

# **The New National Land Sustainability Plan**

Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

National and Regional Planning Bureau

National Planning Division

Facing declining population of our country, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport decided to drastically revise the former Comprehensive National Land Development Act and to replace the Comprehensive National Development Plans with the New National land Sustainability Plan, in order to ensure national and regional planning systems that will adequately meet the needs of the new era. Here we would like to report about the new national and regional planning systems and introduce our approaches to formulate the future National land Sustainability Plan.

## **1. Background of the past national and regional plans**

National and regional plans are long-term, comprehensive and spatial plans to show the ideal state of territory that is comprised of land, water, nature, social infrastructures, industry accumulation, culture, human resources and others.

Starting from the 1st Comprehensive National Development Plan that was formulated in 1962, our national and regional planning after the WWII had been centered around the Comprehensive National Development Plan, based on the Comprehensive National Land Development Act (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Comparison of Comprehensive National Development Plans**

	Comprehensive National Development Plan	New Comprehensive National Development Plan	3rd Comprehensive National Development Plan	4th Comprehensive National Development Plan	Grand Design for the 21st Century
Date of Approval by the Cabinet	October 5, 1962	May 30, 1969	November 4, 1977	June 30, 1987	March 31, 1998
Prime Minister	Hayato Ikeda	Eisaku Sato	Takeo Fukuda	Yasuhiro Nakasone	Ryutaro Hashimoto
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transition to high growth economy</li> <li>2. Overpopulation and disparity in income</li> <li>3. National income-doubling plan (Pacific Belt Zone Project)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High growth economy</li> <li>2. Concentration of population and industry in metropolitan areas</li> <li>3. Advancement of information technology, globalization, and technical renovation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stable economic growth</li> <li>2. Signs of decentralization of population and industry</li> <li>3. It became obvious that national resources and energies are limited</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Concentration of population and various functions in Tokyo</li> <li>2. Employment issues in non-metropolitan areas are more serious for reasons such as drastic structural changes in industry</li> <li>3. Advancement of full-scale globalization</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Global age(Global environmental issues, megacompetition, and exchanges with Asian nations)</li> <li>2. Decreasing population and the aging society</li> <li>3. Information-oriented society</li> </ol>
Target Achievement Year	1970	1985	about 10 years from 1977	around 2000	2010-2015
Basic Objectives	<b>Well-balanced development between regions</b>	<b>Creation of a rich environment</b>	<b>Improvement of the general living environment</b>	<b>Formation of a multipolar country</b>	<b>Prepare the basics for a multiaxial structure</b>
Development Method	<p><b><u>Development of regional hubs</u></b></p> <p>Decentralization of industry is needed to achieve the objectives of this plan. Efforts must be made to develop regional hubs, by organically relating them to and promoting interaction with the existing production mass in Tokyo and other metropolitan areas, with a new transportation and communication network. Such development shall be performed by maintaining the characteristics of the peripheral areas and achieving a chain reaction that promotes regionally balanced development.</p>	<p><b><u>Large-scale project development</u></b></p> <p>Promote large-scale projects by developing transportation networks, such as the Shinkansen (bullet train) and expressways, to mitigate the uneven use of land and solve problems such as overpopulation, depopulation, and regional disparities.</p>	<p><b><u>Stable settlement concept</u></b></p> <p>Promote development of non-metropolitan areas while controlling the concentration of population and industry in metropolitan areas. Make efforts to achieve a well-balanced use of the national territory while responding to the issues of overpopulation and depopulation, with the aim of creating a better living environment for citizens.</p>	<p><b><u>Interactive network concept</u></b></p> <p>Establish a multipolar pattern territory with the following initiatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Promote a creative/innovative improvement of each area of national territory by maximizing regional characteristics</li> <li>(2) Develop backbone transportation, information, and communication networks nationwide in accordance with the national program or initiatives led by the national government</li> <li>(3) Establish various interaction opportunities through a joint effort between the national government, each regions, and private institutions.</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Participation and Cooperation</u></b></p> <p>– This plan conceives the participation of diverse entities and cooperation between regions as the basis for national and regional development.– (Four Strategies)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build nature-rich residential areas (small cities, agricultural and fishing areas, hilly and mountainous areas)</li> <li>2. Renovate metropolitan areas (renovation, renewal, and effective use of spheres in large cities)</li> <li>3. Form regional cooperation corridors (regional partnership taking the form of axis)</li> <li>4. Form international spheres of interaction on a large scale (which has global interactive functions)</li> </ol>

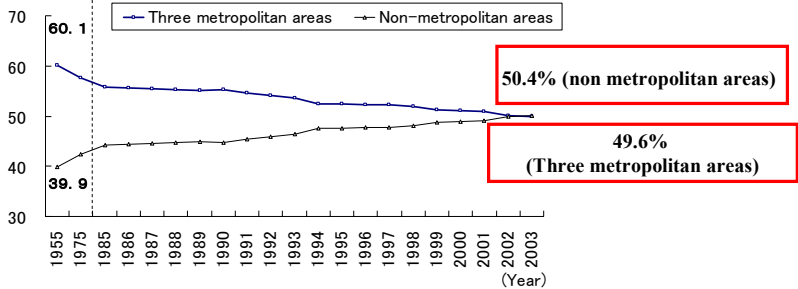
The Comprehensive National Development Plan, which was established five times in the past, has been formulated and promoted to solve various problems reflecting the needs of each era. As more than half a century has passed since the end of WWII, decentralization of plants and educational institutions (Figure 2) and growth of province and prefecture center cities has been promoted all over Japan. From a long-term perspective starting from the end of WWII until today, the trend of acute population flow to the metropolitan area has been converging (Figure 3), and income gaps between

regions have been also significantly reduced. When looking at each region, living environment has been also greatly improving, such as signs of pollution prevention and congestion reduction seen in metropolitan areas, and the pervasion and improvement of public facilities and infrastructures achieved in non-metropolitan areas. With these progresses, Japanese people are now able to pay attention to the beauty of national land, establishment of unique local cultures, and coexistence with nature.

