

The Democratic Party's Priority Policies: Our Promise to the People

Economic Revitalization Begins with Individual People



Japan Stands at a Turning Point Peace and People's Lives are Under Threat

Summer of 2016... Entrust us with your power.

Japan Stands at a Turning Point

Today, 70 years after the end of the war, we have reached a turning point of historic significance.

Japan is faced with a drastic population decline, immense fiscal deficits, and unrelenting economic stagnation. With these fundamental problems left unresolved, many of our children and young people are unable to realize their full potential and have lost hope for their future.

The fundamental values and rights of “constitutionalism,” “pacifism,” and “democracy”, so carefully nurtured by the Japanese people throughout the postwar period, are now under threat.

Faced with this grave situation and armed with a strong sense of crisis and mission, we decided to form the Democratic Party as a new party capable of replacing the Liberal Democratic Party as the party of government.

The fundamental philosophy underlying the founding of the Democratic Party is expressed in the principles of “freedom,” “mutual coexistence,” and “responsibility for the future.”

Protecting Peace and People's Lives

The Democratic Party's campaign in the House of Councillors election will be based on two appeals.

Our first appeal addresses the economy and people's lives.

Three and a half years have passed since the start of so-called “Abenomics”. Yet, 80 percent of the public say that they have no real sense that the economy is improving. Wages and spending remain stagnant, to the degree that the scheduled consumption tax hike had to be postponed. Now is the time for us to switch to economic policies that will promote both growth and distribution of wealth.

By investing in people, pursuing fair distribution of wealth, and correcting inequalities, the Democratic Party will create an environment that allows

individuals to reach their full potential and realize an economy that enriches people's lives.

Our second appeal focuses on the Constitution and peace.

By revising the interpretation of the Constitution of Japan, the Abe Administration has made it possible for Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense under ambiguous terms. The Abe Administration's next target is to gain a two-thirds majority in the House of Councillors in order to amend Article 9 of the Constitution and make way for the unrestricted exercise of collective self-defense. The commitment made to never become involved in overseas conflicts with the use of force is the Constitution's core pacifist principle and a value that shapes our nation. Under no circumstances can we allow it to be subverted and destroyed.

The Democratic Party Will Fight with All Its Might

Twenty-five years as a politician have convinced me that ordinary Japanese people living ordinary lives in their local communities are actually quite extraordinary.

During these years, I have met so many people who are not limited to thinking about themselves and ignoring their responsibilities to the future. These are people who care seriously about their community and the future, and are prepared and eager to fulfill their responsibilities. As long as we have such amazing people of conscience among us, the future of Japan is bright. This is my belief.

I am appealing to the Japanese people with whom we are standing today at this historic turning point.

This House of Councillors election represents nothing other than an epic battle between the Abe administration and the conscience of the people of Japan. We are committed to overcoming the grave situation created by the Abe administration and to protecting peace and people's lives.

The Democratic Party will fight with all its might.

Katsuya Okada
President
The Democratic Party

Move Forward with the People

How do you feel about your life right now?

We will reflect the voices of individuals in our policies.

Politics exists in order to bring forth the amazing power that exists within each and every one of the people who live in our nation.

However, politics currently refuses to listen to the voices of citizens, and widens social inequalities, and the Japanese people have lost sight of the hopes they should have for their lives.

The Democratic Party will move forward with the People.

“I want to receive nursing care, but I can’t find a nursing home that will take me, and I don’t know what to do.”

Woman in her eighties

“Why do I receive less pay than men even though we are doing the same work?”

Women in her twenties

“I want to find a permanent job, but all the openings are for temporary employees.”

Man in his twenties

“I can’t see any improvement at all in the economic situation in the regions.

Man in his fifties

“If we keep on like this I feel as if we are getting closer to war, and it makes me nervous.”

Man in his twenties

“As a university student, I am worried about being able to repay my scholarship loan.”

Teenage woman

“I want the government to make it clear exactly how they are using taxpayers’ money.”

Woman in her twenties

“If things stay this way, I won’t be able to keep on farming.”

Man in his fifties

“My child can’t get a nursery place.”

Woman in her forties

Our Promise to the People

01.

Economic affluence begins with enriching ordinary people

The Current Situation

Because of the failure of Abenomics, prices have gone up while wages remain unchanged. Various inequalities have widened, and a sense of insecurity is spreading. The economy will not improve by making the rich richer.

