The SDGs and Human Security

Chapter 1

What Are the SDGs Aiming for?

1-1 The Meaning of the SDGs and the Significance of Human Security

1 The Road to the SDGs

The origin of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), i.e., the idea that economic development must strike a balance with environmental capacity and aim for sustainable human development, can be found in Agenda 21, the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development, which was adopted at the United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. Thinking on human development has shifted from simply seeking economic prosperity and the conveniences of living to a more comprehensive approach, that aims to reduce the burden on the environment and natural resources, promote economic activities and consumption in harmony with nature, create equitable and inclusive societies, and develop human potential to the fullest extent possible. An inclusive approach to development, that puts the emphasis on each and every person, was finally adopted as the SDGs by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. This suggests that it has taken 23 years for this global action plan to come to fruition (Table 1-1).

Table 1-1: **Timeline of people-centered inclusive initiatives leading to the SDGs**

Year	
1992	**UN Conference on Environment and Development: Agenda 21 Programme of Action for Sustainable Development**
1994	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (Human Security)
1999	Establishment of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
2000	**UN General Assembly: Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2001–2015**
2001-03	Commission on Human Security (Co-Chairs: Sadako Ogata, Amartya Sen)
2005	World Summit Outcome Document
2012	UN General Assembly Resolution outlining a common understanding of Human Security (A/RES/66/290) **UN Conference on Sustainable Development**
2015	**UN General Assembly: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — the 2030 Agenda**

Based on the Millennium Declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000, the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the year for achieving them (2015) were determined, and the 21 numerical targets and 60 indicators to monitor their progress were agreed. This was a landmark development, unprecedented in the UN's history.

What makes the SDGs even more groundbreaking is that they broadened the scope of the development goals, making them universal and applicable not only to developing countries but also to developed countries. The focus also evolved from the national level to the level of communities and individuals. For example, MDG 1 aimed to halve the proportion of people living in absolute poverty (those living on the equivalent of less than 1.9 US Dollars a day) by 2015. In contrast, SDG 1 aims to cut, at least by half, the proportion of people in relative poverty (those living on less than half of the median disposable income of the population) by

2030, broken down by age group, gender, and other characteristics. To achieve the SDGs, it is not sufficient to assess the whole population. Rather, we need to assess progress for each vulnerable group, for example, according to age, gender, region, disabilities, and other factors.

2 Human Security

The concept of human security has played a major role in making the Sustainable Development Goals more comprehensive and in shifting the focus from the national level to the level of communities and individuals.

The concept of human security, which aims to realize a just society by taking a holistic view of security from the perspective of individual human beings, has gradually taken root around the world since it was proposed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its 1994 *Human Development Report*. This idea of human security, which goes beyond the traditional concept of national security and takes a comprehensive view of security threats from the perspective of the individual, should be seen within the context of the negative effects of globalization and ongoing global challenges. Globalization has yielded many benefits, but these benefits have not been equally enjoyed by all people and countries, and disparities within and between nations are widening. A country's economy may grow, but this does not mean that the lives of all its citizens will improve in the same way. As such, national level indicators, such as average life expectancy and average income, do not provide a true picture of the lives of people in that country.

In addition, in their daily lives, many people are realizing that issues that transcend national borders, such as infectious diseases and climate change, cause serious damage and pose an ever-greater threat to security. These kinds of global challenges cannot be solved by one country alone or by military force. We have entered an era in which security can no longer be thought of solely in terms of enhancing national defense capabilities or diplomatic efforts. Human security is a concept that complements national security, in that it aims to achieve security in a comprehensive way, through a full range of economic, technological, social, and cultural means, with the participation of all actors, not just the government (Table 1-2).

Since 1998, Japan has played a leading role in promoting the concept of human security around the world. At the initiative of the Government of Japan, the UN Trust Fund for Human Security was established in 1999. Moreover, based on the report of the Commission on Human Security (co-chaired by Amartya Sen and the late Sadako Ogata), the 2012 UN General Assembly agreed on a common understanding of human security, including the notion that human security incorporates

> "the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential."

This concept is now well established as a global consensus.