However, the unipolar structure concentrated in Tokyo and the Pacific Belt Region is not yet to be entirely redressed. There are still many provincial areas troubled by depopulation problems, and fricht from the central urban districts is becoming a serious problem in local cities. In metropolitan areas, issues such as rearranging overcongested urban districts are left to be problematic, in terms of disaster prevention and living environment. Furthermore, the landscape is now quite disordered due to the sprawl in suburbs, and the land use that is lacking harmony with its surroundings in rural areas. Land and water contamination and dumping of illegal wastes are also becoming social problems.

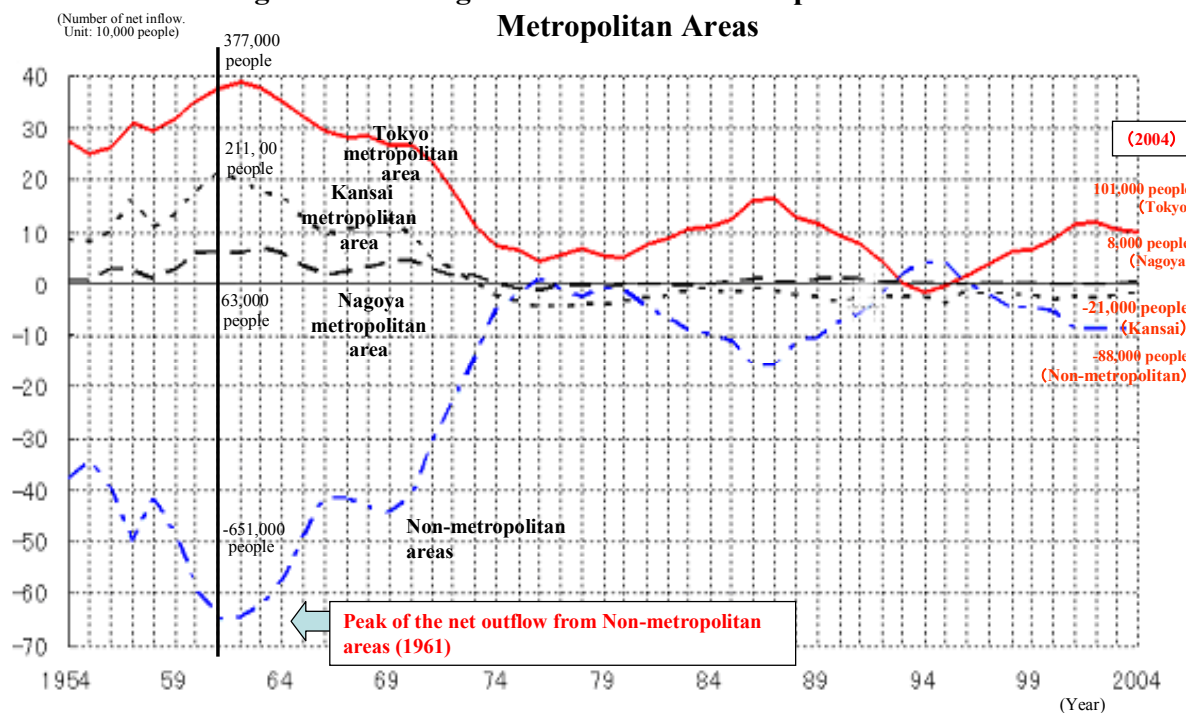
**Figure 2: Trends in the Share of Industrial Shipment Value by Region**

(Share of nationwide total, %)



(Source) Prepared by the National and Regional Planning Bureau, Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport, according to "Census of Manufactures" by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.  
 Note) Three metropolitan areas: Tokyo area (Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, Tokyo Metropolis and Kanagawa Prefecture)  
 Kansai area (Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture and Nara Prefecture)  
 Nagoya area (Gifu Prefecture, Aichi Prefecture and Mie Prefecture)

**Figure 3: Convergence in the Trends of Population flow into Metropolitan Areas**



Source: Prepared by the National and Regional Planning Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, based on "Annual report on the internal migration in Japan derived from the basic resident registers" by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Note: Definition of each region are as follows.

