**Answer from the Government of Japan to**

**Guiding Questions for the Focus Areas of the X Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing:**

**Education, Training, Life-Long Learning and Capacity-Building**

**National Legal Framework**

1. In your country/region, how is the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age guaranteed in legal and policy framework?

The Government of Japan (GoJ) outlines Japan’s Basic Act on Education and Basic Plan for Promoting Education, which stipulate promotion of education and life-long learning for older persons.

Further, the Basic Act on Measures for Aging Society also outlines the Guidelines of Measures for Aging Society. Subsections (a) and (b) of Section 3 in Chapter 2 of the Guidelines, call for provision of a variety of learning opportunities at schools and in society.

**Availability, Accessibility and Adaptability**

1. What are the key issues and challenges faced by older persons in your country/region with regard to the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services?

According to an opinion survey on lifelong learning conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2018, issues related to learning costs, training courses hours and access to learning sites are highlighted as challenges.

3. What steps have been taken to ensure that education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services are available and accessible to all older persons, adapted to their needs, suited to their preferences and motivations, and of high quality?

A variety of public extension courses are held at universities and other educational institutions. Moreover, online public learning opportunities provided by the Open University of Japan are available, and various learning opportunities are also provided at community centers and other social educational and cultural institutions.

4. In your country/region, are there studies and/or data available on the access of older persons to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older persons?

In regards to access to school education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) compiles and releases data collected through MEXT’s Basic School Survey on the number of enrolled students by generation.

The MEXT also compiles and releases data collected through its Social Education Survey, such as data on classes and lectures offered at social education facilities like community centers.

Additionally, the GoJ formulates and releases its Annual Report on the Aging Society. The GoJ widely informs the public of the Report. Subsections (a) and (b) of Section 2-3 in Chapter 3 of the Report provide an overview of measures for provision of learning opportunities to older persons in the fiscal year 2018.

**Equality and non-discrimination**

5. In your country, is age one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination in relation to education in older age?

In Japan, various educational opportunities are provided so that all citizens, regardless of age, can engage in learning activities throughout their lives. As mentioned above, a variety of public extension courses are held at universities and other educational institutions. Moreover, online public learning opportunities provided the Open University of Japan are available, and various learning opportunities are also provided at community centers and other social educational and cultural institutions.

**Accountability**

6. What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building?

As mentioned in the response to the previous question, in Japan, various educational opportunities are provided so that all citizens, including older persons, can engage in learning activities throughout their lives. The provision of these various opportunities enable many older persons to voluntarily attend open lectures, take the Open University of Japan extension programs, participate in learning activities at community centers.

**Social Protection and Social Security (including social protection floors)**

**National legal framework**

1. What are the legal provisions in your country that recognizes the right to social security and social protection, including non-contributory and contributory old-age benefits? Do they have a constitutional, legislative or executive foundation?

Regarding the right of older persons to social security, the Long-term Care Insurance Act guarantees the right to receive long-term care when an individual requires long-term care.

The National Pension Act and the Employees' Pension Insurance Act stipulate the right to receive pension benefits. The National Pension Act is based on principles outlined in Article 25 (2) of the Constitution of Japan.

**Availability**

2. What steps have been taken to guarantee universal coverage, ensuring that every older person has access to social security and social protection schemes including non-contributory, contributory and survivor old-age pensions, to ensure an adequate, standard of living in older age?

According to the Japanese public pension system, residents of Japan from 20 to 59 years old should be insured through the National Pension program. As long as they meet the requisite coverage period for entitlement (10 years), old-age basic pension (full pension: 64,941yen (the fiscal year 2018)) is provided according to the individual’s period of contribution.

People under the age of 75 who reside in Japan are to enroll in the national health insurance system of their local municipality, and people at the age of 75 or over are to enroll in the medical care system for the elderly.

3. What steps have been taken to ensure that every older person has access to social security and social protection schemes which guarantee them access to adequate and affordable health and care and support services for independent living in older age?

Insurance premiums for long-term care are decided based on respective income level of care receivers. Moreover, individuals whose income is below a certain level qualify for insurance premium reductions funded by revenue generated from a consumption tax. The premium reduction measure will expand when consumption taxes are raised to 10%.

Further, out-of-pocket payment is set at 10% in principle, and the GoJ, by setting a maximum upper-limit on out-of-pocket payment, ensures that elderly people who need long-term care services can access the services they need.

In addition to these measures, the GoJ plans to establish a structure called the Community-Based Integrated Care System. The purpose of the system is to comprehensively ensure provision of healthcare, nursing care, prevention, housing, and livelihood support. Through this system, older persons will be able to live the rest of their lives in their own ways in environments familiar to them, even in a situation where they become heavily in need of long-term care.

Under the health care system, medical insurance premiums are reduced for the low-income earners. In addition, there is an upper-limit on patient co-pay based on each person’s income for the purpose of reducing their financial burden.

**Adequacy**

4. What steps have been taken to ensure the levels of social security and social protection payments are adequate for older persons to have access to an adequate standard of living, including adequate access to health care and social assistance?

The GoJ is promoting an initiative called the Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Tax, wherein all consumption tax revenue associated with the increased tax rate is used for enhancement and stabilization of social security, while working on prioritization and efficiency improvement.

**Accessibility**

5. What steps have been taken to ensure older persons have adequate and accessible information on available social security and social protection schemes and how to claim their entitlements?

The GoJ believes that, when providing long-term care, it is important to clearly explain contents of the system revisions to insured persons. Therefore, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) distributes posters and leaflets which concisely explain the contents of the revisions to the local governments and tasks them with informing the public.

The pension benefit application form and the corresponding pamphlet on pension claim procedures are sent to individuals three months before they reach the age of pension eligibility. The goal is to inform individuals of their eligibility for their benefits so that they can prepare their pension claims and receive their pension in a smooth and timely manner.

6. The design and implementation of normative and political framework related to social security and social protection benefits included an effective and meaningful participation of older persons?

The GoJ gathers public opinions when enacting various cabinet orders or ministerial orders associated with changing policies through the Public Comment System.

**Equality and non-discrimination**

7. Which are the measures adopted to ensure equitable access by older persons to social security and social protection, paying special attention to vulnerable groups or those in vulnerable situation?

In addition to the above-mentioned measures those who have low-income and/or take maternity or child care qualify for certain pension premium exemptions in the Japanese public pension system. Those exemption periods are counted as coverage periods for entitlement.

**Accountability**

8. What mechanisms are in place to ensure social security and social protection schemes are effective and accountable?

Please see the answer to Q4.

9. What judicial and non-judicial mechanisms are in place for older persons to complain and seek redress for denial of their right to social security and social protection?

Article 183 of the Long-term Care Insurance Act stipulates that a person who is dissatisfied with the action executed concerning an Insurance Benefit (including the action pertaining to a request for issuance of a Certificate of Insured Person and action concerning a Certification of Needed Long-Term Care or Needed Support Certification) etc. may apply to a Certification Committee for Long-Term Care Insurance in each prefecture for an examination.

With regard to the social insurance system, including medical insurance and pensions, dissatisfied persons may appeal to a Certification Committee for Social Insurance against the disposition on the insured person’s certification, standard remuneration and insurance benefits.