contribute their own learning to their local community through an whole-institution approach.

As is shown in the fact that the concept of ESD has been incorporated in the National Curriculum Standards, Japan has been striving to transform learning contents to those oriented to a sustainable society. From now on, the government will endeavor to further enhance learning environments through effective utilization of ICT and other solutions and to offer more diverse learning opportunities. Considering that various pioneering ESD-related programmes or projects in Japan have been executed by local communities, members in each region should preferably share their local targets and define the roles to be assigned to respective stakeholders in the region, in order that all those stakeholders will work together to resolve their local problems.

<Main stakeholders in this priority action area>

- Schools
 - National and Local governments (including boards of education)
 - Other educational institutions (social education facilities, universities, organizations practicing ESD)
 - Civil societies including NGOs, NPOs and public interest corporation, private sector entities, and local communities and others.
- Practicing ESD based on the National Curriculum Standards (ICYMI)

Looking into the National Curriculum Standards that has been phased in since fiscal year 2020, its foreword and general provisions bring up the fostering of “builders of a sustainable society” through the realization of curriculum open to society. In pursuit of a sustainable society, the Government of Japan ensures that ESD will be steadily implemented in school curricula based on the National Curriculum Standards, working with the Board of Education and others.

- Enhancing education environments through ICT

To provide learning experiences that the era of “Society 5.0¹⁴” demands, the Government of Japan has launched the Global and Innovation Gateway for All (GIGA) School Program¹⁵. This program promises “one device per one student with a high-speed networks in schools.” In order to operate this scheme in full swing from April 2021, the improvement of school ICT environments has been just set off simultaneously all over Japan, and the education using digital contents has been promoted. In addition, the government will provide support to help children deepen wide knowledge and other skills they have learned in school through education using ICT in their local communities and to

¹⁴ A human-centered society that balances economic advancement with the resolution of social problems by a system that highly integrates cyberspace and physical space.

¹⁵ GIGA School Programme is to realize an educational ICT environment optimized for each of the various children, including those with special needs, and ensure further development of their abilities, by ensuring to provide “1 device for 1 student with a high-speed network in schools” in a unified manner.

encourage their hands-on learning.

- **Building and enhancing networks to promote whole-institution approaches**

In order to encourage whole-institution approaches, the Government of Japan will further enhance the ESD promotion network, prompt the formation of ESD consortia, and expand model projects. Through using “A Guide to Promoting ESD” or enhancing the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, the government will facilitate schools’ cooperation with other schools, local communities, universities, private sector entities, social education facilities and other stakeholders.

On the other hand, schools, social education facilities, universities, local governments, civil societies, private sector entities and other organizations are required to develop or expand whole-institution approaches in cooperation with various stakeholders and strengthen their own governance system to realize whole-institution approaches.

- **Ensuring a wide variety of learning opportunities**

The Government of Japan will encourage experience-based learning activities for youth and children, either in-school or out-of-school, and support efforts to enhance such experience-based programs. Among others, the government intends to create opportunities where children can interact with nature, including nature observation tours or natural environment learning programmes. For this purpose, the government will seek cooperation with formal schools and non-formal or informal nature schools in respective regions.

In this context, schools, social education facilities, universities, local governments, civil societies, private sector entities and other organizations are encouraged to organize various regional programs which involve the region’s cultural things or activities (e.g., World Heritage site, traditional events) or incorporate the region’s resources (e.g., Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks), in cooperation with various stakeholders in the region.

(3) Priority action area 3: Building capacities of educators

While educators are main actors to support learners’ sustainable learning, their roles are significantly changing along with social changes. To guide learners, educators themselves need to have knowledge and skills and to understand which approaches will be the most effective for learning.

In Japan as well, leaders or instructors working in various organizations play a tremendous role as facilitators to practice ESD. Skill development is required, not only of school or university teachers, but also of students aspiring to teaching as profession and ESD practitioners in-formal or informal education.

