Preface

Japanese trends of SDGs focused on regional vitalization and local government initiatives

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) is a set of international development goals from 2016 to 2030, which was adopted by the UN Sustainable Development Summit held in September 2015, building on the success of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations 2015: Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development). The 2030 Agenda listed "Sustainable Development Goals" consisting of 17 goals, 169 targets, and 232 indicators in order to eradicate poverty and realize a sustainable world. The SDGs are universal goals applicable not only to developing countries but also developed countries, and pledge to "Leave no one behind" through the implementation process.

Japan is committed to make every effort both domestically and internationally to achieve SDGs. To this end, Japan has established the "SDGs Promotion Headquarters" that is led by Prime Minister Abe and consists of all Ministers, as well as the "SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting" as a multi-stakeholder framework in May 2016 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The Headquarters formulated the "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles" and created the "Japan SDGs Award" at its past meetings, and has just held its fifth meeting on June 15, 2018 with the following outcomes.

Firstly, the Headquarters decided the "Expanded SDGs Action Plan 2018" building upon the basic three directions of Japan's SDGs Model, which were set forth as a part of the "SDGs Action Plan 2018" at the 4th meeting last December, as well as its major efforts. The Prime Minister instructed all Ministers to steadily implement the "Expanded Action Plan" along with the Policies and Strategy, and to further strengthen and expand their respective efforts in the latter half of 2018.

The following are the three directions of Japan's Model in Expanded SDGs Action Plan 2019:

- Promotion of Society 5.0 that corresponds to SDGs
- Regional vitalization driven by the SDGs
- Empower next generations and women

The following is an overview of "Regional vitalization driv-

en by the SDGs", which is particularly relevant to this preface in three directions.

- Newly launched project "SDGs Models of Local Governments" through which the entire central government intensively supports selected local governments in their SDGs implementation, and then expand success and lessons learnt to other local governments. Under this project, selected 29 municipal governments as SDGs "FutureCity."
- Communicate the local efforts for SDGs towards the world, through holding G20 Summit and ministerial meetings in 9 cities as well as bidding for Expo 2025.
- Make the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games conducive to SDGs. To this end, highlighted the promotion of SDGs in the Sustainability Plan Version 2 together with the Plan's guiding principle.

Promote the SDGs in local areas making the most of their unique needs and strengths, and thereby vitalize local areas and make communities more resilient with the measures of disaster risk reduction, environmental-friendly and attractive.

Secondly, the Japanese government decided to create Japan's SDGs model with a focus on regional vitalization and promote local government initiatives for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would contribute to it. There was a call for municipal initiatives to achieve SDGs, and in June 2018, 29 cities were designated as SDGs "FutureCity". 10 leading initiatives in particular were selected as Local Government SDGs Model Projects, the plan being to support these efforts while propagating and expanding on their successes.

The Japanese government is also developing an environment-friendly "FutureCity" Initiative (FCI). The FCI was launched in 2011 and it is being promoted by the national government's Cabinet Office (Japan of Sustainability).

To realize a sustainable society, it will be essential to take environmental, social and economic values into consideration. A "FutureCity" where anyone would want to live and everyone enjoys vitality is defined as a city where environmental, social

Table 1: Global indicator and Localized indicator related to goals and targets selected from SDGs

Tourism research subject	Selected specific goals	Selected specific targets	Global indicator	Localized indicator
Regional tourism planned by destination	Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Target 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local and products	8.9.1: Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate	8.9.1: Tourism consumption per prefecture (Tourism consumption / Gross prefectural production)
Regional development linking urban and rural areas	Goal 11: Same as the above	Target 11.a: Support positive economic, social, and environmental links among urban, peri-urban, and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	11.a.1: Proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections and resource needs, by size of city.	11.a.1: Population ratio in urbanization adjustment area (Population in urbanization adjustment area / Total population)

Source: Created by the author based on the self-tick list.

and economic values are being innovatively enhanced. The basic premise of a "FutureCity" calls for the attainment of a certain level of enhanced value in each of these three aspects of life.

Thirdly, concerning SDGs for cities and communities, there is an introduction guideline. The expected readers of this guideline are all stakeholders who seek to create sustainable cities and communities, and revitalize local communities, including local government officials, citizens, those in NPOs or NGOs, and corporate officers or employees. This guideline helps these stakeholders plan and take on promoting SDGs for the creation of sustainable cities and communities (SDGs for our cities and communities: Introduction guideline). The guideline provides information necessary for undertaking SDGs at the local government level in five steps.

- Step 1: Understand SDGs
  - 1-1: Understand the general outlines of SDGs
  - 1-2: Understand the three-layered structure in general outlines of SDGs
  - 1-3: Understand the relationship between SDGs and local government roles
- Step 2: Structure to work towards SDGs
  - 2-1: Understand the importance of vertical and horizontal integrations by local governments
  - 2-2: Facilitate vertical integration at levels from niches to global sales
  - 2-3: Clarify involved stakeholders and facilitate horizontal integration
  - 2-4: Establish a structure to promote SDGs
- Step 3: Policy goals, specific targets and indicators
  - 3-1: Marshal projects at the local government level
  - 3-2: Set policy goals
  - 3-3: Organize indicators to measure the progress in policy goals
- Step 4: Action program
  - 4-1: Create an action program for community SDGs
  - 4-2: Execute the action program for community SDGs
- Step 5: Follow-up
  - 5-1: Establish a follow-up system
  - 5-2: Follow up the progress on regular basis

Many of the 232 global indicators for SDGs proposed by the UN Statistical Commission are not fit for use at the local government level, because they are meant to be used to follow up and review the level of worldwide progress in SDGs. Many of the indicators can also be of no use, because the data required is unavailable to a local government while it is collectable at the national level. It is therefore necessary for a local government to have its own SDGs indicators ready to follow up the progress in community projects.

There are two possible approaches to selecting and defining indicators for local SDGs.

- "Universal indicators," for which the data is collected by many governments and can be compared with each other.
- "Original indicators," which a local government sets up for its own community to represent the local identity.

A self-checklist regarding "localized indicators" for the assessment of progress in promoting local SDGs is provided at the end of the guideline (Self-checklist regarding "localized indicators"). This checklist was prepared in accordance with the contents of the guideline (i.e., Step 1 to 5). Localized indicators described in the appendix are just a few examples, and indicators that are more suitable should be examined.

For example, Table 1 shows that both "global indicators" and "localized indicators" are illustrated in relation to the specific selected SDG goals and targets, regarding tourism research subjects of regional tourism planned by destination, and regional development linking urban and rural areas.

About the author

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