

Recommendations for Revising Japan's SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles



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September 2019
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Background

2019 is one of the most important years in the history of sustainability, since the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be reviewed by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the UN General Assembly, in late September. The Government of Japan has established the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, which is chaired by the Prime Minister and consists of all Cabinet members, as an intra-governmental mechanism for implementing the 2030 Agenda. The Headquarters has organized the SDGs Implementation Roundtable (RT) as its advisory body, consisting of individual experts representing diverse stakeholders and representatives of all governmental agencies. In 2016 the Headquarters formulated the "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles" as a "national strategy" for achieving the SDGs.

Recently, the Headquarters decided to revise the "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles" by the end of this year. Voluntary expert members of the RT (Voluntary RT experts) organized a conference together with the United Nations University (UNU) and in support of the Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs (SDGs-Japan), Keio University (xSDG Lab., Keio Research Institute at SFC) and SDSN Japan, in order to incorporate a wide range of voices from multiple stakeholders to develop collective recommendations for revising the SDGs Guiding Principles. This conference, the "Stakeholder Conference for Revising SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles", was held on 6 September at UNU Headquarters in Tokyo. Voluntary RT experts concluded their recommendations by reflecting discussions and suggestions made during the conference (see photos).

Conference *

The conference aimed to collect a wide range of views and opinions from multiple stakeholders and reflect them in recommendations to be submitted to the government. The conference was attended by 200 participants from across Japan, including companies, local governments, labor unions and civil society groups. Voluntary RT experts served as co-chairs and facilitators of breakout sessions. The conference discussed a wide range of issues such as the vision of the world in 2030 and Japan, perspectives on policies and measures for implementation of the SDGs, and efforts by each sector to achieve the SDGs. Breakout sessions focused on the roles of stakeholders such as civil society, private companies, the financial sector, local initiatives and academic and education communities, and their discussions also covered the government system for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its reviews and indicators.



*Research activities related to this conference and recommendations were supported by grants from the Environment Research and Technology Development Fund (1-180185-16) of the Ministry of the Environment Japan.



Recommendations

By reflecting the discussions during the conference, voluntary RT experts prepared recommendations and submitted them to the Government of Japan on 9 September through Amb. Tamaki Tsukada, Director-General/ Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the Vice Chair, Senior Official Board of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters in the Cabinet Secretary. The recommendations began with an overview of the transition of SDGs implementation in Japan after the current Guiding Principles were formulated in 2016. They suggested a vision for the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles and the roles of various stakeholders such as (a) civil society, (b) private companies, (c) the financial sector, (d) local initiatives, and (e) academic and education communities. The recommendations also covered cross-cutting issues such as (a) goal-setting, follow-up and review, (b) governance for effective implementation, (c) securing budgets & human resources, and (d) policies and measures for implementation.

Amb. Tsukada of MOFA stated "I am grateful that the voluntary RT experts have developed these valuable recommendations by reflecting a wide range of voices from multi-stakeholders in such an efficient and timely manner. I am committed to reflect these recommendations to the revising process of the Guiding Principles as much as possible". The Government of Japan plans to prepare its first draft of the revised "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles" in October for public comments, which will be reflected in the finalized draft.