1. Economy remains stagnant

During the administration of the now-defunct Democratic Party of Japan, real economic growth averaged 1.7 percent per year. This has dropped to 0.8 percent under the current administration. It is clear that Abenomics has failed to achieve results.

2. Real wages have also decreased

Real wages, adjusted for the rise in prices, have fallen below 95 from a benchmark of 100 in 2010. As a result, consumption has also failed to increase.

3. Irregular employment is increasing

Irregular employment now accounts for more than 40 percent of employment. As a result, jobs are becoming increasingly unstable.

Solutions Proposed by the Democratic Party

We will shift to economic policies that begin by enriching ordinary people.

Now is the time to change the economic policies of the last three and a half years.

Growing inequalities and skewed distribution of wealth and opportunities are preventing people from reaching their full potential and obstructing personal consumption.

What Japan needs is to achieve both distribution of wealth and economic growth.”

To achieve fair redistribution of wealth and to realize Japan’s full potential, we will determinedly pursue “investment in people,” “revolution in work culture,” and a “growth strategy.”

This is the crux of the Democratic Party’s economic policies.

Priority Policies for Regaining Economic Affluence Beginning by Enriching Ordinary People

(1) We will realize infinite possibilities by investment in people

Investment in people is the main source of power needed to stimulate the Japanese economy. The Democratic Party will work to reduce the burden placed on nurseries, kindergartens, and compulsory education, and will create grant-in-aid scholarships for entering university. We will strengthen the link between learning and working by enhancing vocational and technical education, and by developing a more diverse menu for public vocational training. To support entrepreneurship, we will increase subsidies for IT, design, human resource development, R&D, and related endeavors.

(2) We will implement a revolution in work culture to create an environment where individuals can realize their full potential

The Democratic Party will change the current work culture, where overtime work is the norm, and improve work productivity. We will strongly support the ability to work and simultaneously raise children or care for the elderly by shifting from a work culture where overtime is the norm and increasing work productivity. We will raise the minimum wage so that everyone earns at least 1,000 yen per hour. We will review the undesirable amendment of the Worker Dispatching Act to achieve “equal pay for work of equal value.” In this way, we will bring relief to household budgets, stimulate consumption, and achieve economic growth.

(3) We will realize Japan’s full potential through a growth strategy

[1] By providing assistance to R&D in telemedicine, iPS cell technologies, and artificial intelligence, and promoting the use of IoT and Big Data, we will support innovations that protect lives and livelihoods.

[2] We will promote the green-energy revolution and global warming countermeasures.

[3] To assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to increase the employment of full-time workers, we will introduce subsidies covering 50 percent of the increase in employer’s social insurance contributions. To support the management of SMEs, we will not expand the application of invoice and size-based business taxes, and we will prohibit third-person guarantee systems.

[4] We will make further improvements in the tax system governing donations to NPOs to promote development of the “New Public Commons”, so that civic powers who are capable of solving social issues can continue their activities.

[5] We will actively pursue measures for using tourism as an engine for growth in local economies. These measures will include fostering human resources in tourism management, and making it easier for workers in general to take paid leave.

[6] “Special zones” have proven to be successful and we will expand them nationwide, lowering barriers to new entrants and entrepreneurship.

Coping with the Failure of Abenomics

1. We will postpone raising the consumption tax and concentrate on rebuilding lives

Abenomics has failed, creating a situation where it is impossible to raise the consumption tax as originally planned. To rebuild the lives of ordinary people, we will postpone raising the consumption tax rate by two years to April 2019, subject to the following four conditions.

[1] Increased budgets for pensions, healthcare and long-term care, and childrearing support will be implemented as scheduled in April 2017 without waiting for the consumption tax increase.

[2] A determined commitment will be made to implementing administrative reforms such as eliminating wasteful use of taxpayers' money. At the same time, we will not shy away from painful political reforms.

[3] A firm commitment to our goal of returning Japan's primary balance to a surplus by 2020, to ensure that the burden is not passed to the next generation.

[4] Reduced tax rates benefiting high-income individuals will be abolished. Additional revenue from higher consumption tax rates will be used to finance tax credits with benefits for middle- and low-income individuals.

