

Part 5 Promotion of international cooperation

1 Promotion of the availability of internationally comparable statistics and of the use of statistics in other countries

(1) Review of statistical surveys for promoting the availability of internationally comparable statistics

<Background and current situation>

Information on statistics from foreign countries is indispensable to understanding international trends in the organization of policies and the performance of social and economic activities in Japan. To effectively utilize such information, however, it is important to ensure that the foreign statistics and the Japanese statistics are comparable. With regard to statistical surveys, it is also necessary to try to improve the availability of internationally comparable statistics by performing required reconsideration where necessary.

Reconsidering statistical surveys in response to international trends is also useful for the improvement of statistics in Japan.

(Examples of fields in which efforts have been made, so far, to promote the availability of internationally comparable statistics)

- The industry classification and the commodity classification are scheduled to be involved in revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC) in fiscal year 2007. In Japan, the Japanese Standard Industrial Classification (JSIC) was revised, prior to the above revision, in fiscal year 2002, and the new, major classifications, such as that for info-communications lines, have already been introduced.
- With regard to other international classifications, the preparation of various classifications is also proceeding under the United Nations framework for international economic and social classification.
- For IT statistics and R&D statistics, the preparation of model questionnaires and manuals is underway at OECD's committees.
- Japan has so far been committed to the preparation of international input-output tables, starting from the 1985 table.
- The international comparison of SNA, price statistics and wage statistics requires the reflection of purchasing power parity. For this purpose, Japan has participated in international comparison programs since 1975.
- Japan has so far responded to overseas trends in terms of survey technologies, such as

seasonal adjustment methods.

<Basic direction>

- (1) Promotion of gathering and sharing information in relation to statistics in foreign countries and international institutes.
- (2) Promotion of positive participation in international standard establishment operations relating to statistics, and the application of international standards to statistics in Japan.
- (3) Promotion of cooperation in international comparison programs, and their use in Japan.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) should establish a “General Window to International Statistics Information” function for sharing information with the Cabinet Office and ministries. The Cabinet Office and ministries should accumulate and provide the following information, which can be retrieved and referenced from the “General Window”:
 - (i) Statistics systems in foreign countries, and reports issued by major international institutions (Japanese translation)
 - (ii) International standards relating to statistics (originals and their Japanese translations)
 - (iii) Information on statistics-related international conferences in which the Cabinet Office and ministries have participated.

Statistical information to be made widely available to the public will be accumulated and provided on websites in easy-to-understand forms. Information on exclusively statistical services, massive volumes of data, and highly detailed and technical information will be accumulated and provided via Kasumigaseki WAN.

To implement this policy, the Cabinet Office and ministries should urgently establish a study mechanism under the auspices of the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting on International Statistical Affairs (hereinafter referred to as “Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting”).

The MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) should establish a window tentatively based on existing information, during fiscal year 2004. The ministry should prepare specific proposals on specifications for the window, and specific information to be accumulated by the Cabinet Office and ministries, taking into account the results of the interim window. The ministry should then promptly open a fully-fledged window, and the Cabinet Office and ministries should accumulate information in sequence.

Attention should be paid to the fact that it is necessary to solve copyright issues in advance, if reports issued by international institutions are to be shown on websites.

- (2) With regard to the 2007 revision of ISIC and CPC, the MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) should participate in and contribute to the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications, and Technical Subgroup ranked under the group, through cooperation with the Cabinet Office and ministries, based on experience in Japan.

- (3) With regard to other international standards, the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should also understand the existing standards, in order to participate promptly and positively in activities for organizing and reconsidering standards, based on experience in Japan. Standards thus newly organized should be studied in terms of their applicability in Japan, and their applications should be promoted whenever possible. In addition, their applicability in Japan should be considered and fed back to reconsideration operations. With regard to international standards, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that there are some fields where it is difficult to prepare statistics in accordance with international standards because of Japanese own administrative system and needs, and Japanese statistical continuity.
- (4) When committed to the preparation of international input-output tables, the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should continue to make proposals for the promotion of their standardization, to encourage the availability of international comparison.
- (5) The MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) should, through cooperation with the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned, continue to cooperate with the international comparison program, in line with progress of the Asia-Pacific Area Comparison Program and the OECD Comparison Program, by participating in the management committee for the 2003 Round of the Asia-Pacific Area Comparison Program (Project period: 2002 to 2005, reference year: 2004), conducted as part of the World Comparison Program. The ministry should also positively announce purchasing power parity data as a result of the program, through such media as Internet websites. With regard to the 1993 –Round of the Asia-Pacific Area Comparison Program, and the 1999 Round of the OECD Comparison Program, the ministry should immediately publicize information on these international comparison programs, with explanations on the website of the Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts, and Telecommunications.
- (6) With regard to survey technologies, primarily the MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department), and the Cabinet office and other ministries should collect and analyze information on overseas trends and reflect the information in domestic statistics.