<Main stakeholders in this priority action area>

- Those who deliver education in the form of ESD, including school teachers
- National and Local governments (including boards of education)
- Other educational institutions (social education facilities, universities, organizations practicing ESD)

- Civil societies including NGOs, NPOs, and public interest corporation, private sector entities and others
- Training for teachers

To deliver high-quality learning that can respond to changing social needs and to improve educators’ teaching skills necessary for adequately handling increasingly complex educational issues, the Government of Japan will stress the concepts of the SDGs and ESD in teacher training. Efforts to improve skills and qualities of teaching staff will be sought through utilizing “A Guide to Promoting ESD” with case studies of good ESD practices, and other resources for the promotion of ESD produced by various stakeholders, informing and providing training to enable them to practice and advance high-quality ESD in school curricula and in education programs for local communities, and expanding model projects for upgrading teacher training.

Schools, local governments, social education facilities, universities and other organizations are expected to voluntarily hold training seminars or workshops for teachers with a focus on region-specific issues and to enhance ESD training programs through effectively utilizing “A Guide to Promoting ESD” with case studies of good ESD practices and other tools.
- International exchange programs for teachers

The Government of Japan will invite foreign teaching staff to Japan and dispatch Japanese teachers overseas to explore good practices of both ESD and education for international understanding in schools and local communities in different countries. At the same time, the government will strengthen cooperation on ESD with various foreign countries.
- Fostering ESD practitioners in respective organizations

To effectively foster ESD practitioners, the Government of Japan will foster professionals who can design teacher training programs and assist those professionals’ activities.

Local governments, boards of education, social education facilities, universities, private sector entities and other organizations are expected to ensure that their staff in charge of teacher training can design and deliver training programs incorporating ESD perspectives. To hold such training programs, it is recommendable to actively seek the participation of civil societies, environmental counselors or other external experts.
- Promoting mutual learning in the ESD promotion network

Based on the Implementation Plan for Education for Sustainable Development in Japan (March 2016, Inter-ministerial liaison committee on ESD), the Government of Japan is strengthening mutual learning among educators in different positions in the ESD promotion network where various stakeholders can participate. With the goal of building a sustainable society, this network has been developed for the purpose of encouraging multiple stakeholders engaged in ESD to work together in various dimensions, primarily for

regional projects, and to advance ESD based on their crosscutting collaboration. The government will continuously endeavor to create opportunities for those who participate in the network to share the latest trends of ESD and good ESD practices in different regions and to interact for mutual learning.

- ICT-driven training

Under the necessity of educator training with due consideration to COVID-19 infection prevention, the preparation of video materials and the utilization of online solutions have been rapidly advancing. With the improvement of operational efficiency owing to the utilization of ICT, the limitations of online solutions are being understood more clearly. Since the know-how and wisdom accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic will surely be useful in the post-COVID-19 era, the Government of Japan is going to continue ICT-driven training for educators engaged in ESD.

(4) Priority action area 4: Empowering and mobilizing youth

Facing many kinds of challenges in modern society, youth are becoming more willing to express opinions and move into action than before to address global issues. Since youth have an ability to find out creative and originative solutions, the presence of youth is indispensable to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, empowering all youth, regardless of gender, nationality, disabilities, socio-economic background of their family etc constitutes the core of the efforts to advance ESD.

According to Japan's SDGs Action Plan, Japan's "SDGs Model" focuses on three pillars, one of which is empowerment of the next generation and women. It is therefore necessary to reach out to a wide range of generations including children at an early age and young adults, to support voluntary activities by all youth, and to create mechanisms for reflecting the voice of youth in society through various means.

<Main stakeholders in this priority action area>

- Youth organizations, youth support organizations
- Civil societies including NGOs, NPOs and public interest corporation
- National and local governments (including Boards of Education)
- Educational institutions (schools, social education facilities, universities, private sector entities, other organizations practicing ESD)
- Private sector entities and others

- Creating peer-to-peer communities for youth

To secure opportunities for youth to interact with domestic and foreign youth, the Government of Japan and other organizations will build platforms or networks, hold forums, operate portal sites, proactive exchange between youth organizations and carry out other measures. Such interaction will connect youth taking leading roles in diversified areas related to the SDGs or ESD. In addition, the government and other organizations will endeavor to create environments for reflecting views of youth in society.

