

# Report by the Study Group on Sustainable Development Goal 14

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## 1. Object and Purpose of the Study Group

### (1) Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. The Agenda lays out universal goals for both developed and developing countries, who will join forces to tackle issues concerning development in the developing countries and the inseparable economic, social, and environmental challenges around the world. They are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted as international goals for the period from 2016 to 2030, and consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets that build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) formulated in 2001.

In May 2016, Japan established a promotion headquarters consisting of all Cabinet ministers with the Prime Minister as the chair (the SDGs Promotion Headquarters) in order to facilitate and promote the implementation of measures related to the SDGs in a comprehensive and effective manner and in close coordination with the relevant administrative agencies. The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, which were adopted at a meeting of the Promotion Headquarters in December 2016, confirmed that Japan will further accelerate initiatives aimed at international cooperation based on the principles of international cooperation. In addition, Japan has declared that it will not only bolster domestic initiatives to deal with economic, social, and environmental issues, or cross-dimensional issues, but it will also engage constructively with these issues as they pertain to the whole international community.

The SDGs include a goal concerning oceans. The fourteenth Sustainable Development Goal is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (SDG14). In June 2017, the United Nations convened the first United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (the UN Ocean Conference) as the first international conference based on a specific SDG. In December 2017, the United Nations General Assembly designated the decade from 2021 to 2030 the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (below, the UN Decade for Ocean Science) in order to promote the implementation of the SDGs from the science perspective. The UN Decade for Ocean Science aims to build the scientific knowledge, platforms, and partnerships necessary for the sustainable development of the oceans, to reflect scientific knowledge, including the social sciences, data and information in ocean policy, and to contribute to the realization of all Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, SDG14. In September 2018, Norway also established the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy

at the head-of-state level (N.B.: Japan also participated). This is how SDG14 has come to international prominence.

From the start, Japan has focused on the importance of SDG14 for the oceans in its SDGs Implementation Guidelines, which cite conservation of the environment, including biodiversity, forests and the oceans, as one of its eight priorities. With regard to marine pollution, cited as SDG14 target 14.1 (By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution), Japan played a leading role as chair of the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, getting agreement on the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision as a measure to counter marine debris and finalizing the agreement on the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter. In December 2019, the SDGs Promotion Headquarters revised the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, but without making any changes to the priorities. Seeing that four years have passed since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, and three years since the decision on the Guiding Principles in 2016, it is now even more urgent to produce results that point toward solutions, and to accelerate economic and social reforms (transformation) through high-impact efforts and measures at the organizational and group levels. Bearing in mind the 2030 time frame to achieve the goals, Japan confirms that it will intensify efforts to accelerate and expand full-scale action in the next four years.

## (2) Japan's Approach to SDG14 and the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy

The SDGs present a broad vision of an initiative that challenges the international community as a whole, but it is difficult to confirm achievements within the limited time frame. Despite establishing indicators to measure the achievements, critics say that these indicators are not necessarily linked to the realization of the targets and goals. Another point is the difficulty of responding to all SDGs and to understand the range of goals. To address this point, the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, formulated by the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, do not list specialized measures for each goal (the main issues), but has rearranged the goals as eight priority areas, noting the relevant SDG for each area. In short, the Guiding Principles do not list dedicated measures for specific goals, in this case SDG14, which is the focus of this study group. It is important to pay full attention to this point when looking at the relationship between specific measures and the guiding principles for implementing the SDGs. To make the measures more accessible, the Japan SDGs Action Platform is a visual guide that lists the main measures as they relate to the eight priority areas mentioned above.

On this basis, it is clear that the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy touches on the SDGs and SDG14 at every turn. Since every measure listed in “Chapter 2. Ocean

Measures for Comprehensive and Systematic Implementation by the Government of the Basic Plan” of the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy is described in more detail than in the abovementioned SDGs Action Platform, the Plan facilitates a better understanding of the government’s efforts to achieve SDG14. With regard to measures that require coordination beyond the boundaries of the implementing ministries and agencies, the Headquarters for Ocean Policy, the Advisory Councilors’ Meeting, and the National Ocean Policy Secretariat fulfill the functions of coordination and integration. Since many measures have the potential to make significant contributions toward the realization of SDG14, a review of all measures in the Third Basic Ocean Plan as they relate to SDG14 has a degree of significance.