This General Assembly resolution stipulates that governments have the primary responsibility for ensuring the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of their citizens and that the international community has the responsibility to provide assistance to governments if they are unable to fulfil their responsibilities (Table 1-3).

The human security approach is characterized by efforts to tackle all threats and challenges from a human perspective; a focus on the most vulnerable people and communities; integrated multi-sectoral activities; context-specific measures; an emphasis on prevention; and partnerships between

Table 1-2: **National security and human security**

National Security	Defense of national territory, territorial waters, and airspace, securing national independence, people's safety, livelihoods and economy Focus on diplomacy, defense, economy, industry, food, resources, energy, etc.
Human Security	A broad and comprehensive view of threats to security from a human perspective, including global issues Aims to secure the life, livelihood, and dignity of every human being Helps people develop their innate abilities to the fullest

Table 1-3: **Main points of UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/66/290 outlining a common understanding of human security**

Principle	Approach
Human beings have the right to live with dignity, free from poverty and despair. Governments have the primary responsibility to ensure the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of their citizens. The international community has a responsibility to provide assistance to governments in addressing current and emerging threats.	(1) People-centered perspective: focus on the most vulnerable people and communities (2) Comprehensive: implement measures that integrate activities in multiple sectors (3) Context-specific measures: identify root causes of insecurity and threats (4) Focus on prevention of insecurity and threats: emphasize empowerment alongside protection (5) Partnership: promote collaboration between local governments, businesses, civil society, etc.

governments, local governments, businesses, civil society, and other actors. In seeking to secure the life, livelihood, and dignity of every human being and to help them to develop their innate capacities to the fullest, human security places a particular emphasis on human dignity.

Every person is born into this world with inalienable value as a human being, entitled to take pride in who they are and to be accepted with respect by others as a human being of worth (Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The idea of human security, which is linked to the core objective of the SDGs, is that we must create a society in which every person born in the world can feel that their existence is meaningful. Finding ways to ensure dignity so that all people are accepted as human beings of worth is a critical issue in contemporary Japanese society (see Chapter 1, 1-2).

3 The Core Objective of the SDGs: A Society Where No One Is Left Behind

The SDGs were adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. As an action plan for the 2030 Agenda, they consist of 17 goals that present a comprehensive and multi-layered view of the economy, society, the environment, and the planet from the perspective of every human being, with future generations in mind (**Figure 1-1**). The SDGs call for action at three levels: environmental (the

Figure 1-1: **The 17 SDGs**

global environment, including land, air, and sea), economic, and social (see the SDGs model in the Introduction).

As noted previously, the SDGs differ from their predecessor, the MDGs, in that they expand the development goals to be comprehensive and universal, applicable not only to developing countries but also to developed countries, while their focus has evolved from the national level to the individual level (Table 1-4).

Table 1-4: Characteristics of the SDGs: sustainability and the dignity of every individual

MDGs (2001–15)	8 Goals, 21 Targets, 60 Indicators Poverty, education, and health in developing countries	
SDGs (2015–30)	17 Goals, 169 Targets, 247 Indicators Views the economy, society, and the global environment from the perspective of individual human beings	
	Universality:	covers all countries, both developing and developed
	Integration:	emphasizes interconnectedness of economy, society, and environment
	Inclusivity:	aims for "a society where no one is left behind"
	Human dignity:	addresses inequality, discrimination, violence
	Forward-looking:	design measures which take into consideration future generations
	Participatory:	involves all core actors and organizations, in addition to government

As inequality continues to widen in many countries, an approach that focuses on the most vulnerable is essential. There is a deep affinity between the core objective of the SDGs, which aim for an inclusive society by taking a comprehensive and multi-layered view of society, the economy, and the global environment from the perspective of individual human beings; and the concept of human security, which aims for a society that recognizes that all people have the right to enjoy life, livelihood, and dignity, by virtue of being born human beings, and where people feel that their own existence is meaningful.