- Creating environments to facilitate the participation of youth in international discussions

By effectively utilizing the platforms and other tools described above, the Government of Japan will endeavor to secure opportunities for youth to express opinions in international settings including youth forums hosted by the United Nations' organizations. Through coordination with international programmes operated by UNESCO or other schemes, the Government of Japan will assist young people participating in ESD to enable them to access and interact with stakeholders in the world.

Likewise, educational institutions, local governments, civil societies private sector entities and other organizations are expected to create ways to enable youth to participate in international discussions at various opportunities.
- Promoting exchange among youth

With youth educational facilities at the core, the Government of Japan will strengthen cooperation with local governments and youth organizations. This is intended to enhance opportunities for youth to participate in cross-cultural exchange or learn the importance of a sustainable society at home and abroad. These opportunities will provide an opportunity to foster global human resources who can lead the next generation.
- Encouraging self-initiated efforts of youth

The Government of Japan, in cooperation with other relevant organizations, will offer opportunities for interaction among youth by encouraging hands-on activities by high school students and others through the promotion of various programmes and by promoting mutual cooperation. In addition, the government will offer opportunities for youth and other people to think deeply and discuss environmental challenges and other global issues in modern society and to express opinions on those issues.

(5) Priority action area 5: Accelerating local level actions

Most practical activities aiming at sustainable development are performed at local levels by drawing on the knowledge of the region, fostered through the diversity of its natural environment and culture. Likewise, most partnerships aiming at sustainable development tend to be formed in local communities. Therefore, learning institutions and local communities are expected to actively cooperate with each other.

In Japan also, most pioneering ESD projects have been executed at local levels. Based on this recognition, various stakeholders in each region are encouraged to mutually cooperate and to call for behavioral transformations to resolve regional problems. In this way, ESD at local levels is expected to promote the development of better communities for all who live within and around.

<Main stakeholders in this priority action area>

- National and Local governments (including boards of education)
- Civil societies including NGOs, NPOs and public interest corporation
- Educational institutions (schools, social education facilities, universities, private sector entities, other organizations practicing ESD)

- Private sector entities
 - All members belonging to the local community
- Leveraging ESD to promote local SDGs

In the view of creating a sustainable society, local governments are expected to endeavor to ensure that various plans to be formulated by respective organizations will incorporate the SDGs and the concept of ESD. Fully recognizing the effects on local community transformation and development that the results of implementing ESD could cause, ESD at local levels should be implemented as part of the efforts of fostering human resources to aim at the SDGs.

The Government of Japan is willing to integrate ESD with the efforts of building Regional CES (local SDGs) as the desired future, in order to leverage ESD for human resources development. The national government's measures include backing up local governments' efforts to advance ESD, for example, in a way to tie in with the programmes for creating SDGs Future City.
 - Networking for supporting ESD across the nation

As the hubs for the ESD promotion network in which various ESD practitioners can interact and seek cooperation, the Government of Japan operates ESD Resource Center of Japan (national and regional). This is intended to ensure the framework for ESD practitioners to receive support anywhere in Japan. Such network will be operated in a way to enable regional ESD Resource Center of Japan or local ESD hubs to give advice or support in line with regional circumstances. For horizontal deployment of good ESD practices, successful ESD cases in any regions should be shared by all regions nationwide.
 - Promoting cooperation with educational institutions, social education facilities and other

To allow both adults and children to learn regional problems through ESD at accessible venues, local governments are required to execute their ESD plans in cooperation with schools, social education facilities, universities, civil societies and private sector entities. In this regard, using ASPUnivNet or RCEs acknowledged by the United Nations University may be helpful. Other available resources include networks among social education facilities such as community halls and other facilities that can serve as accessible learning centers in the respective region, as well as collaborative school activities and other programmes jointly operated by local communities and schools in the region.
 - Promoting learning focused on experience-based learning activities

Schools, educational institutions, social education facilities, universities, local communities, private sector entities, civil societies and other groups in respective regions are required to cooperatively organize various regional programs which involve the region's cultural things or activities (e.g., World Heritage site, traditional events) or incorporate the region's resources (e.g., Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks).