### (3) Object and Purpose

With regard to the various measures listed in “Chapter 2. Ocean Measures for Comprehensive and Systematic Implementation by the Government” of the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, the Study Group has reviewed these measures from the perspective of SDG14 to understand Japan’s efforts to achieve SDG14. By focusing on the sustainable development of the marine sector in Japan and the degree to which it contributes to the realization of SDG14, the Study Group has attempted to identify the priority measures aimed at achieving SDG14. By examining the measures from different perspectives, the Study Group has identified outcomes and issues, discussed how to coordinate effective implementation, examined policies for the integrated implementation of the measures, and presented its opinion on these matters. To prevent the efforts to achieve SDG14 from becoming temporary and with 2030 as the yardstick, the Study Group has also considered gaps in issues and policies that cannot be addressed at the present time.

As mentioned in section 2 above, the approach of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters is based on the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles and the SDGs Action Plan. That is, rather than focusing on dedicated measures for each goal (the main issues), the issues are divided into several priority areas, listing the actions for each area, and noting the relevant SDGs. This work is an attempt to develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges of achieving the SDGs. Therefore, this Study Group contributes to the discovery of new issues involving the efforts to achieve SDG14 by identifying the priority measures for SDG14, verifying these measures from various perspectives, and offering approaches and perspectives focused on achieving SDG14. Furthermore, in terms of the implementation of the Third Basic Ocean Plan, if it can be made clear that the proper implementation of the measures set out in the Basic Plan contribute significantly to SDG14, we expect SDG14 achievement to become a new assessment

criterion for the implementation of these measures, which, in turn, will enhance the legitimacy of implementing the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy.

#### (4) Guidelines for Reviews and Results

To gain an understanding of Japan's current efforts, the first Study Group session was briefed by the SDGs Promotion Headquarters Secretariat (Global Issues Cooperation Division, International Cooperation Bureau of Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on the full picture of the SDGs, and the positioning of SDG14 within the goals.

Through exchanges of opinion and understanding gained from these briefings, the Study Group confirmed that its review and results guidelines for each theme are based on the following points.

- (A) To always bear in mind the interconnections between SDG14 and the other SDGs when conducting the review
- (B) To send clear messages that raise public recognition and broaden awareness (also consider human resource development perspectives)
- (C) To conduct a balanced review (also consider the perspective of promoting a sustainable marine industry)
- (D) To consider not only the leadership of Japan, but also involve cooperation, collaboration, and connections with developing countries worldwide
- (E) Japan will play an active role in the creation and implementation of international rules.

## 2. The Main Themes of the Review

The first session of the Study Group discussed the selection criteria for the themes to cover and confirmed that the target themes would be selected based on the following five criteria.

- (1) Matters related to SDG14 in the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, in particular, matters that come up again and again
- (2) Perspectives on adjustment and integration functions at the Headquarters for Ocean Policy, the Advisory Councilors' Meeting and the National Ocean Policy Secretariat
- (3) Perspectives related to the development of science and technology, including sharing information about scientific data
- (4) Matters that are strongly linked to international cooperation
- (5) Perspectives of maritime security and the maritime nation

We selected three themes in accordance with the selection criteria listed above. They are Theme 1: Marine Plastic Litter, Theme 2: Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and Theme 3: Small island states. These themes were discussed in depth at the subsequent meetings of the Study Group.

### 3. Summary: Review Results

Each of the selected themes were considered in turn at the Study Group sessions. The issues were considered on the basis of the guidelines for reviews and results that were confirmed at the first Study Group session. That is, (A) To always bear in mind the interconnections between SDG14 and the other SDGs when conducting the review (interconnection with other SDGs); (B) To send clear messages that raise public recognition and broaden awareness (public awareness and recognition); (C) To conduct a balanced review (balanced review); (D) To consider not only the leadership of Japan, but also involve cooperation, collaboration, and connections with developing countries worldwide (cooperation with developing countries worldwide); and (E) Japan will play an active role in the creation and implementation of international rules (Japan's contribution to international rule-making). The following is a summary of the results of the discussions about each theme.

The Study Group hopes that the government will keep the following matters in mind when planning and implementing measures related to these themes in the future.

#### (1) Theme 1: Marine Plastic Litter

##### (A) Interconnection with other SDGs

##### (1) SDG 14, SDG12, and SDG17

With regard to the issues of marine plastic litter and initiatives to recycle plastic resources, SDG14 is clearly linked with SDG12 (Ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns) and SDG17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development). More specifically, efforts to promote measures to counter marine plastic litter are broadly related to the following targets: 12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse; 17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries;

and 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

The importance of partnerships between various stakeholders is also confirmed. For example, The Nippon Foundation is implementing a project that targets twelve stakeholders (corporations, local government, academic researchers, government, shipping and marine operators, fishermen, sports associations, NPOs and NGOs, venture companies, marine education at schools, high schools and universities, affiliated partners).