Tokyo metropolitan area: Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, Tokyo Metropolis, Kanagawa Prefecture

Nagoya metropolitan area: Gifu Prefecture, Aichi Prefecture, Mie Prefecture

Kansai metropolitan area: Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, Nara Prefecture

Three major metropolitan areas: Tokyo metropolitan area, Nagoya metropolitan area, and Kansai metropolitan area

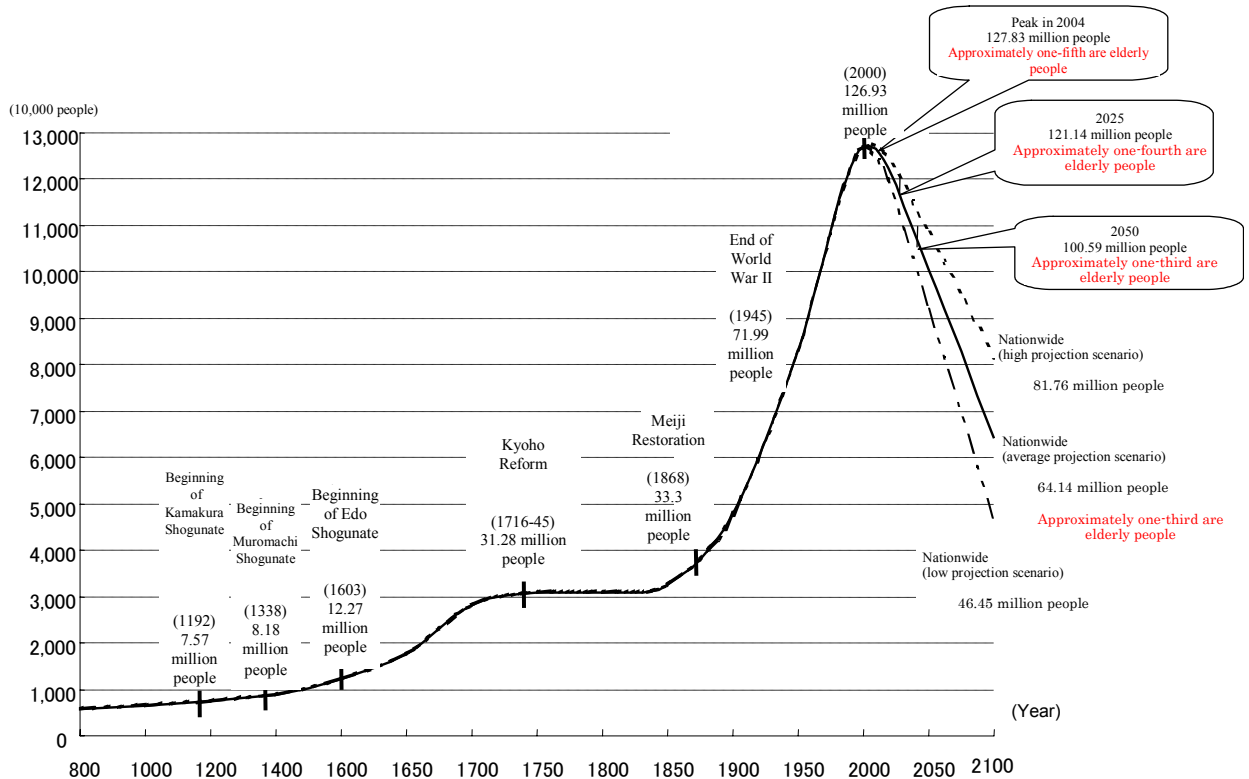
Non-metropolitan areas: Regions other than the three major metropolitan areas.

## 2. Reform of the national and regional planning system

### (1) Background of the reform

With the population decrease that is started in 2005 (Figure 4) in the background, feelings of anxiety and uncertainty exist among the Japanese public. Also in terms of national land policy, pressing issues are emerging, such as population decrease mentioned above, expansion of areas where maintaining the local community is going difficult, rapid devastation of farmlands, and the expansion of forests that are not properly maintained. From an international perspective, the East Asian economic bloc is growing rapidly, so that close collaboration with East Asian countries is crucial for maintaining and developing our vigor in an economic society through the 21st century (Figure 6). In order to cope with these pressing domestic and international issues properly, national and regional plans, which are long-term, comprehensive and spatial plans, are required to clearly show the future vision of our territory and people's lives.

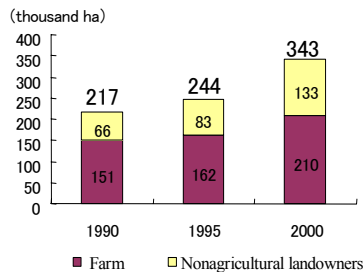
**Figure 4: Long-term Trends of Total Population in Japan**



Source: Prepared by the National and Regional Planning Bureau, Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport, according to "National Census of Japan," "Annual Report on Current Population Estimates" by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "Overview of Future Trends in Population in Japan" (conducted January 2002) by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, and "Long-term Time Series Analysis on Changes in Population Distribution throughout the Japanese Archipelago" by the National Land Agency (1974).

**Figure 5: Change in Areas of Devastated Farmlands and State of Thinning Implemented by Household Engaged in Forestry**

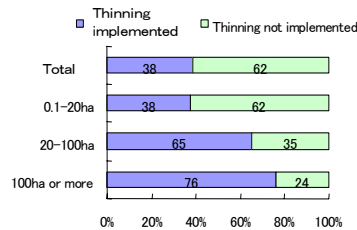
[Change in Areas of Devastated Farmlands]



Note) Total figures do not necessarily agree because the figures are rounded.

(Source) Prepared by the National and Regional Planning Bureau, Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport, according to the "Agricultural and Forestry Census."