(2) Responding to international trends in the quality of statistical data

<Background and current situation>

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has organized a framework for assessing the quality of statistics in each country, called Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF), which is applied to Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSCs, IMF examination concerning nations' currency policies. IMF uses DQAF to assess the quality of statistical data of its member countries. IMF's DQAF has already been applied to statistical data from some developed countries, such as Sweden and Italy). There are some DQAFs that have been prepared tentatively, besides the frameworks concerning general statistics (general framework). They cover individual fields such as

SNA, international trade balance statistics, money supply statistics, financial statistics and producer and consumer price indexes. IMF is scheduled to improve the accuracy of these frameworks and to prepare frameworks for other individual fields.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has prepared frameworks for the quality of agricultural statistics. In addition, OECD has committed to review the quality of the data it releases.

<Basic direction>

- (1) A study should be made concerning the application of IMF's DQAF in Japan, in order to feed back results of the review to IMF.
- (2) Information should be gathered concerning other international institutions' commitment to the quality of their data.

<Concrete measures>

The Cabinet Office and ministries will, based on the analysis of the examination for developed countries, study possible problems and challenges should the application of DQAF in Japan be realized the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting should set up study mechanisms.

With regard to the specific application of the general frameworks, the MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department) and the Cabinet Office and other ministries should analyze the statistical data from developed countries that have so far undergone ROSCs. They should then analyze the results of ROSCs examinations for the countries covered in fiscal year 2003, and study possible problems and challenges with the application of ROSCs in Japan, taking the results into account. With regard to the frameworks for individual fields, the Cabinet Office and related ministries should make a study during a period that is applicable to the study on the general frameworks.

In Japan, however, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that studies are required more on specific cases than on the general principle. With regard to the standards related to the release of individual statistical data, such as information associated with statistical surveys (hereinafter referred to as "metadata"), it is necessary to pay special attention to the degree at which required levels are attained, in respect of current monthly surveys.

(3) Improvement of methods for providing results

<Background and current situation>

With regard to the provision of statistical data on websites in Japan, English websites do not necessarily provide sufficient accumulated or time-series information.

With regard to the general provision of statistical data, they are not often prepared in an internationally comparable form. In addition, no standardization of English terms related to

statistics is available.

With regard to the provision of metadata, there appears to be a trend toward the setting of mechanisms for the preparation of common metadata and intensive metadata management in Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX), and initiatives (action plans) concerning the exchange of statistical data and metadata among international institutions.

With regard to the presentation of statistical data to international institutions, limitations determined by ministries are, in some cases, imposed on the supply of the statistical data obtained through electronic media from other ministries.

<Basic direction>

- (1) Efforts should be made to provide English Websites with complete information.
- (2) Internationally comparable statistical data and metadata should be provided.
- (3) The use of uniform and common English terms concerning statistics should be established.
- (4) Limitations and restrictions should be eased in the presentation of statistical data to international institutions.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and ministries should establish a mechanism for studying, within the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting, a uniform standard for providing statistical information on English websites, while considering the standard for providing statistical information in Japanese, mentioned in Part 4 2-(3) "Provision of Information Related to Statistical Surveys". They should then implement such a uniform standard.
- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries should indicate data on results of statistical surveys, as required, while paying attention to international standards and classifications, with the reconsideration of these surveys as a prerequisite toward the promotion of international comparability of the data.
- (3) Primarily the MPHPT, and the Cabinet Office and other ministries, should investigate and study the international standard for metadata and organize a metadata benchmark to meet the international standard. The Cabinet Office and ministries should urgently establish a mechanism within the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting to study such a standard, and then organize a proposed standard by fiscal year 2005, taking account of the extent to which SDMX has been studied.
- (4) To prepare a glossary of English terms for statistics, the Cabinet Office and ministries should promptly set up a study mechanism within the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting. They should analyze the OECD glossary of terms, and examples of applications of terms, in order to prepare such a glossary by fiscal year 2004.
- (5) Limitations imposed by arrangement between ministries will be eased uniformly across the

whole Government structure, to allow the provision of statistical data obtained from the Cabinet Office and ministries to international institutions. To achieve this, the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should improve the handling of such data during fiscal year 2003. When easing such limitations, the minimum conditions required are not to be preventive. They can include the range of data submitted to the original data-preparing ministries by a ministry before supply to international institutions, and the reporting of international institutions to which the relevant data are to be provided.