2. Mechanisms for Practicing ESD (Areas of Implementation)

Mechanisms to steadily implement efforts in the five priority action areas in Japan include the following.

(1) Enhancing stakeholder networks and communication

<Building multi-stakeholder networks>

To facilitate crosscutting cooperation, the establishment of a multi-layered network comprised of diversified stakeholders should be encouraged. For this purpose, the Government of Japan will develop the framework to enable stakeholders working for SDG 4 to collaborate with one another to advance ESD, using The Platform for Future Co-Creation of UNESCO activities beyond the five priority action areas.

Under this Platform for Future Co-Creation of UNESCO activities, the domestic network for UNESCO's activities will be strategically developed and the scheme for overseas expansion of progressive UNESCO-initiated activities in Japan in an integrated manner will be established, benefiting from stakeholders interested in or having a track record of UNESCO's activities and a wide range of stakeholders acting towards the SDGs, in close collaboration with the ESD promotion network.

As the hubs for the ESD promotion network, the Government of Japan operates one national ESD Resource Center of Japan and eight local ESD Resource Center of Japan. The functions assigned to these centers are as follows: (i) sharing information, (ii) consultation and support services to facilitate cooperation for ESD activities, (iii) facilitation of networking and mutual learning, (iv) fostering human resources. Through encouraging the centers to exercise these four functions, the Government endeavors to expand ESD nationwide, to enhance support capacities, to sophisticate ESD activities by various players, and encourage multidimensional collaborations. This network ensures the scheme for receiving support for practicing ESD anywhere in Japan. With the expansion of this network, systems for mutual learning and teaching by theme will be phased in to further sophisticate ESD activities. Since the ESD promotion network is characterized as a network with diverse actors, its expansion and multi-stratification will be sought.

To connect school teachers' networks in respective regions with regional ESD-related networks and promote their cooperation, the Government of Japan will endeavor to create opportunities for the members of both networks to work together, with cooperation from boards of education. Specific efforts for this purpose include the preparation of guidebooks that may be informative for starting collaboration with stakeholders in and outside schools, the enhancement of information gathering and communication on ESD activities in respective regions, and making the network more multi-layered.

<Enhancing communication>

Public awareness activities will be reinforced, both domestically and internationally, by underscoring ESD activities as a key to achieving all the SDGs. In many areas related to the SDGs or ESD, the general public, business entities, private organizations and other groups should be encouraged to voluntarily learn or educate and to deepen their understanding and acquire practical abilities for sustainable development. To accelerate this, relevant ministries

and agencies of the Government of Japan will provide teaching materials or assisting their preparation, deploy public awareness activities, offer ESD-related information, and encourage the sharing of information about successful or recommendable ESD-related practices.

In particular, the dissemination of information in English will be strengthened in order to aggressively publicize Japan's good ESD practices in the world. Such information strategy needs to be effectively implemented based on cooperation between Japan and international organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations University, and through utilizing international frameworks such as Japan-US environmental policy dialogues, the Global Environmental Education Partnership (GEEP), the ASEAN+3 Working Group on Environmental Education, and Japan-China-Korea Environmental Education Network.

(2) Review and assessment

To properly review and assess this 2nd ESD Implementation Plan, the Government of Japan will hear opinions from various stakeholders on a regular basis, with support from the ESD Roundtable and Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. The government will try to qualitatively and quantitatively assess ESD-related efforts in Japan based on relevant data by reference to the SDG global indicators.

Based on the foregoing, an interim review will be conducted in 2025 and a comprehensive review will be conducted in 2029. The final annual assessment will be conducted and published with a view to promoting a post-2030 ESD agenda more effectively. As and when necessary in the middle of the ESD for 2030, this 2nd ESD Implementation Plan may be reviewed, based on close observations of domestic environments, economic conditions, social changes, international trends and other influential factors.