

VII. Government Initiatives

1. Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime

Considering the current situation where juvenile and heinous crimes occur frequently among the people's everyday lives, the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime was established. The first meeting of the Ministerial Meeting was held in September 2003. The Prime Minister presided over this meeting, which was composed of all the Cabinet ministers. The meeting has the mission to take effective, comprehensive, and active measures in close cooperation with the ministries and other governmental agencies concerned with activities against crime in order to restore Japan as the safest country in the world. After the first meeting, the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime met often to devise various measures adapted to address the crime situation, with the focus placed on support for action by the public to secure their own safety, development of a social environment where crime is less likely, and various anticrime measures including border measures. These measures were advanced as comprehensive anticrime action to make society as a whole stronger against crime. As a result, some improvement was seen in public order in Japan, as the number of reported crimes has fallen to less than half the level reached in the worst post-war period.

Meanwhile, given the fact that new threats, such as cybercrimes, cyberattacks, international terrorism, and organized crime, are emerging, and that social structure is changing, the strategy to create the safest country in the world was drawn up in December 2013 (approved by the Cabinet on the same day) with a view to creating "the safest country in the world, Japan" by reducing crime and building public confidence in security within seven years before the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games, which will be held in 2020. The strategy has been followed-up every six months to steadily realize its aims.

In FY2019, the 32nd Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime, which was held in December 2019, discussed Acceleration Plan for Recidivism Prevention Plan, countermeasures against terrorism toward the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics Games, and countermeasures against particular types of fraud.

(Reference) Members of the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime

Chief: Prime Minister

Members: All the Cabinet Ministers

2. Meeting for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse

Based on a Cabinet decision in January 1997, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse was established in the Cabinet. While the Headquarters actively promoted various measures against drug abuse, such as the securing of close cooperation between concerned administrative authorities, strict control of drugs, and publicity and public awareness for securing public understanding and cooperation, the Headquarters was reorganized and convened as the Meeting for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse under the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime in December 2008.

Recognizing the need for medium and long-term strategies to fight drug abuse, the Headquarters decided on the Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy in May 1998, the New Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy in July 2003, the Third Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy in August 2008, and the Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy Acceleration Plan; thus promoting comprehensive and aggressive measures. By these strategies, certain results were achieved; for instance, the number of young people arrested for abusing methamphetamine or cannabis decreased. Drugs sold as "legal herbs," however, spread and in some cases, users of such drugs committed secondary crimes, and the drugs damaged users' health. Even substances similar to the designated ones have appeared and are easily available on the internet. Given these facts, the Fourth Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy was newly established in August 2013. This strategy aims at the [i] promotion of prevention of drug abuse by raising public awareness or other measures; [ii] prevention of repeated drug abuse through medical treatment or support for rehabilitation for abusers; [iii] eradication of smuggling organizations, strict control of abusers, and strengthening of inspections and instructions; [iv] prevention of drugs from entering Japan through inspection at the border; and [v] international cooperation to prevent the smuggling of drugs.

In addition, as there seemed no end to crimes and serious traffic accidents resulting in death caused by abusers of dangerous drugs, and this became a grave social problem, Emergency Measures in order to eradicate the abuse of dangerous drugs was compiled at the Meeting for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse in July 2014. Since then, each time the meeting was convened, the progress of the Fourth Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy and the Emergency Measures were followed-up. In FY2017, the secretariat was transferred from the Cabinet Office to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. At the Meeting for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse held in August 2018, the Fifth Five-year Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy was established and the strategy was followed-up in September 2019.

(Reference) Members of the Meeting for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Drug Abuse

Chief: Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare

Deputy Chiefs: Chair of the National Public Safety Commission

Minister of Justice

Minister of Finance

Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

Members: Minister of State for Youth Affairs

Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety

Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry

3. Meeting for the Promotion of Measures against Firearms

On September 19, 1995, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures against Firearms was established in the Cabinet, and had promoted measures proactively, while securing close collaboration among relevant administrative organs. In 2008, this headquarters was re-formed as the Meeting for the Promotion of Measures against Firearms under the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime.

In December 1995, an outline for the promotion of measures against firearms, which clarified the basic government policy on measures against firearms, was drawn up. Concerned government agencies have cooperated to proceed with various measures, drawn up promotion plans for each year, and followed up on the progress of the plans.

In FY2019, it was decided to establish a Five-year Plan on Promotion of Measures against Firearms in order to materialize measures provided in the outline from a mid- and long-term perspective and implement them strategically. Concerned government agencies will take comprehensive and proactive measures under the plan to eradicate illicit firearms and crimes involving firearms.

(Reference) Members of the Meeting for the Promotion of Measures against Firearms

Chief: Chair of the National Public Safety Commission

Members: Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary

Cabinet Public Relations Secretary

Director-General of Community Safety Bureau of National Police Agency

Director-General of the Criminal Investigation Bureau of National Police Agency

Chief of Organized Crime Department of the Criminal Investigation Bureau of National Police Agency

Director-General of Minister's Secretariat of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Director-General of the Criminal Affairs Bureau of Ministry of Justice

Deputy Director-General of Immigration Services Agency of Japan

Director-General of Foreign Policy Bureau of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Director-General, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Director-General of the Customs and Tariff Bureau of Ministry of Finance

Deputy Director-General of Fisheries Agency

Director-General of Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau of Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

Director-General of Policy Bureau of Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

Vice Commandant of Japan Coast Guard

Director-General of Nature Conservation Bureau of Ministry of the Environment