2. We will work to abolish negative interest rates

Efforts to force price levels upward will only create greater pain for households if wages fall behind prices. In particular, negative interest rates not only have a major negative impact on depositors, but may also undermine the basic architecture of financial markets. We will prompt the Bank of Japan to abolish negative interest rates while continuing to fight deflation and to work to stabilize exchange rates. We will encourage the Bank of Japan to adopt more flexible monetary policies in light of present circumstances.

Our Promise to the People

02.

Children first

The Current Situation

There has been no fall in the number of children waiting for a place at public nurseries. The income levels of parents directly influences whether children continue on to university. One in six children is living in poverty. The government has failed to propose fundamental responses to these critical problems.

1. No fall in the number of children waiting for nursery places

More and more people want to continue working while raising children, but the problem of wait-listed children unable to enter nurseries remains totally unresolved. Investigations by the Democratic Party have shown that in

addition to the official number of wait-listed children announced by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, there are more than 60,000 “hidden wait-listed children” not reflected in government statistics.

2. Positive correlation between lower family income and lower university entrance rate

Private spending accounts for an average of 30.3 percent of total spending on higher education among the advanced OECD countries. The ratio of private spending in Japan stands at 65.7 percent and is extremely high compared to the OECD average. As a result, the university entrance rate for children of households with an annual income of 4 million yen or less languishes at around 30 percent.

Solutions Proposed by the Democratic Party

For the Democratic Party, children come first.

To create a society where all children stand at the same starting line regardless of their family background, we will work step-by-step to realize free education.

We will reduce the burden of childrearing and stop the declining birthrate.

While working to ensure the availability of sufficient financial resources, as a goal for the future, we will extend the free high-school education achieved under the now-defunct Democratic Party of Japan administration to other educational institutions, from nurseries and kindergartens to universities. We will also reduce burdens placed on households by school meals and other similar expenditures.

Priority Policies for Placing Children First

1. We will increase the salary of nursery and kindergarten workers by 50,000 yen per month

Eliminating the shortage in nursery employees is key to resolving the problem of wait-listed children. Monthly salaries for nursery employees are about 110,000 yen lower than the average for all industries. To create nursery care that meets children’s needs, we will raise monthly salaries by 50,000 yen to “increase the number of nursery/kindergarten employees” while “ensuring quality.” We reject the policies of the current administration, which place lives in danger by lowering quality and packing children into nurseries.

2. We will create grant-in-aid scholarships with no obligation to repay

We will create an environment where all young people wishing to enter university, vocational college, or other institutions can continue their education regardless of parents’ income and other household conditions, and graduate without being burdened with student loans. To achieve this, we

will create grant-in-aid scholarships with no obligation to repay, which is the norm in developed countries. At the same time, we will work to eliminate interest charges on student loans. We will endeavor to create a system where people with outstanding student loans will be able to repay their loans without difficulty based on income level.

3. We will give our full support to children of single-parent households

Half of the children of single-parent households are living in poverty. We will extend the payment of childcare allowances to age 20, and raise allowances for the second child and beyond to 10,000 yen per month. Payment methods will be revised to monthly payments. By supporting parents and children, we will increase opportunities for continuing on to universities and vocational colleges.

4. We will reduce co-payment burdens of nursery, healthcare and other services

Lives are seriously disrupted when households are forced to simultaneously bear the co-payment burdens of healthcare, long-term care, nursery fees, and welfare services for disabled persons. To cope with this problem, we will introduce an upper limit on total co-payment amounts and create a “cumulative charging system” to allow people to receive services without financial anxiety. We will enhance public assistance for infertility treatment and expand related counselling and support systems.

5. We will protect children’s lives and support their development

We will tackle the problems of child abuse, bullying, and juvenile suicide head-on. We will enhance counselling services and expand support systems tailored to meet the individual needs of children. We will formulate new laws to expand special child adoption systems so that children who cannot be raised by their biological parents can grow and develop in a family environment.

6. We will change laws to allow young people to run for the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors at ages 20 and 25, respectively

The voting age has been lowered to 18 years of age. We will lower the minimum age for candidacy in all elections by five years, allowing candidacy for the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors at ages 20 and 25, respectively. We will promote education of the public as the source of sovereignty, encourage the participation of young people in politics and enhance democracy.

Our Promise to the People

03.

Protect workers and change the Japanese work culture

Irregular employment has come to account for more than 40 percent of all jobs in Japan. However, no improvement has been made in resolving the problems of wage inequality and the working poor. There is a pressing need to implement policies for protecting workers and changing the Japanese work culture.

