

Summary of “Interim Report by Planning Section”

(Introduction)

- The Planning Subcommittee has worked out an interim report to be submitted to the National Land Council and will start review work to prepare a final report based on the interim report.
- When preparing the interim report, the Subcommittee paid particular attention to the following points.
 - ① **National land development to prevent the decreasing population from leading to the degradation of the country:** As the first national land planning at a time when the population is decreasing, the report presents measures to provide high-quality public services and maintain unique and attractive living environments.
 - ② **Demonstration of each region’s uniqueness in East Asia:** With globalization and the growth of East Asia kept in mind, the report expands the spatial vision of the plan to East Asia and reviews regions’ uniqueness and attractiveness and their international functions.
 - ③ **Mobilization of regional power for regional development:** The report expresses expectations that not only administrations but also different entities, such as local communities, NPOs, and corporations, will play a role and cooperate in the intermediate areas between public and private zones. The report has positioned this as a “new public.”
 - ④ **National land consisting of diverse and autonomous wide-area blocs:** As a new image of national land, the report shows the direction for the development of a national land structure consisting of diverse and autonomous wide-area blocs and thereby aims to raise public awareness of zones.

1. Trend of the Times and Issues in National Land Policies

(1) Great changes in the socioeconomic situation

① Decreasing population and rapidly aging society

- The birthrate in Japan fell to 1.25 in 2005. Even if the birthrate rises to 1.39 (the assumed value for median estimate by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research) toward the year 2050, the population of Japan is estimated to decrease to about 123.2 million in 2020 (about 127.8 million in 2004) and to about 98.9 million in 2050. The ratio of the elderly, which stood at around 20% in 2005, is estimated to rise close to 30% in 2020 and to about 35% in 2050.

② Progress of globalization and economic development of East Asia

- Amid the progress of economic globalization, the rapid economic growth of East Asia, and the advance in industrial structure, moves to develop an East Asia-wide production network and economic cooperation have picked up momentum. In the 1980s, Japan’s major trading partners were the United States and European countries, and they accounted for close to 60% of Japan’s exports. But in 2003, Asian countries surpassed the United States and European countries as major importers from Japan.

③ Advance in information and communications technology

- The striking advance in information and communications technology in recent years has rapidly enhanced living conveniences, improved industry’s productivity, and caused major changes in national life, including person-to-person contact.

(2) Changes and diversification of the public's sense of value

① Rising national consciousness of safety and security, environment, beauty, and culture

- Progress in global warming is expected to cause far-reaching impact, such as increased frequency of abnormal weather. Cases of disasters caused by heavy rainfall are increasing and tend to cause great damage. Japan is one of the largest volcanic countries in the world and is prone to earthquakes, raising concerns that strong earthquakes, such as the Tokai earthquake, the Tonan-kai earthquake, and inland earthquakes in metropolitan areas, as well as tsunamis may occur any time.
- Public interest in the environment has increased; and amid the public's increased awareness toward seeking comfort, relaxation, and spiritual richness, their desire for beautiful scenery, culture, and arts has become stronger than ever.

② Diversification of lifestyles, growth of entities performing the role of the "public"

- The diversification of the public's sense of value and an increase in disposable time over one's lifetime have made it possible for people to choose from diverse lifestyles. Moreover, moves to have "residences in two areas" are increasing.
- As a result of the maturation of the society, increased public awareness, and the diversification of senses of value, etc., a wider range of "public" roles has come to be played by a variety of entities other than administrations, such as NPOs and corporations.

(3) National land situation

① Current status of unipolar, uniaxial national land structure

- Japan has been structured in a unipolar, uniaxial way that has led to a concentration of population and function on the Pacific belt, mainly in Tokyo.
- In order to develop a new growth strategy to overcome the decreasing population, it is necessary to promote strategic investment for enhancing the quality of the obsolete national land infrastructure and strengthening international competitiveness.
- Since a net inflow of population into the Tokyo metropolitan area has been continuing, it is necessary to pay close attention to recent trends in regional disparities among wide-area blocs and prefectures. Local small and medium-sized towns and hilly and mountainous areas are losing their regional vitality and facing the difficulty of maintaining various social services. In order to promote regional independence, it is necessary to develop new regional development models.