(2) Target SDG14.1 refers to marine debris. Part of this target is to remove plastic marine litter to reduce the adverse effects on the marine ecosystem

Target 14.1 (By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution) corresponds to the direct relationship between SDG14 and marine plastic litter, which is treated as part of marine debris. It is also important to focus on marine plastic litter because the actual situation and details are still unknown.

Pollution from land activities is also the focus of attention. Over the past thirty years, the success of Japan's environmental administration with regard to the final disposal of waste has resulted in systems capable of managing and significantly reducing waste. Consequently, these systems should be evaluated for their positive effects on the management of marine debris.

(B) Public Awareness and Recognition

(1) The importance of public education campaigns

Public awareness of the measures still falls short. Above all, it is necessary to further raise public awareness that is linked to concrete actions. In a situation where public awareness needs to change, the presence of a standard-bearer for the nation is important for cooperation among stakeholders.

Initiatives that start locally and at the level of the individual are important. As a trigger to instill public awareness of the value of resources, the move to charge for plastic shopping bags should be connected to reform on a larger scale, not only personal consumption.

(2) The need for social structural change based on fostering public awareness. As a premise, more evidence and scientific recognition are necessary.

Preventing the flow of plastic litter into the ocean is the challenge at the root of the problem with marine plastic litter. From the perspective of breaking away from the throwaway society, and in light of the cost to the next generation, another issue at the national level is to engage with the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle).

Conversely, there are varying opinions about the health hazards of marine plastic litter. The indications are that we still do not fully understand the reality of the impact of microplastics on the ecosystem, the total amount of plastic in the oceans, the chemical impact, or polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB). It is necessary to clarify the science through verification and research that also looks at the impact on public health and landscapes.

Once scientifically sound results have been obtained, it is important to take measures based on these results. However, at the same time, it is also important to take preventive measures before these results have been obtained.

### (C) Balanced Review

#### (1) Balanced responses and harmony between the environment and the economy

It is important for both businesses and consumers to make, use, and process wisely while taking into account the efficiency of the economic burden in the short, medium, and long-term, as well as the technical possibilities and reductions in the environmental load.

Plastic is not the villain. It is necessary to promote proper understanding of plastics among the general public. It is important to foster a national debate on how to use plastics well, rather than adopting the simplistic response that plastic should not be used because of the bad things that are happening. Healthcare and consumption efficiency are benefiting in many ways from the modern use of plastic. In light of the characteristics of plastics, such usage should be prioritized and the extent of use should be reduced.

#### (2) Awareness of how plastic contributes to people's lives and business activities and its significance in heat recovery

Plastic materials contribute much not only to our daily lives, but also to solutions for various social issues such as safe food packaging, or, because plastic weighs less, reductions in the cost, labor, and energy consumption required for transportation.

It is important to understand plastic materials not only as global problem of marine plastic litter, but also to verify appropriate measures from the perspective of recycling plastic resources in Japan.

Assuming that plastic materials are indispensable for a comfortable modern life, it is necessary to indicate a road map and a future image of plastic resources recycling in 2050 and 2100 and, at the same time, to think about what we can do now.

When resource recycling is discussed, there is strong criticism of heat recovery, which is not internationally recognized as recycling. Nonetheless, the fact needs to be recognized that plastic is discarded because dirt sticks to it and it is difficult to recycle. With regard to processing, the role of heat recovery should be reevaluated in cases where the technology replaces coal in the manufacturing of cement, and based on technical developments that reduce greenhouse gases. There is scope for rediscovery of heat recovery as a measure to counter greenhouse gas emissions.

#### (D) Cooperation with Developing Countries Worldwide

##### (1) Importance of international initiatives and support for developing countries

Providing Japan's excellent systems for waste treatment and recycling technology as a package to developing countries is expected to have great effect, but we cannot focus on technologies and systems at the expense of other aspects such as local customs. For example, refillable plastic containers have by no means taken hold overseas. Transmitting information about such measures from Japan has a certain degree of significance. It is important to raise awareness about waste sorting and ineffective use, unlawful use, and unlimited consumption.

Initiatives among international corporations include an international alliance to do away with plastics discarded in nature. Aiming to solve the problem with plastic waste, this is an important cross-industry initiative composed mainly of top managers (CEOs) at the participating companies.

##### (2) Public-private response to import/export regulations in each country (responses to China, in particular)

China's ban on the import of plastic waste had a huge impact on countries that previously exported plastic waste as a resource. As a result of the ban, it is an urgent issue to respond to the pressure on resource recycling in Japan. Corporations on their own cannot solve this problem; it is one that Japan as a whole must deal with.