Priority Policies for Protecting Workers and Changing Work Culture

1. We will resolve wage inequality between irregular and regular workers

In many cases, irregular workers performing equal value work are paid less merely for the reason that they are irregular workers. This situation is patently unfair. We will create a law to realize “equal pay for work of equal value,” and prohibit unreasonable differences in wages and treatment. We will overturn the current system so that the burden of proof for establishing that employment practices are not discriminatory will be borne by management, instead of irregular workers themselves. In introducing these changes, we will ensure that the low wages and poor working conditions of irregular workers will not be used as a benchmark for the workforce as a whole.

2. We will formulate laws to eliminate long working hours

Long working hours undermine the work-life balance, obstruct the social participation of women, and lower work efficiency. We will formulate a law that will set a limit on overtime work. We will aim to mandate a minimum interval of 11 hours from the time a worker leaves work and the time that he or she returns to work on the following day. We will promote efficient work practices, and will eliminate “black businesses” that exploit workers, as well as deaths from overwork.

3. We will realize a “minimum wage of 1,000 yen for all”

Surprisingly, it is not widely known that Japan’s minimum wage is among the lowest in developed countries. Even within Japan, wide regional differences persist and are a leading cause of inequality. While providing SMEs with appropriate support, we will raise the minimum wage to ensure that everyone can earn 1,000 yen or more an hour.

4. We will increase participation in the employees’ pension system

We will aim to ensure all people working for businesses are enrolled in the employees’ pension and health insurance systems, regardless of their form of employment. As the first step, we will gradually extend the scope of participation in the systems to irregular employees.

5. We will support full-time employment by SMEs

Employer’s social insurance contributions place a heavy burden on SMEs, and are one of the reasons why SMEs hesitate to employ full-time workers. To increase full-time jobs, we will introduce subsidies covering 50 percent of the social insurance contributions of SMEs for new full-time employees when certain conditions are met.

6. We will revise the Undesirable Amendment of the Worker Dispatching Act

The current administration made an undesirable amendment to the Worker Dispatching Act that effectively abolished time limits on the employment of dispatched workers. This has resulted in the emergence of “lifetime” dispatched workers, and an increase in “low wage” temporary staff. We will review provisions that allow businesses to continuously use cheap labor by regularly replacing temporary staff. We will open the way to full-time employment of temporary staff while improving their working conditions.

Our Promise to the People

04.

Changing Society through Women’s Voices

We will create a new society where both men and women can make individual choices on how to live and how to enrich their lives. To achieve this, we will move away from rigidly rooted gender-based roles and stereotypes to a freer and fairer society, and bid farewell to outdated systems.

Priority Policies for Changing Society through Women’s Voices

1. We will aim to achieve “equal pay for men and women”

A large wage inequality persists between men and women, with women’s average salary amounting to only about 70 percent of that for men. To ensure that the same wages are paid for work of equal value, we will create a law mandating “equal pay for work of equal value”. We will change the current work culture, where overtime work is accepted as the norm, and enact a law to eliminate long working hours to ensure that childrearing and work are not mutually exclusive.

2. We will aim to achieve equality in the number of male and female politicians

In the area of politics, we will propose legislation aimed at achieving equality in the “number of male and female candidates,” and legislation making it possible to adopt “alternating male-female lists” in the proportional representation constituencies for House of Representatives elections.

3. We will allow couples to opt for different surnames

Requiring most women to change their surname after marriage can impair the dignity of women and act as an obstacle to work continuation. We will formulate legislation to allow married couples to select different surnames so that both husband and wife can retain their surnames after marriage if they so choose.

4. We will establish support centers for the protection of victims of sexual violence in all prefectures

We will move to revise the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and Protection of Victims and the Anti-Stalking Act, and will take rigorous action against crimes that impair the dignity of victims. We will create one-stop centers for consoling and supporting the mind, body, and daily lives of victims of sexual violence without them having to report to the police.

Our Promise to the People

05.

Preserving the peace of mind of seniors

There is something wrong with a society where old-age bankruptcy and post-retirement inequality adds to the anxiety of people who have always lived and worked diligently. We will create a society where people can grow old with peace of mind.

Priority Policies for Preserving the Peace of Mind of Senior Generations

1. We will increase pension benefits and ease the qualifications for receiving benefits

Reduced pension benefits are threatening the lives of the elderly. We will increase pension benefits for low-pension recipients in April 2017 (maximum increase of 60,000 yen per year) without waiting for a consumption tax hike. We will ease the qualifications for receiving pension benefits by shortening the required period of premium payment from twenty-five years to ten years.