[State of Thinning Implemented by Households Engaged in Forestry by the Size of Mountain Forest Owned]

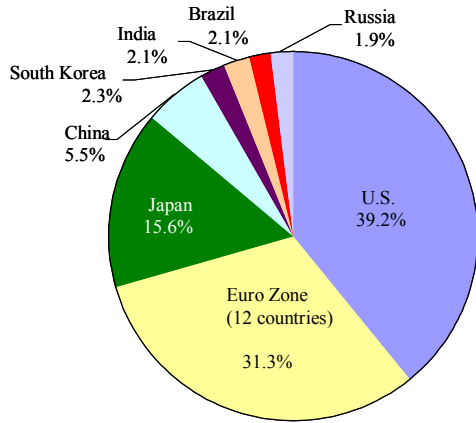


(Source) "Questionnaire on Forestry Activity by Owners of Mountain Forest" by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (November 1997)

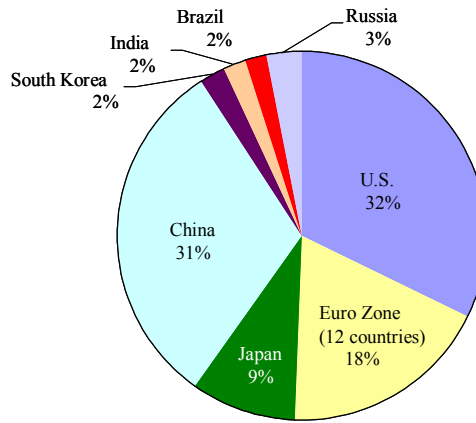
Note) The graph composes the households engaged in forestry that implement thinning, and households that did not implement thinning for the past 5 years although it owns mountain forests subject to thinning.

**Figure 6: Shares of Each Country in the World Economy**

(1) Shares of Each Country in the World's Nominal GDP in 2004



(2) Shares of Each Country in the World's Nominal GDP in 2030



Notes 1. Figures for the world is the total of the above 8 countries/regions.  
 2. The 12 countries for the Euro Zone are countries introduced as Euro as of March 2003 (Ireland, Italy, Austria, Netherlands, Greece, Spain, Germany, Finland, France, Belgium, Portugal, Luxemburg).

(Source) Prepared by the National and Regional Planning Bureau, Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport, according to "Japan's 21st Century Vision" by the Cabinet Office

However, the Comprehensive National Land Development Act, the law governing the Comprehensive National Development Plan that sets the grounds for Japan's national land policy, was orientated to quantitative development, with the social and economic background in 1950 when the Act was formulated. Therefore, a drastic review of the planning system has been required to cope efficiently with the decentralization, and domestic and international collaboration, to facilitate qualitative development of our territory, and to show the vision of our territory that is adequate for a mature society oriented to attain safety, complacency and stability in people's lives.

**(2) The road to the reform**

As for the reform of the national planning system, the goal specified in the 5th Comprehensive National Development Plan, the "Grand Design for the 21st Century" (adopted by the Cabinet meeting in March 1998), was to establish a national and regional planning system to meet requirements such as clarifying the philosophy of the national and regional planning, reacting to reforms such as decentralization, and enhancing the function as a guideline. Reviewing the Comprehensive National Development Plans and National Land Use Plan were also specified in the "2nd Decentralization Promotion Plan" (adopted by the Cabinet meeting in March 1999).

In this context, investigations and discussions were carried out in the National Land Council, and the “National and Regional Planning in the 21st Century,” was reported by the Policy Section of the National Land Council and the Planning Section of the Land Policy Council in November 1999, and the “Future Vision of National Land and the New National and Regional Planning System,” was reported by the Basic Policy Section of the National Land Council in November 2002.

Furthermore, in the “Structural Reform and Medium-Term Economic and Fiscal Perspectives” adopted by the Cabinet meeting in January 2002, it was decided that the Comprehensive National Development Plan should be fundamentally reviewed.

In June 2003, the Investigation Reform Section was established in the National Land Council. The Section examined the “reform of the national and regional planning system” and “Comprehensive Examination of National Land,” that was to review the current state and issues of national land, and to show the basic direction of national land policy from a long-term perspective. “Comprehensive Examination of National Land,” was reported by the Investigation Reform Section of the National Land Council, showing the current state and issues of national land, and the basic direction of the national land policy in the future. The report proposed that national and regional planning be reformed drastically, based on the new trends that caused turnaround in national land policies, such as “decreasing and aging population,” “interregional competition beyond national borders,” “elicitation of environmental issues,” “budgetary restraint” and “limitations of dependency on the central government”.