It is necessary to pay close attention to developments in other countries. It is also necessary to bear in mind the character of each country as responses will vary between countries that are rivals in terms of technology, and countries that use Japanese technologies and the attendant substitutes for plastics or substitute services. It is important to strategically anticipate and recognize such developments.

(E) Japan's contribution to international rule-making

(1) Japan already demonstrated leadership at the G20 Osaka Summit

In its capacity of holding the G20 presidency, Japan hosted the G20 Osaka Summit in June 2019. At the summit, Japan shared the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, which aims for zero new pollution from marine plastic litter by 2050, with the participating countries. The G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, which promotes international cooperation to strengthen appropriate waste management, recovery of marine plastic litter, pioneering solutions and innovations, and capacity in every country, was adopted at the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth, demonstrating great leadership in the area of managing marine plastic litter. It is necessary to make the importance of these initiatives widely known in other countries than the G20.

(2) There is an opportunity for Japan to send messages to raise Japan's profile during the UN Decade for Ocean Science starting in 2021.

The UN Decade for Ocean Science is slated to start in 2021 and it is important to raise Japan's profile in this process. Concerning A Clean Ocean, the first of the six social goals cited in the framework, marine plastic litter has been the target for several years now. Implementing Japanese initiatives by a policy of successfully reflecting Japanese efforts, including scientific research, within this framework will raise Japan's profile and indicate the role the country should play.

(2) Theme 2: Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

(A) Interconnection with other SDGs

(1) Recognize IUU fisheries as a resource management and coastal community problem within the SDGs framework

It is also important to firmly crack down on IUU fishing near Japan, but in light of the multi-faceted content of the SDGs, measures must be based on understanding of IUU fishing as a problem for resource management and for coastal communities. Based on such recognition, it is necessary to consider the nature of Japan's measures to counter IUU fishing.

(2) Confirm the individual meaning of I (Illegal), U (Unreported), and U (Unregulated) of IUU Fishing.

Since there are cases where IUU fishing is not straightforward overfishing, it is necessary to closely investigate whether it is a matter of IUU fishing or overfishing when discussing the issue.

Where illegal or unreported fishing is concerned, it is possible to understand the issue from the viewpoint of illegality and resource management, but in case of unregulated fishing, it tends to be more difficult to understand the actual situation. It is also argued that unregulated fishing should not be lumped together with other illegal fishing for commercial purposes because it is closely related to fishing for food and may be recognized on urgent and humanitarian grounds.

Meanwhile, it is also a fact that firm responses to illegal fishing are required as measures to counter IUU fishing in the vicinity Japan.

### (3) The human rights perspective

In recent years, the aspect of human rights has also been taken into account when IUU fishing is discussed in the international community. Typical examples are the issue of slavery in the Thai fishing industry, and the enactment of the Modern Slavery Act in Britain, which includes a section on the fishing industry. While it is unlikely that inhumane treatment is a problem in Japan's fisheries sector, initiatives to confirm that imported marine products are not concerned in any human rights violations are considered necessary.

### (4) Understand and respond to IUU fisheries as an industry (responses need to include import and export regulations, unloading at ports, etc.)

As the world's largest market for tuna, Japan has acted independently to ensure that the country is not implicated in IUU fishing, and that marine products from IUU fishing do not enter the market by, for example, actively monitoring imported tuna as a measure to supplement those taken by the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMO). It is important for Japan to fulfill its international responsibilities. It is also necessary to more clearly convey the point that fisheries management in the coastal areas is carried out on a community basis in Japan.

## (D) Cooperation with Developing Countries Worldwide

### (1) The importance of support for IUU fishing measures in developing countries, particularly the Pacific island countries

In terms of policy significance, we cite support for initiatives related to the conservation of the environment in developing countries, including biodiversity, forests

and the oceans, which is a priority issue in Japan's SDGs Action Plan. As part of the concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and maritime law enforcement capabilities in developing countries are also recognized as important to Japan.

(2) Need for diverse responses and support in line with the diversity of causes

It is difficult to determine the motives for IUU fishing as they are thought to be diverse. There are, for example, cases of going after specific marine products for commercial purposes without any regard for the rules as a result of financial support from investment companies of a certain size, or cases where fishermen in poor areas of developing countries fish to make a living. In the former case, it is necessary to strengthen regulations and to enforce resource management controls. In the latter case, we must not only pay attention to measures to counter IUU fishing, but also raise awareness of the rules and nurture the local fishing community on the basis of their unique qualities. In these cases, the measures will be diverse.