2. We will commit to safe management of pension funds

The current administration doubled the share of equity investment in managing the 140 trillion yen held in the Employees' Pension and National Pension funds. It is estimated that this resulted in a loss of 5 trillion yen in the first year alone. We will transition to safe management of pension funds by rectifying the fund management of the current administration and reducing equity investment.

3. We will reduce co-payment burdens of healthcare, long-term care, and other services

Lives are seriously disrupted when households are forced to simultaneously bear the co-payment burdens of healthcare, long-term care, nursery fees, and welfare services for disabled persons. To cope with this problem, we will introduce an upper limit on total co-payment amounts and create a "cumulative charging system" to allow people to receive services without financial anxiety.

4. We will raise wages for long-term care workers and enhance long-term care

Although long-term care workers are engaged in heavy and demanding labor, their wages are below the average for other industries, resulting in a chronic shortage of long-term care workers. We will increase the monthly salary of long-term care workers and providers of services to disabled persons by 10,000 yen. We will reduce the wait-list for entering long-term care facilities and ensure that all persons who require long-term care will receive the services they need.

5. We will support people who want to continue working

Seniors who want to continue working should be able to do so. To make this possible, we will steadily implement related measures such as encouraging businesses to raise the worker retirement age and introduce systems for continued employment.

Our Promise to the People

06.

We Will Not Pass on the Burden to Future Generations

How can we allow ourselves to burden our children and grandchildren with the negative legacy of national debt, global warming, and other problems? The Democratic Party will meet its responsibilities to future generations.

Priority Policies for Not Passing the Burden to Future Generations

1. We will promote fiscal reconstruction

We will formulate an act promoting fiscal reconstruction that includes specific targets and strategies for achieving fiscal reconstruction. In this way, we will realize a sustainable fiscal structure.

2. We will use all available policy resources to eliminate nuclear power generation by the 2030s

We will strictly enforce the 40-year operation limit on nuclear power plants, prohibit the licensing of new plants, and ban the restart of plants that have not been certified for safety. We believe no nuclear power plant should be restarted without a responsible evacuation plan.

3. We will reform the tax system to rectify inequalities

We will require major corporations and the wealthy to bear their fair share of taxes. We will raise the tax rate on financial income by 5 percent, and will also raise the income tax rate on the wealthy. We will move forward on revising income tax deductions and the progressivity of property taxes. We will make concerted efforts to prevent tax evasion, which has become an international concern with the release of the Panama Papers.

4. We will not shy away from implementing painful political reforms

We will keep the promise made to the people to reduce the number of seats in the Diet, and will take the initiative in implementing other reforms that

are painful to Diet members. We will move to enact laws to prohibit political donations by businesses and organizations, mandate disclosure of the use of “communication, transportation, and accommodation expenses” (expense account for activities of Diet members), and mandate Internet disclosure of financial reports of political organizations with ties to Diet members collated by name of entities paying and receiving funds.

5. We will rigorously reexamine the use of taxpayers’ money

We will introduce a strict ban on *amakudari*, legislate for an administrative project review that determines the destination and uses of budget expenditures, and we will adopt an administrative reform act to eliminate the waste of taxpayer money. We will restore labor rights and create mechanisms for determining labor conditions through negotiation. Subject to consulting and reaching agreement with civil servant organizations, we will work toward reducing the total personnel expenditure on national civil servants by 20 percent.

6. We will promote global warming countermeasures

We will adopt targets for raising the share of renewable energy to 30 percent, and reducing CO₂ emissions by 30 percent by 2030. We will steadily implement countermeasures to global warming by promoting energy-saving measures and the local production and consumption of energy.

Our Promise to the People

07.

Reconstructing Local Economies

The Current Situation

Tied subsidies have been reintroduced and income support for rice farmers has been cut in half. The central government, far removed from the reality of the countryside and farming communities, continues to intervene and micromanage local economies, but this does nothing to prevent their downward spiral.

1. Regional individuality is being ignored

While calling for regional revitalization, what the current administration has actually been doing is to restrict freedom and stymie local initiatives. Reducing subsidies that can be used freely and resurrecting tied subsidies to force strategies dictated by the central government can only accelerate the decline of local economies.