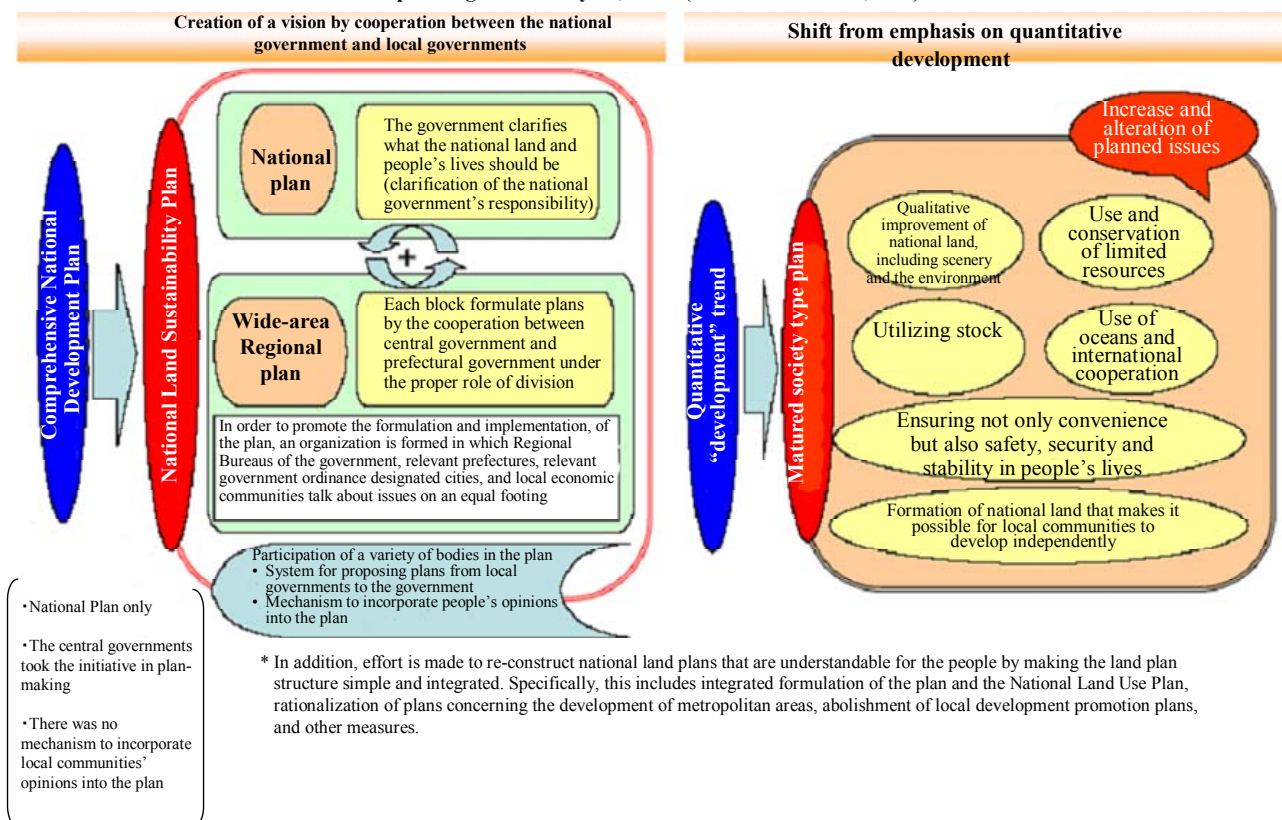
Based on the past discussions in the National Land Council, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport attempted to establish the national and regional planning system that responds appropriately to requirements of the new era, including the decrease of population. In order to achieve this, it introduced the “Bill for partial amendments to the Comprehensive National Land Development Act and other laws in order to promote sustainable development of the national land” to the 162nd Diet session following the Cabinet approval on March 1, 2005. This amendment bill suggested the fundamental revision from the Comprehensive National Land Development Act to the National Land Sustainability Plan Act, by revising the previous Comprehensive National Development Plans into the “National Land Sustainability Plan”, by increasing the items to be planned, by introducing proposal systems from prefecture governments, and by establishing the Regional Plans. Following active discussions in the diet, the Bill was passed on July 22, 2005, declared on July 29, 2005, and enforced on December 22, 2005.

### **(3) Points of the reform**

Points of the “Act for partial amendments to the Comprehensive National Land Development Act and other laws in order to promote sustainable development of the national land” are as follows:

- (i) In order to focus more on the qualitative development than the quantitative development of national land, that used to be the base of the existing national and regional plans, the national and regional plans were reformed so that it will comprehensively promote measures concerning the utilization, improvement and conservation of national land by reviewing what should be planned;
- (ii) In order to encourage the participation of various stakeholders in the planning process, proposal system from local governments and system to reflect on public opinions were introduced;
- (iii) In order to respect the autonomy of regions and realize the partnership between the central government and local governments, in addition to the National Plan, the Regional Plans were also introduced. The plans are planned in each block by mutual collaboration and cooperation of central and prefecture governments, under appropriate divisions of each roles; and
- (iv) In order to make the national and regional planning system understood easily by the public, it streamlined and consolidated the national and regional planning system.

**Figure 7: Points to “Reform of the national land planning system”**  
 Act for partial amendments to the Comprehensive National Land Development Act and other laws in order to promote sustainable development of the national land  
 \*promulgated on July 29, 2005 (enforced in Dec.22,2005)





#### **(4) Outline of the national and regional planning system**

##### **(i) Titles of laws and names of plans**

• Titles of laws: “Comprehensive National Land Development Act” → “National Land Sustainability Plan Act”

• Names of plans: “Comprehensive National Development Plans” → “National Land Sustainability Plan”

• The National Land Sustainability Plan is comprised of the “National Plan” and the “Wide-area Regional Plan.”

\* The Comprehensive Prefecture Development Plans, the Comprehensive Regional Development Plans, the Specified Areas Comprehensive Development Plans were abolished.

##### **(ii) Definition of the National Land Sustainability Plan** (Segments changed to the Comprehensive National Development Plans are underlined)

The “National Land Sustainability Plan” is a comprehensive and fundamental plan to promote utilization, improvement and conservation of national land (hereinafter referred to as the “national land formation”). The plan is about the items listed below.