Measures to counter IUU fishing are not only about stronger enforcement and monitoring. When considering the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of a community, we should also keep in mind that resource management and conservation activities that proceed with a full understanding of "fishing for life" have a more important role. Japan should encourage the international community to promote not only technical assistance, but also community-based resource management and marine conservation in full cooperation with local communities (especially fishermen). In particular, demonstrating global leadership in combating IUU fishing from the bottom up while bearing in mind the international standards that protect subsistence "fishing for life", such as the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-scale Fisheries, may turn the social capital and knowledge cultivated by Japan's fisheries into specific actions linked to international contribution.

(E) Japan's contribution to international rule-making

(1) Japan's contribution to compliance with international rules in international waters (not making the rules itself)

The crackdown on IUU fishing in the high seas has become a global issue. In recent years, regional fisheries management organizations (RFMO) have pushed for management of fishing in the high seas where specific species, such as highly migratory fish stocks, are concerned. Japan has also participated and should continue to actively contribute to measures within the framework. Japan participates in the Agreement on

Port State Measures (PSMA), which acts globally to prevent IUU fishing vessels from using ports, and should also actively lobby countries that have large markets, but have not joined the PSMA, to participate to make countermeasures through such international networks more effective. It is also necessary to develop the human resources needed for international rule-making and rule compliance, and to support international activities.

(2) (As a unique perspective on IUU fishing), clarify issues with coordination between the relevant ministries and agencies for dealing with IUU fisheries.

The report confirms that the necessary cooperation between relevant ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Fisheries Agency), and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (Japan Coast Guard), is in place in terms of control of IUU fishing in the waters around Japan, and support for improving the capacity for IUU fishing countermeasures in developing countries. However, further coordination is expected to identify the causes of IUU fishing and to provide intensive support to specific areas.

(3) Japan will take the international leadership by approaching the issues in a comprehensive and multifaceted manner.

It is a major problem that IUU fishing is extremely closely linked to communities, coastal industries, economic issues, and so on. When promoting resource management, in particular, it is effective to promote the advancement of IUU fishing countermeasures in a format that benefits coastal communities as a whole to avoid the benefits becoming concentrated to limited entities. Being aware of these issues, Japan has the potential to be a leading country in the world because of its well-organized and community-based coastal management, including fisheries management. Japan has the potential to provide the best model.

### (3) Theme 3: Small Island States

Premise:

On the international arena, the term "small island state" refers to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), but we decided to focus on the Pacific island states as the main subject of discussion because of their geographical proximity, historical connections, the security of the sea lanes, and the significance to Japan of taking action. The report also recognizes the potential for applying the outcomes of this study to responses to other small island states.

(A) Interconnection with other SDGs

(1) The need for diverse support that aims for regional stability and prosperity is also related to the other SDGs

Small island states are both vulnerable and resilient due to their unique geographical, topographical, and geopolitical characteristics. It is necessary to provide a diverse range of support that takes such characteristics into consideration. At the same time, seven SDGs (3, 4, 7, 9, 13 and 17 as well as SDG14) refer to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), indicating acute awareness of their vulnerabilities to natural disaster, famine, and climate change caused by poverty. (N.B.: Since the SIDS are also included among the developing countries, there are actually more than seven goals). It may well be said that the SIDS is the SDG14 topic with the most links to other SDGs.

(Areas covered by specific support)

(i) Combatting global warming

Although there are differences depending on the region, there are concerns about damage caused by cyclones and tsunamis.

The biggest concern is the rise in sea levels. Granted, it is a matter of a longer time span than a few years, but there is a high risk that fifty years into the future, sea levels will rise somewhere between several tens of centimeters to nearly one meter. In the long term, we must recognize that people will eventually have to abandon their countries as a matter of reality.

(ii) Human resource development and support for capacity-building

Local residents need to voluntarily take steps with regard to the challenges for island states, not because they are compelled to do so, or at the convenience of aid donor countries. In this context, they need to develop human resources. For example, it would be meaningful to discuss possibilities in the development of seabed resources, or other new fields that have not so far been discussed under the support framework.

(iii) Building a food model

Even in small island states, it is possible to build sustainable models for local food self-sufficiency if optimal methods are used to analyze and act on the demand for food. Considering these viewpoints as well as support for food consumption systems that take public health into consideration, there should be a review of what kind of comprehensive support is possible.

(iv) Marine disaster prevention

Preventing marine disasters is an extremely important issue since small island states are mostly coastal. The points to focus on vary between responses to storm surges, typhoons (cyclones) or other relatively short-term threats, and long-term threats such as

flood damage caused by rising sea levels. It is necessary to provide support that takes these points into account.

(2) The need for a cohesive strategy

It is necessary to recognize the vulnerabilities unique to small island states. Accordingly, the effect will be inadequate unless there is a cohesive roll-out of the various types of support mentioned above.