2. Five “sacred” agricultural products were not protected

The current administration came to power with the promise of “determined opposition to the TPP.” However they have been unable to keep their promise to protect even one of the five “sacred” agricultural products considered vital to Japan. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement as it stands does not protect Japan’s national interests.

3. Food safety and Japanese agriculture are under threat

The current administration has hastily halved income support for rice farmers and intends to phase out the program completely by 2018. Rice prices have plummeted to unprecedented levels, and programs encouraging farmers to shift to growing feed-grade rice provide scant hope. At this rate, it will be impossible to protect Japanese agriculture.

Solutions Proposed by the Democratic Party

We will promote “reforms for regional sovereignty” that will empower local communities to make their own decisions.

We will protect agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries and develop self-reliant regional economies that can stand on their own feet in terms of economy, employment, and energy.

Priority Policies for Reconstructing Local Economies

1. We will provide fiscal resources that regions can use freely

We will abolish tied subsidies whose uses are determined by the central government, and will resurrect “lump-sum subsidies” that can be used autonomously by local communities. We will promote effective use of fiscal resources based on the ideas and initiatives formulated by local governments and residents.

2. We will create legal provisions to implement individual household income support for farmers as a permanent system

Supporting farm management is an important factor in protecting food safety and security and raising Japan’s food self-sufficiency ratio. We will support commercial farming by legislating for individual household income support for farmers as a permanent system, and will develop agriculture as a pillar of regional revitalization.

3. We will raise farm incomes by developing agriculture as a “sixth sector”

We will accelerate the development of agriculture as a “sixth sector” that combines agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries with manufacturing, commerce and tourism. We will create an environment in which motivated young people and women are able to engage in agriculture, forestry, and fishery activities in a sustained fashion, and will revitalize agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries so that they become a source of new employment opportunities. We will raise agriculture, forestry, and fishery operators’ incomes by aggressively promoting the export of agricultural, forestry and fishery products as well as food products.

4. We oppose the current TPP Agreement

Diet deliberations made it clear that (1) the five “sacred” agricultural products crucial to Japan’s national interest were not protected, (2) only minor benefits will accrue to the automobile sector, and (3) information

regarding the details of negotiations and the reasons for the positions taken have not been disclosed. For these reasons, we will oppose the TPP Agreement in its current form.

5. We will promote the local production of energy for local consumption

We will promote the local production of energy for local consumption as a tool for regional revitalization by using solar power and biomass resources to generate energy and jobs in the region. We will enact four laws enabling such initiatives as creating energy-related cooperatives to be implemented, and will assist a diverse range of small businesses in line with the unique characteristics of each region.

6. We will promote culture and sports

We will work to ensure the success of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, and will see to it that the economic benefits of hosting the Olympics reach all parts of the country. Pre-Olympic training of athletes and cultural exchanges will be spread throughout Japan. We will develop an environment where young people, seniors, people with disabilities, and foreigners can participate together in cultural and sporting activities.

7. We will reduce the cost of transportation and distribution

We will lower automobile-related taxes and promote the use of highways to accelerate regional revitalization. We will revitalize public transport networks in the regions to realize a society where everyone can travel wherever they wish, where opportunities for social participation are unrestricted and where people can enjoy comfort and affluence.

Our Promise to the People

08.

Reconstructing Disaster-Affected Areas and Strengthening Disaster Prevention

We will make the greatest possible effort to promote recovery and reconstruction of areas affected by large earthquakes and other frequently occurring disasters, and will use these experiences to strengthen regional disaster prevention.

Priority Policies for Reconstructing Disaster-Affected Areas and Strengthening Disaster Prevention

1. We will accelerate the reconstruction and revitalization of disaster-affected areas following the 3/11 earthquake and tsunami

The reconstruction of the Tohoku region is only partially completed. During the five-year concentrated reconstruction period that immediately followed the Great East Japan Earthquake, all earthquake-related reconstruction projects were paid for by the central government. We will apply the same

terms to earthquake-related reconstruction projects undertaken during an additional five-year reconstruction and revitalization period (2016–2020).