- a) Utilization and conservation of national land resources such as land, water and others;
- b) Utilization and conservation of coastal areas (including items concerning exclusive economic zones and continental shelf);
- c) Prevention and alleviation of disasters such as earthquakes, floods, windstorms and others;
- d) Arrangements and improvements of the size and location of urban/rural areas;
- e) Appropriate location of industries;
- f) Utilization, improvement and conservation of transportation facilities, information and telecommunication facilities, research facilities concerning science and technologies and other important public facilities;
- g) Protection of resources and utilization and improvement of facilities, regarding culture, welfare and tourism; and
- h) Conservation of environments including the creation of a sound environment, and the formation of sound landscape.

##### **(iii) The fundamental principle of the National Land Sustainability Plan**

• Appropriately coping with changes in social economic structure including changes in population and industry, and attempting to realize the national land that will be the basis for:

- a) regional communities that develop autonomously according to their uniqueness;
- b) vibrant economic society through the enhancement of international competitiveness and

- promotion of science and technology;
- c) people's lives that their safety is assured; and
- d) productive environment that also contributes to conserving global environment.
- set appropriate measures regarding national land formation that maintains and improves conditions for our land, while taking domestic and international collaboration into consideration.
- While respecting independent approaches by local authorities, fulfill obligations as central government based on the inherent roles, including implementation of measures that must be carried out on a nationwide scale or from a nationwide perspective.

#### **④ National Plan**

##### a) Contents of the plan

- As a guideline for measures concerning comprehensive formation of national land, it stipulates (i) basic policy; (ii) objectives; and (iii) basic measures that are necessary from a nationwide perspective.
- It should be in accordance with fundamental plans of the central government on environment conservation.

##### b) Planning process

- The Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport should take necessary measures to reflect on opinions from the public, discuss with the head of administrative bodies involved, listen to opinions from prefectures and government-designated cities, through investigations and discussions in the National Land Council, prepare draft for the plan and obtain cabinet approval.
- Prepare the plan and the National Plan of the National Use Plan in an integrated way.

#### **⑤ Policy Evaluation regarding the National Plan**

- When a certain period passes from the establishment of the National Plan, policy evaluation (policy review) should be implemented based on policy evaluation law.

#### **⑥ Proposal for the National Plan**

- Prefectures and designated cities may submit proposal for the draft of the National Plan or the change, to the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. The proposal should attach the preliminary draft.
- When the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport decides not to prepare the draft according to the proposal, the Minister should notify the fact and reasons thereof to the said prefecture or designated city, after hearing the National Land Council's opinions.

#### **⑦ Area for Wide-area Regional Plan**

- Set the Wide-area Regional Plan for areas stipulated by the government ordinance as areas

requiring promotion of comprehensive formation of national land as a whole (Areas for Wide-area Regional Plan), which are comprised of two or more prefectures, such as the National Capital Region, the Kinki Region and the Chubu Region.

### **⑧ Wide-area Regional Plan**

#### a) Contents of the plan

- Regarding national land formation in the Wide-area Regional Plan, it stipulates (i) policy, (ii) objectives and (iii) basic measures that are necessary from a wide area perspective (including those that go beyond the area, if considered necessary).

#### b) Planning process

- The Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport will take necessary measures to reflect on public opinions, and after discussions in the Wide Area Regional Planning Council, will consult with the head of administrative bodies involved to prepare draft for the plan.

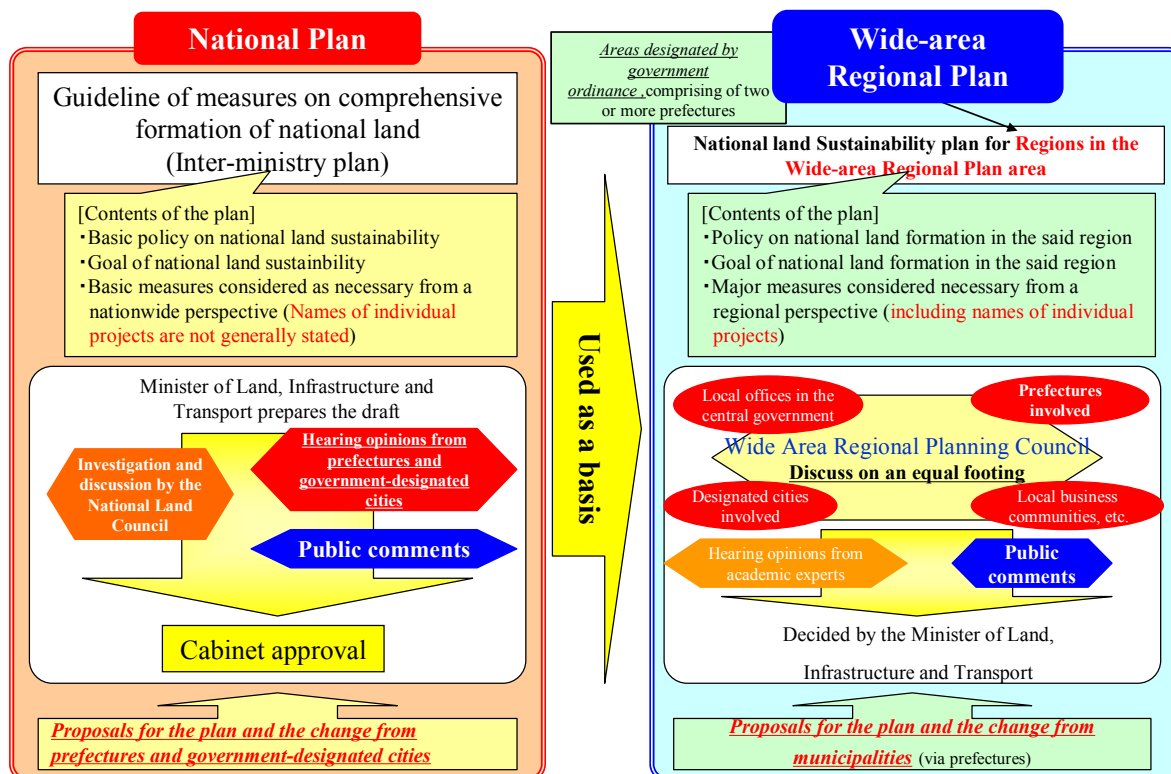
### **⑨ Wide Area Regional Planning Council**