② Progress in the environment for regional independence and increase of problems beyond prefectural boundaries

- Decentralization, municipal mergers, etc. have strengthened regional communities' power to take initiative in decision-making and have been contributing to the establishment of the environment for regional independence, such as an increase in opportunities for direct exchanges brought about by the economic growth of East Asia and advances in information and communication technology.
- Each wide-area bloc has clusters of population and industry that are on par with those in mid-size European countries, and each of these blocs has seen the growth of central urban communities and progress in the establishment of basic public facilities. Therefore,

each wide-area bloc has the potential to enhance its international competitiveness through competition and cooperation with neighboring East Asian countries and has a clear regional identity.

- Moreover, the importance of promoting measures in units of wide-area bloc has increased as challenges that have to be addressed from a wide-area perspective beyond prefectural boundaries have increased. One example is the strategic development of international physical distribution and high-speed transportation systems to respond to wider economic activities and measures for underpopulated areas and hilly and mountainous areas in prefectural boundaries.

③ **Necessity of restructuring ideal relationship between people and national land on the basis of the decreasing population**

- The current century offers a good opportunity to restructure an ideal relationship between people and the national land, as the decreasing population has made it easier to utilize national land. It is important to create a safe and attractive national land by correcting the distortion of national land, enhancing its quality, and reducing environment loads based on the accumulations made so far.
- Japan should appeal its inherent attractions to the world, such as its beautiful rural scenery and clear and safe urban cities, and strive to create a beautiful, trusted, and functional “Japanese brand of national land” where every one wants to live or visit.

Considering the current status of the national land and its problems and with the trend of the new age in mind, Japan should strive to create a national land structure for the new age in order to correct the unipolar, uniaxial national land structure.

2. New National Land Image

(1) Direction of the development of national land structure

- Under this plan, wide-area regional plan districts as a unit should strive to transform the national land structure into one in which each bloc does not rely too heavily on Tokyo for various functions and draw up a distinctive regional strategy to use its resources to the full with a view to competing and cooperating with other areas in East Asia. Mutual interaction and cooperation among these diversely characterized blocs will generate synergistic effects on the formation of a vibrant national land.

When doing so, each bloc should strive to create a safe and beautiful national land by correcting the distortion of national land, enhancing its quality, and reducing environment loads.

(National land in which diverse wide-area blocs develop independently)

- Within each wide-area bloc, the urban cities and industries that could become growth engines for the bloc should be promoted, and each region within the bloc needs to exert its diverse regional characteristics, leading to the creation of comfortable and sustainable living areas.
- A favorable direction for the future of Japan is to increase “the depth of the country” commensurate with its maturity by creating a national land structure comprised of independent wide-area blocs having different characteristics and by having diversity on its land to allow flexible responses to various changes at home and abroad.

Striving for such a national land will contribute to the independent development of wide-area blocs and this in turn will contribute to the development of our country as a whole, leading to the achievement of well-balanced development of the national land to meet the needs of the new age.

- Based on the understanding that the prosperity of East Asia will lead to the growth of Japan, it is necessary to strive to transform the national land structure with East Asia in mind, including the promotion of wide-ranging efforts to utilize the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, the two oceans that have increased in importance.

(2) Support for the promotion of independence of wide-area blocs

- In developing wide-area regional plans, if relevant local offices of the central government, local public bodies and local businesses collaborate under an appropriate role-sharing, it is expected to lead to the creation of characteristic regional communities. To this end, each wide-area bloc should conduct broad-based and cross-cutting studies with regard to ① its position in the national land and the manifestation of its uniqueness in East Asia, ② cooperation among urban cities and regions within each, on the basis of each bloc's characteristics, ③ independent countermeasures against national problems, ④ measures to resolve problems peculiar to each bloc, and ⑤ focused and selective mobilization of resources based on its independent regional strategy.