It is also necessary to consider whether some support for island states will also contribute to the promotion of other SDGs.

For the small island states in the region, the survival of the nation is at stake and this will have an impact on the international order in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to strategically plot Japan's involvement in a region where Australia and New Zealand, the major powers, are in the process of developing their understanding and responses to a real and serious problem for the region.

(C) Balanced Review

(1) Comparison between Pacific small island states and Caribbean small island states and responses in line with the characteristics of each island state

Since each island state has different major industries in relation to a sustainable marine economy, priority SDGs will also differ. Geographical links and differences in fish consumption also create differences in how people relate to marine resources and their awareness of the links. As a result, responses must differ significantly.

(2) Doubts about the concept of an extra-large marine protected area from the perspective of food sovereignty and renewable energy (the significance of the marine protected area is not denied, but its good aspects should be prudently considered)

Some small island states are thinking about turning their entire exclusive economic zone (EEZ) into marine protected areas, but fishery resources are not protected by simply setting up a marine protected area. A range of conditions must be in place for marine protected areas to achieve the expected results. Establishing a marine protected area without such conditions may cause problems in relation to progress with food sovereignty and renewable energy. It is important to note that Western NGOs are involved in setting up marine protected areas, and that the process is heavily influenced by the intentions of the donors (the ones providing support).

(3) Need to ascertain the role of private-sector industry in light of the circumstances of small island states

Pacific island states want to attract private investment, but there are high hurdles when looking for matches in the private sector. In cooperation with regional organizations for small island states, it is necessary to continue to dispatch public-private joint economic delegations (so-called economic missions) for purposes of information provision, local surveys, and inspections, and to continuously support the entry of corporations that are a good match with the market scale and characteristics of the Pacific island states.

(D) Cooperation with Developing Countries Worldwide

(1) Coexistence of support by other countries and support by Japan, and demonstrating Japan's strong points in this context

The United States, Australia, and New Zealand have continuously provided assistance to the Pacific island states based on their own relationships and strategies. At the present time, the strong points of Japan lie in its support for capacity development and cooperation in the field of technology development, which is a close match with local needs. This should be promoted based on awareness of social and cultural values and understanding of diverse systems of government. Recently, there have been moves by China to leverage its huge financial resources to provide calculated support. Keeping this in mind, it is now necessary for Japan to provide support that leverages its strengths (not only existing measures, but also new technologies).

(2) Promote SDGs through collaboration between Japan and small island nations

The SDGs are based on concepts to be promoted by the world as a whole, and should be approached together with the small island nations from the perspective of what to do to achieve the SDGs in a world that includes small island nations. Consequently, to express this nuance, it is important to promote concepts based on collaboration with and not support for small island nations. If, as a result of such collaboration, Japan and the small island nations develop in parallel, this will tie in with long-term benefits for Japan.

(3) Commonalities and differences between the small island nations and the island nation of Japan

Being island nations, Japan and the small island nations are often victims of natural disasters and, as such, they have many problems in common. For example, it is difficult to promote renewable energy due to geographical factors. If Japan is able to find such

commonalities and cooperate with the small island nations in areas where it can apply its experience, it is possible to build relationships by leveraging Japanese characteristics.

#### 4. Recommendations

The following are our recommendations for formulating and implementing measures related to the themes considered by this Study Group.

(1) Realize the national interest and makes the decisions of Japan as a sovereign state with regard to achieving SDG14

The whole international community should engage with the SDGs, which consist of 17 goals and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. Each of the 17 goals that make up the SDGs, including SDG14, has a list of targets for a total of 169 targets, and for each target there is at least one global indicator for measuring achievements. Although there are set indicators, critics point out that they are not necessarily linked to the achievement of the goals and targets in cases where there is no international agreement on definitions, or where the UN has not published methods of calculation. Therefore, achieving SDG14 becomes a matter of each country exercising its own judgment. Likewise, following up progress with the SDGs and its targets is a voluntary process done by each country on its own initiative.

In light of these peculiarities of the SDGs, even when, for argument's sake, an indicator has been reached, it is up to each country as a sovereign state to make its own judgment on whether the goal has been achieved or not. That is, each country strives to achieve the SDGs while trying to deliver its own national interests. Japan is no exception. Therefore, the ideal format for Japan is to create a Japanese model aimed at achieving the SDGs. In section (3) below, we discuss the basic policies for examining the Japanese model that has emerged out of the discussions in this Study Group.

(2) Achieving SDG14 based on the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy

When discussing the SDG14 international goal for the oceans, we must always bear in mind the connections with Japan's ocean policy, that is, the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy. We paid particular attention to this point when we established the themes dealt with in the Study Group, and during the actual investigations and discussions.

