

Please Support Official Statistics Especially in this State of Emergency!

(Introduction)

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to statistics enumerators, advisors, prefectural and municipal government staff who are in charge of statistics, and other relevant persons for their efforts in preparing official statistics amid this situation where the declaration of the state of emergency issued in response to the rapid increase in the number of those infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is being extended. Although we cannot foresee the situation in the future, it is inevitable that there will be various kinds of impacts on the preparation of statistics. Being in the position to securely produce important statistics, I would like to convey my ideas on how to consider and react to the situation to those who are involved, and would appreciate your kind understanding and cooperation.

(Basic policy)

I believe that the impact of the spread of infection will be shown significantly in the statistics conducted through enumerators. For the time being, the impact on the three regular surveys, namely the Labour Force Survey, Family Income and Expenditure Survey, and the Retail Price Survey, of which the results are reported at the Cabinet Meeting by the Minister, and on the Population Census that covers all the people living in Japan, scheduled to be conducted this autumn, must be assessed. We would like to cooperate with local governments to ensure that we can continuously conduct our surveys by exercising our wisdom.

The basic policy of the Statistics Bureau is to ensure the production of statistics while taking utmost care in preventing the spread of infection. In order to realize this, it is important to resolve feelings of anxiety by reducing opportunities where statistics enumerators have direct contact with the survey target households, etc., as much as possible. The Ordinance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications was revised in April so that two of the regular surveys, namely the Family Income and Expenditure Survey and the Labour Force Survey, can be conducted by utilizing mail and other means in the time of emergency. Combined with the collection of answers via the internet, we consider this will be an important method for reducing contact opportunities. We are also exploring flexible measures regarding the survey method of the Population Census, from the viewpoint of risk management.

(Support official statistics!)

I would like to reaffirm the significance of producing official statistics securely. I believe that the need for timely and accurate statistics is becoming even greater in such time of emergency, as the vital information that allows governments and companies to grasp the reality of the economy and society and accurately respond to it. Further, it also has an important historic value of preserving data for the future. It will be the greatest support for statistics to once again share this value with the people involved, and to continuously be engaged in the service with a feeling of solidarity.

Depending on the situation from now on, slight delays might be caused in the publication of some statistics, but we must not allow ourselves to create a vacuum of statistics. We, the staff members of the Statistics Bureau, keep

firmly in mind that we could never produce statistics without the effort of people involved in the survey throughout Japan. With constant gratitude for the survey target households and companies, we are determined to overcome this crisis by enhancing the feeling of unity, with the pride of serving the core role of statistical administration, also in liaison with the National Statistics Center, which is in charge of processing the collected data.

Once again, I greatly appreciate the understanding of and cooperation from all of you who are engaged in statistical service.

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