In national planning, we should give the direction of national land development that forms the basis of wide-area regional plans and present common problems to be addressed by each bloc, while placing emphasis on each bloc's independence. Moreover, from a national standpoint, expectations on each bloc and the necessity of cooperation among blocs should be made known, while we try to understand the germination of studies on original strategies to be developed by each bloc.

- In order to promote the formation of independent wide-area blocs and to implement measures necessary from the standpoint of national strategy, the national government is required to study and establish support frameworks, such as support of focused measures designed to strengthen international competitiveness based on wide-area regional plans, support for efficient and effective realization of the strategies, and development of the environment for regional competitions in wisdom, ingenuity, etc.
- It is also necessary for the national government to continue to provide support to areas in disadvantageous positions in terms of geographic, natural, and social conditions on the basis of each area's conditions. When doing so, the national government should study appropriate support measures to respond to the needs of each area.

3. Aims of the Plan and Strategic Efforts

In the new plan, the following strategic measure should be presented in order to make the plan show the direction for the next age through activities of all generations.

[Formation of national land to deal with globalization and decreasing population]

It is necessary to promote stable economic growth in each wide-area bloc and maintain the vitality and diversity of each area within the bloc by creating a national land in which diverse

wide-area blocs evolve independently.

First, with the aim of incorporating East Asia's growth dynamism, it is necessary to deepen the relationships between each wide-area bloc and East Asian regions and promote improvement of infrastructure to that end ((1) Realization of a seamless Asia).

Second, amid the decreasing population and advancing aging society, it is necessary to restructure urban area structures, revitalize industries, and promote inter-regional exchanges so that each area within a bloc, from urban cities to rural areas, will be maintained as a living base without losing its vitality and individual characteristic ((2) Creation of sustainable areas).

[Restructuring and preservation of a safe and beautiful national land]

We have to restructure a safe and beautiful national land by utilizing surplus national land made available by the decreasing population and maintain and pass it down to the next generation, while promoting the creation of independent national land.

Third, it is necessary to enhance preparations for disasters both in terms of hardware and software and to promote efforts to make the whole national land structure safe against disasters ((3) Creation of a disaster-resistant and flexible national land).

Fourth, it is necessary to develop a sustainable and beautiful national land by promoting national land management focused on cycling and symbiosis ((4) Management and nourishment of beautiful national land).

[Regional development by "new public"]

When promoting strategic efforts to achieve the above four aims, it is necessary to have a cross-cutting perspective of promoting cooperation between administrations and diverse private entities, including local communities and enterprises, by taking into account the diversification of people's sense of value and the growth of NPOs.

(1) Realization of a seamless Asia

As the interdependent relationship between Japan and other East Asian countries has further deepened, it is necessary for Japan to strive for co-prosperity with East Asian countries by strengthening exchanges and cooperation in various fields, while keeping in mind Japan's competitive relationship with them.

Neighboring East Asian countries that are linked by land routes have been strengthening their solidarity through promotion of the Asian Highway project, etc. Japan lags behind them in terms of securing the continuity and interchangeability of traffic networks in East Asia.

In order to support exchanges and cooperation between Japan and neighboring East Asian countries, it is necessary to realize a seamless Asia for faster and smoother flow of people, goods, and information in East Asia.

① Strengthening Japanese industries under the East Asian network-type industrial structure

Creation of new industries by making use of accumulation/ Scientific and technological innovation/ Strengthening the basis of Japan's industrial production/Etc.

② Promotion of exchanges and cooperation with East Asia

Establishment of platforms to resolve problems common to East Asia, such as urban and environmental problems/Increasing the number of visitors to Japan by promoting

tourism/Networks for human resources development and exchanges/Etc.