(4) Promotion of elimination of duplicated reports to international institutions

<Background and current situation>

With regard to double reports among international institutions, commitment to the elimination of such duplication has already taken place. Such double reports are even discussed at international conferences such as the UN Statistical Commission.

<Basic direction>

To reduce the burden of making reports to international institutions, Japan should also promote the elimination of double reports in international institutions.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) should investigate the actual situation of double reports provided by the Cabinet Office and ministries to international institutions during the fiscal year 2003.
- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries should collect information, as required, at international conferences and encourage improvement of the actual situation regarding double reports at international conferences, if necessary. They should also encourage international institutions to improve the situation. The MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department) should generalize the information gathering and encouragement by the Cabinet Office and ministries toward improvement of this situation.

(5) Commitment to a common data transmission system among international institutions

<Background and current situation>

A common data transmission system is under study at SDMX to consider the system as a standard for data exchange between international institutions. The study is now underway on the basis of the GESMES method, used in the European Union, and the GESMES/CB method, used between international institutions and central banks.

<Basic direction>

Japan should participate in the operation to organize a common data transmission method, while considering its availability in Japan.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and ministries should gather information at SDMX and international conferences, so that the common transmission method for time-series transactions (exchange) and data which are based on the GESMES/CB method, now in use for data transmission between international institutions and central banks, is available as a platform (a communications foundation) for data transmission in Japan, in the future. They should also encourage international institutions to collect information and improve the actual situation of double reports. The MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department) should generalize the information gathering and encouragement by the Cabinet Office and ministries toward improvement of this situation.
- (2) Primarily the MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department), and the Cabinet Office and other ministries, should collate the potential merits and demerits (costs, compatible type of data, and compatible type of data transmission) involved in actual utilization of various types of data transmission methods, for each type of statistical data, through studies groups established within the conferences for individual ministries, taking into account the results of studies at SDMX.

2 Progressive international cooperation in the field of statistics

(1) Comprehensive and integral promotion of international cooperation in statistics

<Background and current situation>

International cooperation in the field of statistics is underway independently at the Cabinet Office and ministries. In contrast, the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting has been held twice a year since 1995, under the New Strategies for Government Statistical Services over the Coming Decade. At present, however, the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting involve only the exchanging of information on international conferences that members have participated in, and international cooperation.

<Basic direction>

A specific mechanism should be studied, to reinforce liaison between the Cabinet Office and ministries concerning international challenges.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) Primarily the MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department), and the Cabinet Office and other

ministries, should, at the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting, set topics for discussion of substantial policies, such as policies for promoting the items outlined in the document “New Directions”, and flexibly utilize working groups toward more fruitful studies there. Systems of deliberation should be developed without delay at the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting concerning challenges specified to be studied in the above-mentioned document.

- (2) Primarily the MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department), and the Cabinet Office and other ministries, should create a mechanism for accumulating across these ministries and sharing know-how for international cooperation. (see 1-(1) “Review of statistical surveys for promoting the availability of internationally comparable statistics”)

(2) Fostering statistical staff who can take charge of international cooperation

<Background and current situation>

Personnel who can take charge of international cooperation are not currently fostered in a systematic and ongoing manner.

<Basic direction>

Efforts should be made to develop staff who can take charge of international cooperation in a systematic and ongoing manner (gaining a master’s degree or doctorate, short-term training, etc.).