2. We will promote the reconstruction and revitalization of Fukushima Prefecture from the nuclear power plant disaster

Without the revitalization of Fukushima Prefecture, there can be no revitalization of Japan. We will acknowledge the government's responsibility to society, and promote the reconstruction and revitalization of Fukushima from the nuclear power plant disaster. We will make every effort to ensure the safety of the damaged nuclear reactors, and will take a leadership role in coping with the leakage of contaminated water and other challenges related to decommissioning the reactors. We will act swiftly to rebuild and stabilize livelihoods by supporting measures for countering negative rumors and the erosion of interest and concern, thorough decontamination, and by implementing speedy payment of compensation.

3. We will engage in recovery and reconstruction from the Kumamoto Earthquake

The earthquakes that shook Kumamoto in April caused extensive damage. We will increase support for earthquake victims by raising the amount of assistance from 3 million yen to 5 million yen, and expanding the scope of assistance from homes that have suffered “large-scale destruction” to include homes that have been “partially destroyed”. We will make the greatest possible effort to speed recovery and reconstruction from the Kumamoto Earthquake by such means as suspending all highway tolls in affected areas.

4. We will strengthen regional disaster prevention—learning from our experiences and spreading the acquired knowhow to all parts of Japan

We will formulate disaster evacuation plans and create mechanisms for thoroughly informing and educating residents about these plans. We will strengthen regional disaster prevention and mitigation capabilities by supporting the activities of fire departments, disaster prevention experts, voluntary disaster prevention organizations, citizen's fire-fighting brigades, women's disaster prevention clubs, and disaster volunteer teams. We will develop mechanisms for the central government to react responsibly to massive-scale disasters, such as by promptly dispatching ministry and agency staff members with disaster-response expertise.

Our Promise to the People

09.

We Will Defend Our Country and Contribute to the International Community

We will defend Japan and contribute to global peace and prosperity. We will develop Japan's defensive capabilities predicated on an exclusively

defensive posture. We will deepen the Japan-US alliance and realize coexistence with the Asia-Pacific region.

Priority Policies for Defending our Country and Contributing to the International Community

1. We will strengthen the nation's defense to be "Realistic in Japan's vicinity and restrictive in far-off regions"

To facilitate speedy and coordinated responses by police authorities, the Japan Coast Guard, and the Self-Defense Forces to "grey zone" incidents that do not involve armed attacks in the Senkaku Islands and elsewhere, we will create a Territorial Security Act. We will revise the Act Concerning the Measures for the Peace and Security of Japan in Situations that Will Have an Important Influence on Japan's Peace and Security so that we can maintain the principle of "surrounding areas" in the provision of logistic support by the Self-Defense Forces to U.S. armed forces, while expanding the scope of support for U.S. armed forces on the high seas, thereby enhancing capabilities for joint Japan-U.S. operations.

While maintaining an ongoing dialogue with Okinawa, we will steadily implement the Japan-U.S. agreement on the transformation of U.S. armed forces. We will propose the revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement and do our best to reduce the burden borne by residents of related areas.

2. We will contribute to international peace—taking a positive stance on humanitarian assistance

We will revise the International Peace Cooperation Act and expand the scope of international peace cooperation operations to include such activities as disarming and rehabilitating former combatants, and restructuring public security sectors. We will collaborate with NGOs to overcome such challenges as achieving sustainable development and coping with global environment problems.

3. We will resolutely defend Japan's national sovereignty

We will actively convey to the international community our unchanging positions on the Senkaku Islands and Japan's sovereignty. On the Northern Territories, we will move forward on negotiations with Russia in light of various bilateral agreements reached in the past and on the basis of the principles of law and justice. On Takeshima, we will patiently and tenaciously call on South Korea for a resolution based on international law.

4. We will do our utmost to solve the abduction issue

The abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korea represents a grave violation of both national sovereignty and human rights. We will determinedly pursue an early resolution to this problem, while continuing to examine the Stockholm Agreement that fails to set a fixed deadline.

5. We will strengthen anti-terrorism measures

We will strengthen immigration control and introduce stricter regulation on terrorism-related movement of funds and drug trafficking. We will eliminate the breeding grounds of terrorism by using ODA and other means to alleviate poverty in developing countries, promote peace-building activities, and support democracy.

6. We will promote the abolition of nuclear weapons

As the only country to have suffered from nuclear attack during wartime, we will work toward realizing a world free of nuclear weapons.

Our Promise to the People

10.

Defending the Pacifism Enshrined in Our Constitution

The Current Situation

The Liberal Democratic Party is currently proposing to amend Article 9 of the Constitution, create a “National Defense Army”, and exercise the right of collective self-defense without any constitutional restraints. The move toward amending Article 9 threatens Japan’s pacifism. The outcome of efforts to stop the movement to revise Article 9 rides on the forthcoming House of Councillors election.