③ Formation of national land infrastructure to support a seamless Asia

Creation of daytrip business zone and overnight freight delivery zone in East Asia and development of an Asian broadband environment/ Formation of a wide-area bloc gateway/ Sharing of common policies for the development of a transportation and telecommunications infrastructure in Asian countries/ Etc.

(2) Creation of sustainable areas

In order to develop sustainable areas and revitalize industries at a time when the country's population is decreasing, it is necessary to shift away from building infrastructure in line with the expansion of urban cities resulting from the population increase, and move toward promoting cooperation and structural changes of urban cities in line with the existing infrastructure, while striving to correct the diffusive urban structure. It is also important to encourage efforts focused on value available only in each area, such as revitalizing industries by making use of resources peculiar to the regions and re-evaluating various functions of rural areas, and to promote accumulation of human resources and inter-area personal exchanges and cooperation.

① Formation of sustainable and comfortable urban areas

Transformation into an intensive urban city structure and effective utilization of tracts of land that have not been fully utilized/Broad-based responses beyond municipal boundaries/Improvement of the quality of housing /Response to problems peculiar to metropolitan areas, etc.

② Revitalization of industries by making use of regional resources

Distinctive industrial development by mobilizing all regional resources/Creation of new industries and regional development centering on universities, etc./Fostering regional brands, promotion of regional tourism, etc.

③ Formation of beautiful and comfortable rural areas and new development of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industry

Harmonization of the natural environment, production base, and living environment/Utilization of diverse attractions and tangible and intangible value/Improvement of the competitiveness of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industry, etc.

④ Promotion of invitation and relocation of people to regions and inter-regional exchanges and cooperation

Promotion of the two-residence lifestyle/Development of information platforms for intermediation functions concerning regional living, employment, etc.

(3) Creation of disaster-resistant and flexible national land

There are concerns about an increase in the risk of a variety of serious disasters not seen in the past and about wide-ranging, complex, and prolonging disasters. Moreover, the society's capacity to deal with disasters has been decreasing as can be seen, for instance, in the

weakening of local communities.

Therefore, it is necessary to create a disaster-resistant and flexible national land so that people who require support at times of disaster can be safe and comfortable.

When doing so, it is also important to ensure strong and universally-designed traffic and communications networks so that rescue and evacuation activities and information transmissions may not be disrupted in times of disaster.

① Promotion of disaster countermeasures also focused on disaster-damage reduction

Enhancement of quake resistance, including improvement of existing facilities/Development of before-disaster systems such as hazard maps for the prevention of disasters and the implementation of emergency measures, systems in times of disaster such as transmission of information, and after-disaster systems such as protection of disaster victims/Preparation of business continuity plans (BCPs), Etc.

② Renovation of the national land structure to make it disaster-resistant

Measures to lead to the development and utilization of a disaster-resistant national land structure/Enhancement of complementarity and substitutability by networking central functions/Ensuring redundancy in traffic and communications networks, such as roundabout routes/Measures to prevent isolation of hilly and mountainous areas and disadvantaged areas, Etc.

(4) Management and nourishment of beautiful national land

Because the first period for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that was promised under the Kyoto Protocol is expected to start in 2008, efforts to prevent global warming are urgently called for. It is against this background that public interest in environment conservation has increased. It is important to develop beautiful national land by promoting national land management focused on cycling and symbiosis and to pass it down to the next generation. With regard to food and forest resources, etc., Japan needs to increase its self-sufficiency rate, while at the same time anticipating a rise in demand from other Asian countries promoted by their economic growth.

① Formation of properly managed national land focused on cycling and symbiosis

Development of diverse and sound forests by such means as planting broadleaf and conifer trees/Integrated rehabilitation of forestry and lumber industries/Creation of a cycling society/Development of physical distribution systems for recyclable resources/Formation of wide eco-nets, etc.

② Utilization of national land and management of hydrological cycle systems in river basins

Construction of a sound hydrological cycle system in river basin areas/Promotion of comprehensive management of sand and soil/Development of systems to raise public awareness of the importance of both upstream and downstream areas and river basins, etc.

