

# Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation

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### Chapter I General Provisions

#### (Purpose)

Article 1 Considering the serious issues faced by individuals suffering mental or physical harm due to experiencing loneliness in their daily lives or lives in society or isolation from society in a situation exacerbated by societal changes that have weakened interpersonal and societal connections (referred to below as "loneliness and isolation"), in order to prevent loneliness and isolation, provide swift and appropriate support to persons experiencing loneliness and isolation, and otherwise facilitate their efforts to escape such a state (referred to below as "measures to address loneliness and isolation"), this Act aims to promote comprehensive policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation in conjunction with policies introduced under other related laws, by establishing fundamental principles, outlining the responsibilities of the national government, defining the core components of the policies, establishing the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation, and taking other actions.

#### (Fundamental Principles)

Article 2 Measures to address loneliness and isolation must be implemented by treating the matters listed below as fundamental principles:

- (i) it is important to advance measures to address loneliness and isolation across all societal sectors, recognizing that the issues faced by persons experiencing loneliness and isolation are a problem for society as a whole, based on the understanding that any person can potentially be in such a state at any point in life and the issues faced by persons experiencing that state due to changes in society are severe;
- (ii) in light of the diverse cause and manifestation of loneliness and isolation, it is essential to provide continuous support tailored to the unique circumstances of persons experiencing such states, including their family members (referred to below as "concerned parties"); and
- (iii) it is essential to provide necessary support to the concerned parties with the objective of enabling them to escape their loneliness and isolation and lead a smoother daily and social life, by fostering their interactions with society and others in accordance with their preferences.

#### (Responsibility of the National Government)

Article 3 The national government is responsible for establishing and implementing policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation, pursuant to the fundamental principles specified in the preceding Article (referred to as "fundamental principles" in the following Article and Article 6).

(Responsibility of Local Governments)

Article 4 Each local government is responsible for establishing and implementing policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation which reflect the circumstances of the concerned parties, within their jurisdiction in coordination with the national government and other local governments, pursuant to the fundamental principles.

(Efforts of the People)

Article 5 The people are to strive to deepen their understanding and concerns towards persons experiencing loneliness and isolation, and to cooperate with the policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation which the national government and the local governments implement.

(Coordination and Cooperation among Relevant Persons)

Article 6 The national government, the local governments, persons who provide support to the concerned parties, local residents, and other relevant persons are to strive to coordinate and cooperate with one another, in pursuit of realizing the fundamental principles.

(Legislative Measures)

Article 7 The government must undertake necessary legislative, fiscal and other measures to implement its policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation.

## Chapter II Policies Regarding Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation

(Priority Plans on Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 8 (1) The Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation must create a priority plan to facilitate the promotion of the policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation (referred to as a "priority plan on measures to address loneliness and isolation" in this Article, and in Article 21, paragraph (1), item (i)).

- (2) The priority plan on measures to address loneliness and isolation must provide for the following matters:
- (i) the fundamental plan of action concerning the policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation;
  - (ii) the policies that should be comprehensively and systematically implemented by the government in relation to measures to address loneliness and isolation; and
  - (iii) in addition to what is provided for in the preceding two items, other matters as are necessary to comprehensively and systematically promote the policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation.
- (3) As a general rule, the policies provided for in the priority plan on measures to address loneliness and isolation must be accompanied by specific objectives to be attained by those policies and the time frame for their attainment.
- (4) Upon creating the priority plan on measures to address loneliness and isolation in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (1), the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation must make it public without delay. The same applies when amendments are made to the aforementioned plan.
- (5) The Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation must investigate the status of the attainment of the objectives specified in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3) at suitable junctures, and make the outcome of that investigation public without delay.

(Promotion of Understanding by the People)

Article 9 The national government and the local governments are to strive to actively carry out necessary awareness-raising activities concerning measures to address loneliness and isolation, in order to increase the general interests of the people, gain their understanding and cooperation, and contribute to the autonomous activities in which the diverse members of society participate.

(Support for Counselling)

Article 10 The national government and the local governments are to strive to implement necessary policies to encourage local governments, persons who provide support to the concerned parties, local residents, and other relevant persons to provide the necessary information, advice, and other forms of assistance in response to consultations from the concerned parties.