Constitutionalism and pacifism are under threat

In September 2015, the current administration forcibly enacted an unconstitutional package of national security laws in face of opposition from more than 60 percent of the population.

Solutions Proposed by the Democratic Party

We will defend to the end the constitutionalism and pacifism that the Japanese people have nurtured over the 70 years of the postwar period.

Priority Policies for Defending the Pacifism Enshrined in Our Constitution

1. We will nullify the national security laws enacted last year

The present administration has intentionally and opportunistically altered the interpretation of the Constitution to allow the exercise of collective self-defense under very ambiguous terms. This challenges the Constitution’s principle of constitutionalism empowering the people to halt the excesses of state power, and undermines the principle of pacifism enshrined in Article 9. This travesty can never be accepted. We will demand nullification of the national security laws enacted last year.

2. We will oppose the amendment of Article 9 which threatens pacifism

The principle of pacifism expressed in Article 9 of the Constitution has at its core the commitment never to become involved in overseas conflicts with the

use of force. Amending Article 9 to give constitutional approval to the unrestricted exercise of collective self-defense, as proposed in the Liberal Democratic Party's Draft Constitution, can by no means be permitted. We will resolutely uphold the principle of pacifism.

3. We will work with the people in envisioning a forward-looking constitution

The Constitution of Japan is founded on the principles of "sovereignty of the people," "respect for fundamental human rights," and "pacifism." These principles that have been painstakingly nurtured by the people of Japan over the 70 years of the postwar period must be firmly maintained. With this as a premise, we will work with the people in envisioning a forward-looking constitution that addresses new issues that reflect the changing times, such as "new human rights" and "reforming the structure of government."

Our Promise to the People

11.

Defending the Freedom and Rights of the People

The Current Situation

In recent years, the media has hesitated to report on matters that inconvenience the government. There is also evidence of growing intolerance toward diverse values and denial of human rights of minorities. Left alone, these developments can destroy the foundations of democracy.

1. Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets places government information in a black box

The Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets forcibly enacted in December 2013 allows the government to conceal information that it finds inconvenient. The monitoring powers given to the Review Board created in the Diet are insufficient.

2. Freedom of the press is under attack

Japan's World Press Freedom Index was steadily rising until 2010 when it ranked 11th. Since then it has plummeted, falling to number 72 this year.

Solutions Proposed by the Democratic Party

We will halt the out-of-control policies of the present administration. We will stand on the side of the people and realize a free and diverse society.

Priority Policies for Defending the Freedom and Rights of the People

1. We will ensure the people's right to know and freedom of the press

We will review the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets, and strengthen the monitoring functions of the Diet and other institutions so that the government will not be able to wrongfully conceal information. We will revise the Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs to expand the scope of information disclosure and to lower the cost of filing disclosure requests. We will respect the freedom of broadcasters to produce and schedule programs. We will not engage in the arbitrary stoppage of broadcasters' transmissions as provided under the Broadcast Act.

2. We will create a law to eliminate LGBT discrimination

We will create a society where diverse values and the human rights of minority members are fully respected. We will further develop the Hate Speech Countermeasures Act to create a law that prohibits discrimination by reason of race, ethnicity, and birth. We will enact a law to eliminate LGBT discrimination (law prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity).

3. We will prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities

We will strive to effectively apply the provisions of the Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities. We will develop infrastructure and human resources to allow cancer patients, persons with intractable diseases and others to live free from anxiety in their own local communities.

The Democratic Party's Promise to the People

We Will Rebuild the Economy and People's Lives

Widening inequalities and the decline in real wages prove that Abenomics has come to a complete dead end.

Now is the time for us to shift to economic policies that begin by enriching ordinary people.

What is needed is to achieve both distribution of wealth and economic growth

We will determinedly pursue "investment in people", "revolution in work culture" and a "growth strategy"

We Will Protect the Pacifist Principles of the Constitution

The Liberal Democratic Party is currently attempting to revise Article 9 of the Constitution, create a "National Defense Army", and make it possible for Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defense without any constitutional restrictions.

We will stop the out-of-control behavior of the current administration, and defend to the end the pacifist principle of the Constitution that has been nurtured by Japan during the postwar period.