③ Promotion of efforts toward “national management of national land”

Promotion of efforts to manage and nourish national land by each and every individual in the country, etc.

④ **Comprehensive use and conservation of ocean and coastal areas**

Comprehensive and strategic efforts by the government as a whole/Promotion and management of isolated islands/Management of coastal areas, etc.

(5) Regional development by a “new public” (cross-cutting perspective)

Considering that not only administrations but also diverse private entities should form the core of regional development, it is necessary to promote regional development based on the concept of a “new public” that calls for the public and private sectors to collaborate. The goal is to provide well-thought-out services by expanding their activities to the intermediate areas between public and private zones. These efforts will help establish systems for new regional management and regional problem resolution. Furthermore, the “new public,” through private and other diverse entities, is expected to lead to the practice of open regional development, where people with different backgrounds interact through two-residence lifestyles, and to the realization of communities by making use of their original attractions.

① **System for regional development based on the axis of a “new public”**

Fostering intermediate support organizations to promote integration of activities of diverse private-sector entities, such as regional communities and NPOs/Mechanism to make participation easy, etc.

② **Management of national land infrastructures by diverse entities**

People’s participation in the management of familiar national land infrastructures, such as roads, rivers, harbors, etc.

③ **Regional development through self-help efforts focused on the initiatives and activities of diverse private entities**

Creation of differentiated value and attractions/Utilization of regional resources, such as culture/Securing major players from outside experts/Consensus-building on the future image of life in endangered villages/Changes in the way of government support, such as development of environments for competition for wisdom and ingenuity, etc.

4. Realization of the Plan

(1) Direction of national land infrastructure investment

It is important to improve the quality of the national land infrastructure through more focused and efficient infrastructure investment based on regional characteristics while making use of the accumulation of infrastructures so that it will contribute to stable economic growth, enhancement of regional vitality, and restructuring of a safe and beautiful national land.

The investment environment for a national land infrastructure is expected to become severe due to increases in investment for maintaining and improving the existing infrastructure. Against this background, it is necessary to strategically develop a national land infrastructure that will also be required in the next generation, while keeping the ideal form of regional communities that are envisioned in the wide-area regional plans firmly in mind. To that end, it is necessary to make well-focused investments from multiple perspectives, such as ① investment to realize national strategies and regional strategies for independence, ② investment to resolve problems to be dealt with by regional communities, and ③ investment

necessary to maintain security and safety throughout the nation. It is also necessary to study the direction of such investments.

(2) Improvement/utilization of national land information and monitoring of plans

Since improvement and utilization of national land information is conducive to ensuring the utilization, development, and conservation of national land and the security and safety of national land, it is necessary to promote the active utilization of the geographic information system (GIS). In order to implement monitoring after plans are drafted, it is necessary to study specific monitoring procedures as well as systems and monitoring indicators that would make people feel that national life has improved.

(3) Inspection of various systems related to the plan

By taking advantage of the formulation of the plan, it is necessary to inspect a variety of systems concerning national land policies and study new frameworks.

5. Formulation of National Land Use Plans

With regard to national land use, there are various problems, such as low-quality use of national land, excessive loads on the national land and global environments, and a decline in the level of national land management, as well as new conditions such as the growing public awareness of security and the environment. Therefore, when formulating national land use plans, it is necessary to present the direction of sustainable national land management focused on three perspectives: “cycling and symbiosis” (development of a material-circulation system in harmony with human activities, development of a sound hydrological cycle system in river basin areas, and conservation and recovery of nature, etc.), “security and safety,” and “beauty” (overall high quality of national land, such as human activities healthily harmonizing with the ecological system).

(Conclusion)

- We hope that the preparation of this interim report will prompt active discussions at all levels and lead to a broad consensus on the development of a national land development plan.
- In particular, discussions should be held immediately in each wide-area bloc with the participation of diverse entities, while taking into account the opinions and suggestions of experts.
- The Planning Subcommittee for its part will continue its efforts for the preparation of a final report.