Formulated in 2018, the Third Basic Ocean Plan is now into its third year. Bearing in mind that the plan is reviewed every five years, the investigation by the Study Group confirms and recommends the following points with regard to the implementation of the plan that is now more than half-way through its third term.

Firstly, it was confirmed that the three themes examined by the Study Group in this fiscal year are closely connected to the many and diverse measures listed in Chapter 2 of the Third Basic Ocean Plan. This is also closely related to the fact that the themed discussions by the Study Group once again confirmed that the initiatives intended to achieve SDG14 cannot in themselves bring matters to a conclusion. To achieve SDG14, we must move the initiatives forward while keeping in mind that the goal involves a diverse range of measures. In this context, the Third Basic Ocean Plan, which hinges on Comprehensive Maritime Security, clarifies the importance of implementing the full range of diverse measures. Measures related to achieving SDG14 can be understood as corresponding to “measures with aspects that contribute to maritime security even if security is not necessarily their sole and main purpose” as stated in the Third Basic Ocean Plan. That is, these measures can be positioned as measures that form “the foundation which contributes to reinforcement of maritime security,” and make up the initiatives that contribute to Comprehensive Maritime Security. This Study Group has dealt with three themes, but the results of the investigation should be used as recommendations for guidelines, methods, and evaluation with regard to the implementation of the diverse measures that contribute to Comprehensive Maritime Security. As discussed below in section (3), it should be noted that this point is also expressed in the concrete form of basic guidelines for the Japanese model.

Secondly, the coordination and integration functions of the Headquarters for Ocean Policy, the Advisory Councilor's Meeting, and the National Ocean Policy Secretariat are essential to deliver many diverse measures while reflecting how they relate to one another. SDG14 is closely related to a range of measures, which means that promoting a single measure is not sufficient for the overall promotion of SDG14. As stated in the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, where SDG14 is concerned, the National Ocean Policy Secretariat enlists the cooperation of the relevant government ministries and agencies while taking measures to strengthen coordination in order to implement each measure in an integrated and systematic manner. It would be advisable to examine integrated initiatives and to understand the aspects where promoting individual measures contribute to achieving SDG14, as well as the aspects where the aim of achieving SDG14 becomes the reason to promote domestic and international implementation of individual measures.

### (3) Basic Guidelines for the Japanese Model of Achieving SDG14

In December 2019, the government’s SDGs Promotion Headquarters revised the implementation guidelines for the SDGs, presenting the Japanese SDGs Model, which is focused on three key dimensions: (1) Promote Society 5.0, which links business, innovation, and the SDGs; (2) Revitalize local economies powered by the SDGs, and

attractive urban planning that is both robust and environmentally friendly; (3) Empower women and the next generation to become key players in the SDGs. This is the same approach as the Japanese model investigated by this Study Group. As stated above (1. Aims and Intent of the Study Group (2)), the SDGs Promotion Headquarters and this Study Group have taken different approaches to the SDGs (the latter with a particular focus on SDG 14), but, ultimately, arriving at the same methodology. This is not at all a coincidence. In the future, the pursuit of the Japanese model will be an important point when promoting the SDGs across the government as a whole, and when considering SDG14 in relation to the oceans.

In terms of SDG14, it is necessary to achieve SDG14, which contributes to the national interest of Japan, based on the Japanese SDGs model.

Seen from this perspective, we recommend the following guidelines for achieving SDG14. We have discussed three themes in this Study Group. To arrive at these recommendations, we have identified guidelines that can be generalized to a certain extent when formulating and implementing shared guidelines and Japan's ocean policy.

(i) Collaboration with a range of stakeholders: Internal implementation

It is of paramount importance to join forces with more stakeholders to achieve the SDGs. In addition to the traditional stakeholders of industry, government, and academia, the implementation guidelines for the SDGs, which were revised in December 2019, include civil society, consumers, the new public (cooperatives), labor unions, the next generation (youth), and local governments. With regard to SDG14, in particular, the measures to counter marine plastic litter, and the importance of educating the public as well as the importance of involvement by diverse stakeholders were discussed earlier (3. Summary (1) Theme 1: Marine Plastic Litter (B)), but with regard to the stakeholders mentioned in the revised implementation guidelines for the SDGs, it is essential to continue to consider how to collaborate in the future.