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The SRTI at the MPHPT will offer courses that enable acquisition of linguistic skills, knowledge about statistics and international cooperation, in order to foster those staff members who have the potential to take charge of international cooperation. The training center should develop a curriculum during fiscal year 2004, taking into account the wishes of the Cabinet Office and ministries, and begin offering these courses fiscal year 2005.
- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries should urgently set up a meeting for deliberation within the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting, and gather intelligence on international developments in the field of statistics that should be understood by and shared with the entire Government, such as the background and prior history of those items that are common challenges at international conferences. The Cabinet Office and ministries should make specific studies concerning the inclusion of these developments in training programs at the Cabinet Office and ministries, while considering how far these items have been studied at conferences for individual ministries.
- (3) When expanding opportunities of secondments for overseas study, under the Outline of Reform of the Civil Service System, the Cabinet Office and ministries should make efforts to assure a constant number of applicants covering statistics-specific staff, as one of the staff

training courses, and review the training course while considering what progress is being made in the promotion of the reform of the civil service system.

- (4) The Cabinet Office and ministries should take advantage of opportunities for selected personnel to study at overseas graduate schools under the overseas long-term training programs offered by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (which will be Incorporated Administrative Agency after October 2003, both called JICA for short), and opportunities to study in the graduate school development assistance course in English, under the domestic long-term training program.
- (5) The Cabinet Office and ministries should continue to take opportunities to participate in the United Nations' Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP).

(3) Contribution to improvements in statistical capacity building of developing countries

<Background and current situation>

PARIS 21 (Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century) was established in 1999 as an international cooperative body dedicated to the improvement of statistical capacity building of developing countries.

PARIS 21 is a joint project comprising specialist statisticians and development specialists from assistance-providing countries and institutions, and assistance-receiving countries. The joint project was established mainly by international institutions such as the United Nations, OECD, World Bank, and IMF, and aims to promote the building of statistical capacity building for developing countries in a cooperative manner. An administrative committee has already been established to organize and promote operation of the project. The committee is made up of representatives from the international institutions and assistance-providing countries (France, Germany, Switzerland, U.K., and U.S.), plus representatives by region from assistance-receiving countries. The Japanese Government was a member of the tentative administrative committee but is not a member of the current one. Consequently, PARIS 21's secretariat and members strongly requested that Japan become a member. In response, the Japanese Government is now committed to necessary steps toward registering probably two officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) to the committee.

Japan has been positively engaged in contribution to SIAP by providing it with cash and products since it was established in 1970, and Japan's contribution has been working increasingly effectively in the effort to contribute multilateral cooperation for the improvement of statistical abilities in developing countries.

Activity related to statistical needs in developing countries includes Human Development Reports in 1990 and since, and the introduction of Development Goals, e.g., Millennium Development

Goals. There are growing needs for statistics for measuring these indicators.

In addition, there is a growing international interest in problems of poverty. For example, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has established a committee concerned with the reduction of poverty. In response to this, there are requests for the promotion of international cooperation in individual fields associated with the needs of developing countries.

Japan's statistics-related general international cooperation toward developing countries suffers from insufficient awareness of its statistical systems and surveys, despite its expanding international cooperation in statistics. For example, there is a situation where the relationship between Japan and its trainees from developing countries tends to dissipate following training periods.

<Basic direction>

- (1) Japan should continuously promote its contribution to PARIS 21 and SIAP.
- (2) Japan should promote the understanding of needs in developing countries (especially in fields now free of its contribution), and information sharing.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) With regard to activities in PARIS 21, the Cabinet Office and ministries should promptly establish mechanisms for information exchange at the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting, and promote information exchange in this country. The MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) should participate in the PARIS 21 Administrative Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, taking into account the above-mentioned promotion of information exchange.
- (2) The MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department) should continuously practice cooperation with SIAP.
- (3) The Cabinet Office and ministries should continue to gather information on relevant international conferences.
- (4) Primarily the MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department), and the Cabinet Office and other ministries, should promote exchange of information that they hold. (Refer to 2-(1) "Comprehensive and Integral Promotion of International Cooperation in Statistics".)
- (5) The Cabinet Office and ministries should continue to promote the acceptance of trainees for governmental employment from developing countries, and the establishment of international workshops (international seminars) for leaders.
- (6) The Cabinet Office and ministries should regard basic information about the country's statistical systems and statistical surveys as common items for their training programs. With regard to these common items, primarily the MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department) should embody their contents in mechanisms for studies within the Inter-ministerial Liaison

Meeting, during fiscal year 2004.

- (7) The Cabinet Office and ministries will promote policies for staying in touch with accepted trainees from developing countries, following their training periods, and will exchange information on these trainees at the Inter-ministerial Liaison Meeting, without delay.