(Fostering Dialogue)

Article 11 The national government and the local governments are to strive to implement necessary policies to foster dialogue and promote coordination and collaboration among themselves, persons who provide support to the concerned parties, local residents, and other relevant persons, recognizing that the coordination and collaboration among them can effectively advance measures to address loneliness and isolation.

(Recruitment of Personnel)

Article 12 The national government and the local governments are to strive to implement policies necessary for the recruitment, training, and enhancement of personnel who provide support to the concerned parties.

(Assistance for Local Governments and Persons Who Provide Support to Concerned Parties)

Article 13 The national government is to strive to provide information and undertake necessary measures to assist with the policies implemented by the local governments concerning measures to address loneliness and isolation, as well as activities carried out by persons who provide support to the concerned parties in relation to measures to address loneliness and isolation.

(Advancement of Research and Studies)

Article 14 The national government is to strive to advance research and studies into the actual circumstances of persons experiencing loneliness and isolation, as well as other necessary research and studies for establishing the policies regarding measures to address loneliness and isolation.

(Local Councils for Loneliness and Isolation Measures)

Article 15 (1) Either independently or with other local governments, a local government is to strive to establish a local council for loneliness and isolation measures (referred to below as a "local council") composed of organizations and bodies related to support to concerned parties (referred to as "support" in this paragraph, the following Article, and Article 17, paragraph (2)), persons engaged in support-related professions, and other related persons (referred to as "relevant organizations and other such persons" in paragraph (2) of the following Article, and Article 21, paragraph (2)), in order to ensure coordination and cooperation necessary for advancing measures to address loneliness and isolation.

(2) Once a local council has been established, the head of the local government must issue public notice to that effect in accordance with the provisions of Cabinet Office Order.

(Functions of the Local Council)

Article 16 (1) A local council is to exchange the necessary information and hold discussions regarding the particulars of support, in order to attain the objectives referred to in paragraph (1) of the preceding Article.

(2) The relevant organizations and other such persons that make up the local council (referred to as "constituent organizations and other such persons" in the following paragraph and the following Article)

are to provide support in accordance with the outcome of the discussion referred to in the preceding paragraph.

- (3) A local council may request that the constituent organizations and other such persons provide information or express their opinions on the concerned parties who are subject to support, or otherwise provide the necessary cooperation, if the local council considers this to be necessary to exchange information or hold discussions as prescribed in paragraph (1) or if the local council considers this to be necessary when requested by any of the constituent organizations and other such persons in relation to the provision of support by other constituent organizations and other such persons.

(The Local Council's Organization Which Coordinates Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 17 (1) The head of the local government that has established a local council may designate a single organization or body from among its constituent organizations and other such persons to act as the organization which coordinates measures to address loneliness and isolation (referred to as a "coordinating organization" in the following paragraph and following Article).

- (2) A coordinating organization is to oversee the functions of the local council, and facilitate the liaison and coordination among the constituent organizations and other such persons, for example by tracking the status of support provided by a constituent organization or other such person, and, if necessary, combining it with the support provided by different constituent organizations and other such persons, as prescribed by the local council so that necessary support is appropriately provided.

(Duty of Confidentiality)

Article 18 A person who is or was engaged in the functions of a local council (including the functions as a coordinating organization; the same applies in this Article) must not disclose any confidential information obtained in relation to the functions of the local council, without a justifiable reason.

(Matters Determined by the Local Council)

Article 19 Beyond what is provided for in Article 15 through the preceding Article, matters necessary for the organization and operation of a local council are determined by the local council itself.

### Chapter III Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation

(Establishment)

Article 20 The Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation (referred to below as "headquarters") is to be established within the Cabinet Office as a special organization.

(Functions Under the Headquarters' Jurisdiction)

Article 21

- (1) The headquarters is responsible the following functions:

- (i) the creation of the priority plan on measures to address loneliness and isolation, and the promotion of its implementation; and
- (ii) in addition to the matters provided for in the preceding item, deliberation of important matters relating to measures to address loneliness and isolation.

- (2) The headquarters is to hear the opinions of local governments, local councils, or relevant organizations and other such persons as necessary, in order to carry out the functions referred to in item (i) of the preceding paragraph.