- In order to discuss the Wide-area Regional Plan and its implementation, council comprising of local offices of central government, prefectures and designated cities involved should be established in each area.
- Municipalities within the area, local authorities adjacent to the area and other entities having a close relationship may be included in the council.

### **⑩ Proposal for the Wide-area Regional Plan**

- Municipalities may submit proposal for the draft of Wide-area Regional Plan or the change to the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport via prefecture government. The proposal should attach the preliminary draft.
- When the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport decides not to prepare the draft according to the proposal, the Minister should notify the fact and reasons thereof to the said prefecture or designated city, after hearing the National Land Council's opinions.

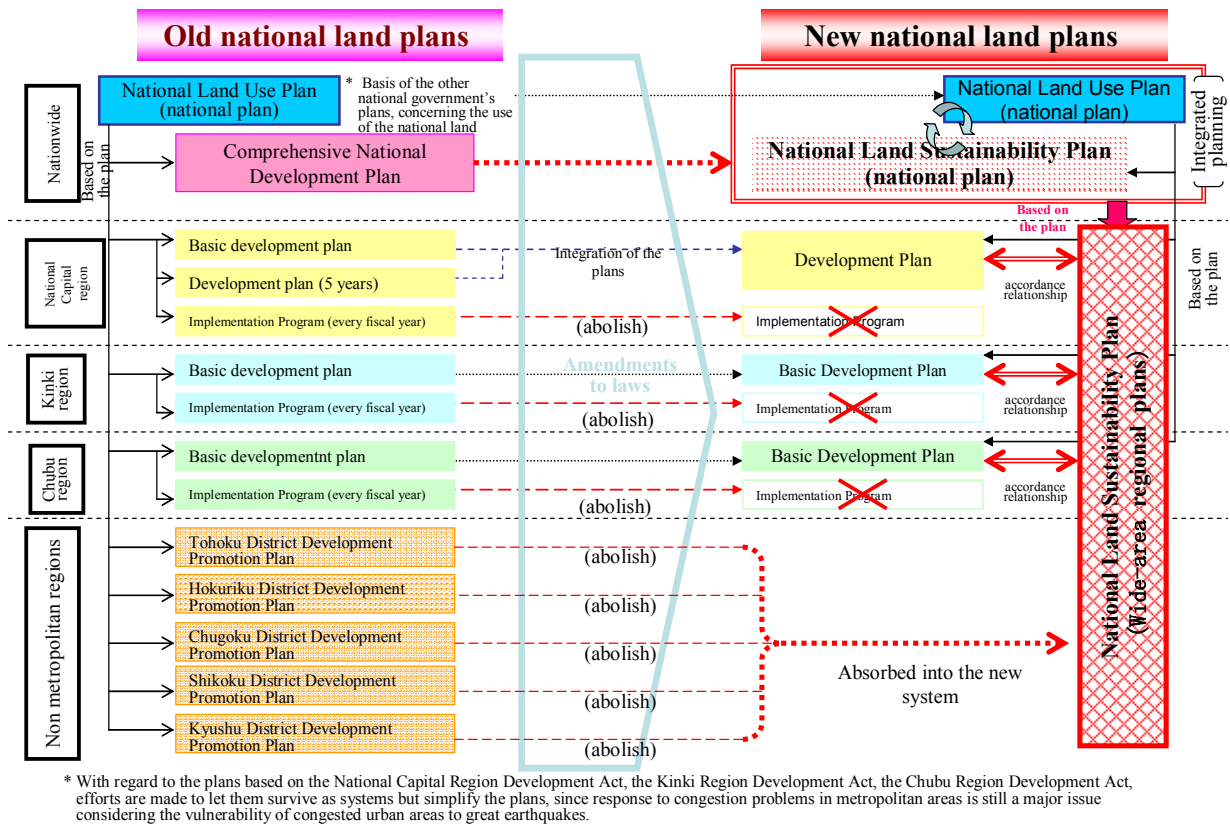
**Figure 8: The New Framework of the New National Land Sustainability Plan**



**⑪ Amendment of metropolitan region development acts and abolishment of district development acts**

- Implementation programs for the National Capital Region, the Kinki Region and the Chubu Region are abolished so that the National Capital Region Development Plan, the Kinki Region Development Plan and the Chubu Region Development Plan will be the comprehensive one.
- The three regions' Development Plans should be in accordance with the National Land Sustainability Plan.
- The Tohoku District Development Plan, the Kyushu District Development Plan, the Shikoku District Development Plan, the Hokuriku District Development Plan and the Chugoku District Development Plan are abolished.