(ii) Collaboration with a range of stakeholders: Collaboration with the international community

The importance of awareness that the SDGs are based on the concept of promoting the SDGs globally was confirmed. In particular, bearing in mind the vulnerability of small island states to climate change and social change, there are repeated references to small island states in many of the SDGs. This approach of collaboration with such regions is essential to achieve the SDGs worldwide. This way of thinking is by no means inconsistent with the formulation of a Japanese model. Assuming that each country has its own model for achieving the SDGs based on their own approaches, it is natural to

think about how to collaborate to achieve the models adopted by other countries in parallel with the realization of the Japanese model. To make a persuasive case for such collaboration with partner countries, the decisive points are the ability to build an attractive Japanese model, and putting such a model into effect. For example, in connection with the theme of marine plastic litter, applicable support that meets local needs include appropriate waste disposal and the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) where Japan has experience and knowhow, or initiatives using the power of Japanese technologies. Japan's social and cultural systems also leverage Japan's strengths in relation to the theme of small island nations. When building the Japanese model, efforts involving points that are not necessarily correctly understood or evaluated at the moment (for example, the significance of heat recovery in processing plastic litter as a climate change control measure) will be important in the future to obtain due recognition from the international community.

At the same time, it is necessary to gather information on what kind of models other key nations in the international community are trying to build to achieve the SDGs. From now on, the focus should be on gathering information about what kinds of initiatives the United States, the EU, China and South Korea, and the ASEAN countries are implementing to achieve the SDGs. Based on this information, Japan should consider how collaboration would contribute to Japan's national interest and to the achievement of the SDGs as a whole around the world.

Discussions about SDG14 are also underway at venues for international discussions concerning the oceans including the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (the UN Ocean Conference), the Our Ocean Conference, which began under U.S. leadership, and the APEC's Ocean and Fishery Working Group (OFWG). In addition to developments in other key nations, it is also necessary to carefully follow developments at these kinds of international fora. Japan should also be co-leader of major discussions at these fora. To that end, it is important to aim to promote the SDGs globally based on a balanced understanding that focuses on the security of human beings.

(iii) Formulating and reinforcing the foundation through science and technology

The examination of the three themes taken up in this Study Group confirmed that there is still not enough information based on scientific data to take necessary measures. From this perspective, the significance of the UN Decade for Ocean Science, which is aimed at contributing to SDG14 and the other SDGs through scientific knowledge, data and information, and building scientific knowledge, infrastructure, and partnerships, will come to the fore. The Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy states that Japan will participate

in formulating and implementing the action plan for the decade, and as a nation, will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. It is important to continue these efforts.

There are also other international initiatives where participation is desirable.

(iv) Integrated implementation of measures

The Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy touches on the SDGs and SDG14 at every turn and positions them as matters that must be worked on to achieve the Plan. Chapter 2 specifies measures for comprehensive and systematic implementation by the government, which describe the government's efforts to achieve the SDG14 in more detail. However, bearing in mind that the measures related to SDG14 straddle many fields, the plan does not necessarily clarify the relationship between the measures. Therefore, to achieve SDG14, it is necessary to implement measures in an integrated manner based on perspectives on what kind of collaboration between measures would be effective. To this end, the National Ocean Policy Secretariat is expected to enlist the cooperation of the relevant government ministries and agencies while taking measures to strengthen coordination to implement each measure in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

(4) Closing Statement

In addition to the themes discussed by this Study Group, a broad range of targets have been set for SDG14 including such important themes as ocean acidification. In other words, the themes for SDG14 are wide-ranging. The SDGs also require initiatives by 2030. That is, SDG14 implies a long-term time frame. This diversity and inter-generational social justice indicate that the ocean environment has an essential function in human culture and socio-economic activities.

Firstly, as described here, based on the outcomes of the investigation by the Study Group, we confirm and recommend the implementation of the second half of the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, which was formulated in 2018. Secondly, the next Basic Plan for Ocean Policy (the fourth term starting in 2023) must have more focused descriptions of the measures to implement SDG14. In doing so, the examination of each theme discussed in the Study Group in this fiscal year must be intensified, and themes that were not addressed in this Study Group must also be examined. To this end, and bearing in mind the formulation of the next Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, we recommend launching another Project Team (or Study Group) under the supervision of the Advisory Councilors' Meeting at an appropriate time to perform another review of SDG14.

## Study Group on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 Members

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## Study Group on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 Meetings Record

Meetings Record	Theme
First Study Group (December 11, 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Object and Purpose of SDG14 Study Group</li> <li>• Positioning of SDG14 in the overall SDGs</li> </ul>
Second Study Group (December 26, 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine plastic litter</li> <li>• IUU fishing</li> </ul>
Third Study Group (January 22, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with theme of previous meeting</li> <li>• Small island states</li> </ul>
Fourth Study Group (February 2, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of previous discussions and consultation of SG's report</li> </ul>