(Membership)

Article 22 The headquarters is comprised of the chairperson of the Headquarters for Advancement of

Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation, the deputy chairpersons of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation, and members of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation.

(The Chairperson of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 23 (1) The chairperson of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation (referred to below as the "chairperson") acts as the head of the headquarters, and the Prime Minister acts as the chairperson.

(2) The chairperson takes overall control of the functions of the headquarters, and directs and supervises the staff of the headquarters.

(Deputy Chairpersons of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 24 (1) The Headquarters establishes the position of the deputy chairperson of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation (referred to as the "deputy chairperson" in the following paragraph and paragraph (2) of the following Article), and this position is filled by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and a minister of state for a special mandate as prescribed under Article 9, paragraph (1) of the Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office (Act No. 89 of 1999) who receives an order pursuant to the provisions of that paragraph and oversees the functions related to the matters stated in Article 4, paragraph (1), item (xxxiv) of that Act and the relevant functions prescribed under paragraph (3) of that Article.

(2) The deputy chairpersons assist in the duties of the chairperson.

(Members of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation)

Article 25 (1) The headquarters is staffed by members of the Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation (referred to as "members of the headquarters" in the following paragraph).

(2) The following persons are appointed as members of the headquarters:

- (i) Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications;
- (ii) Minister of Justice;
- (iii) Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology;
- (iv) Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare;
- (v) Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;
- (vi) Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism;
- (vii) Minister of the Environment; and
- (viii) in addition to those provided for in the preceding items, persons who are nominated by the Prime Minister from among the ministers of state, excluding the chairperson or the deputy chairperson.

(Request to Submit Documents)

Article 26 (1) The headquarters may request that the heads of the relevant administrative organizations submit documents, express opinions, provide explanations, or otherwise provide necessary cooperation, if it considers this to be necessary to carry out its functions.

(2) The headquarters may request necessary cooperation from persons other than those specified in the preceding paragraph, if it considers this to be particularly necessary to carry out its functions.

(Delegation to Cabinet Order)

Article 27 Beyond what is provided for in Article 20 through the preceding Article, matters necessary for the

organization and operation of the headquarters are specified by Cabinet Order.

#### Chapter IV Penal Provisions

Article 28 Any person who violates the provisions of Article 18 is subject to punishment by imprisonment for one year or less, or a fine of 500,000 yen or less.

#### Supplementary Provisions

(Effective Date)

Article 1 This Act comes into effect as of April 1, 2024.

(Transitional Measure)

Article 2 If the provisions of Article 28 are to be applied up to the day before the effective date of the Act Partially Amending the Penal Code and Related Acts (Act No. 67 of 2022) (referred to as the "effective date of the Penal Code" in the remainder of this Article), the term "imprisonment" in that Article is deemed to be replaced with "imprisonment under the former Penal Code". The same applies if the provisions of that Article are to be applied to actions that have been taken before the effective date of the Penal Code.

(Review)

Article 3 Upon the lapse of five years following the enforcement of this Act, the government, considering the circumstances of this Act's implementation and other relevant aspects, is to review the approach towards measures to address loneliness and isolation, and implement necessary measures based on the results of this review, if it considers this to be necessary.

(Partial Amendment of the Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office)

Article 4 The Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office is partially amended as follows.

The following item is added in Article 4, paragraph (1):

(xxxiv) matters related to the fundamental policy to advance measures to address loneliness and isolation (meaning measures as prescribed in Article 1 of the Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation (Act No. 45 of 2023); the same applies in paragraph (3), item (xxvii)-5)

The following two items are added after Article 4, paragraph (3), item (xxvii)-3:

(xxvii)-4 matters related to the creation and advancement of the priority plan on measures to address loneliness and isolation (meaning measures as prescribed in Article 8, paragraph (1) of the Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation)

(xxvii)-5 in addition to the matters provided for in the preceding item, matters related to the planning, design, and implementation of the functions related to the advancement of measures to address loneliness and isolation that do not fall under the jurisdiction of other ministries

In the table in Article 40, paragraph (3), the following row is added after the row referring to the Council for the Promotion of Private Finance Initiatives:

Headquarters for Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation	Act on Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation
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