**Figure 9: Reorganization of the National Land Planning System**



### 3. Setting the National Land Sustainability Plan

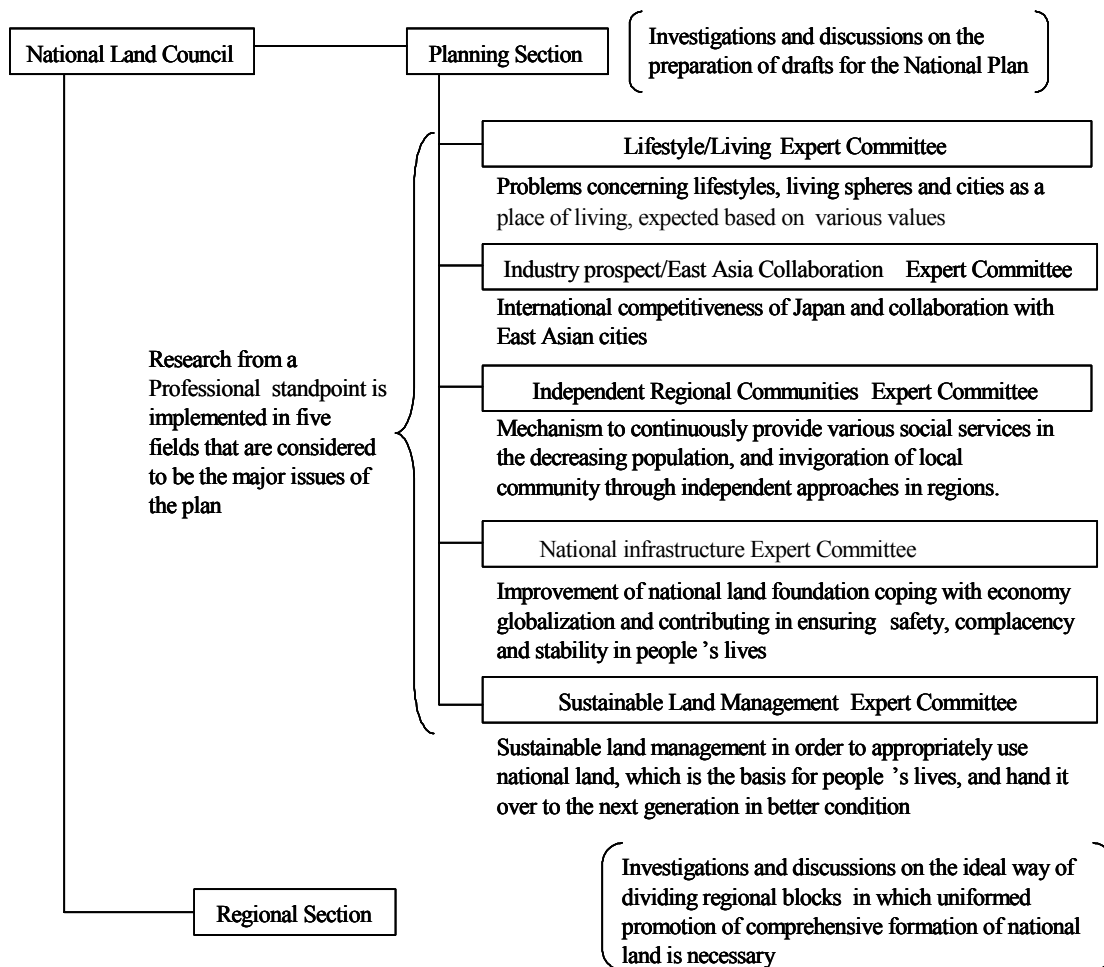
#### (1) Setting the National Plan

As for the National Plan, the Planning Section was established in the National Land Council in September 2005, to discuss the issue in full scale. In October 2005, Expert Committees were established within the Planning Section to further discuss the five main planning issues, that research from a professional standpoint was especially necessary (lifestyle/living, industry prospect/East Asia collaboration, independent regional communities, national land foundation, and sustainable land management).

In the future, the Planning Section will prepare an interim report around autumn of 2006, and it is expected that the National Plan will be adopted in the Cabinet meeting by around midyear 2007.

Based on the reform of the planning system, in the planning process, the government intends to exchange opinions with various entities including local authorities and economic organizations, in order to encourage participation of various stakeholders in the national and regional planning.

**Figure 10: Investigation and Discussion System in the National Land Council**



**(2) Setting the Wide-area Regional Plan**

As for the Wide-area Regional Plan, because it is necessary to set Regions for the Wide-area Regional Plan before developing the Plan itself, the Regional Section was established in the National Land Council in September 2005. It started discussions on how regional blocs should be divided. It is scheduled to decide areas for the Wide-area Regional Plan by mid-2006. After areas for the Wide-area Regional Plan are set, preparations will be carried out to develop the Wide-area Regional Plan, and it is expected that the Wide-area Regional Plan will be established by about a year after the National Plan is established.

#### 4. Summary

While there are feelings of anxiety and uncertainty of the future among the Japanese public, the government wishes to present solutions to various issues, in terms of national land policy and show the future of national land where people can live at ease and the ideal vision for a productive and affluent life, through the National Land Sustainability Plan. In the planning process of these plans in the future, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport intends to evoke wide interests among the public to encourage participation by various stakeholders in the national and regional planning. To depict an ideal future vision for national land and regions, active approach by each entity is expected.