In accordance with the core objective of the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda aims to achieve "a society where no one is left behind" and governments pledged that they "will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first" (Paragraph 4). The SDGs can be interpreted as an extension of the MDGs with the addition of a human security perspective, transforming them into universal goals. As shown in Table 1-5, the 17 SDGs include many targets related to reducing inequalities and disparities, promoting inclusive societies, and ensuring the dignity of every person, along with the sustainability of the economy, environment, and natural resources. However, as mentioned previously, most initiatives to achieve SDGs in Japan, both public and private, have focused on economic and environmental sustainability issues. Conversely, activities related to inclusiveness, another important aspect of the SDGs which protects the dignity of each and every human being, are still limited.

4 Dignity for All and Local Communities

Since the SDGs aim for a society in which all people can lead a decent human life, with a focus on each person as a human being, it is essential to undertake initiatives tailored to the characteristics of local communities. It is

Table 1-5: 17 SDGs, 247 indicators

Sustainability	Dignity of each and every individual: leave no one behind
• End poverty and hunger (Goals 1 and 2) • Water, sanitation, and sustainable use of energy (Goals 6 and 7) • Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work (Goal 8) • Build resilient infrastructure and promote sustainable industrialization (Goal 9) • Realize sustainable cities and human settlements (Goal 11) • Ensure sustainable consumption patterns (Goal 12) • Urgent measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change (Goal 13) • Conservation of oceans, seas, and marine resources, protection of terrestrial ecosystems, and sustainable forest management (Goals 14 and 15)	• Promote healthy living and well-being (Goal 3) • Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal 4) • Gender equality and the empowerment of women (Goal 5) • Reduce inequalities within and among countries (Goal 10) • Promote a fair and inclusive society, ensure access to justice, build inclusive institutions, and protect human rights (Goal 16)

not sufficient to simply monitor and discuss the situation at the national level. For example, improvements in per capita income, the relative poverty rate, life expectancy, the infant mortality rate, the school enrollment rate for children, and the unemployment rate at the national level are welcome, but they are only for the country as a whole and do not necessarily indicate that the situation has improved in each region of the country. Even aside from large, populous countries such as China, India, and Brazil, where regional disparity is most evident, similar disparities exist to varying degrees in all countries, and these are on a growing trend. To achieve a society where no one is left behind, it is not enough to make decisions based on national level indicators alone. This has led to a growing number of voices around the world asking how the SDGs can be achieved at the municipal and local levels, which are more closely linked to inhabitants' spheres of everyday activity (e.g., *Localizing the 2030 Agenda in West Africa: Building on What Works* by Jimena Leiva Roesch and Masooma Rahmaty of the International Peace Institute, 2020; the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia report on *The Attainment of SDGs in Conflict-affected Countries in the Arab Region*, 2021). The success or failure of the SDGs depends on the extent to which the goals are achieved at the municipal and local levels.

5 Limitations of the SDG Indicators for Developed Countries

The UN General Assembly adopted 169 targets and 247 indicators to track progress towards achieving the 17 SDGs (General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/313).

While these indicators are based on universal standards, many are designed primarily for developing and conflict-affected countries, and thus are not necessarily suitable for monitoring progress in developed countries such as Japan.

For example, under Goal 5 "Gender Equality," seven of the 14 indicators are not major issues in developed countries. Meanwhile, Goal 16 "Peace, Justice and Inclusive Institutions" is one of the core SDGs, but ten of the 24 indicators for assessing progress are primarily for developing or conflict-affected countries (**Table 1-6**).

These indicators, designed primarily for developing and conflict-related countries in mind, are difficult to use in measuring the progress of a country like Japan. Despite lagging far behind the world in some areas such as gender equality, as a developed country, Japan has achieved or is achieving most of the targets in areas such as income, health/healthcare, education, energy, and infrastructure, at least at the national level, without having made any additional efforts. As such, its overall level of achievement would be rated as high. However, it cannot really be said that the life, livelihood, and dignity of every individual in Japan are respected, and that every individual lives their life with the pride befitting a human being. If Japan is to become a society where no one is left behind, it is not enough to work mechanically towards meeting the individual SDG indicators.

Another limitation of the indicators is the lack of internationally comparable data for many of them. For this reason, the Sustainable Development Report (SDR),

Table 1-6: SDG indicators primarily for developing and conflict-affected countries

Goal 5: Gender Equality (7 examples of indicators)	Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Institutions (10 examples of indicators)
• Legal framework for gender equality • Proportion of women married before age 15 and before age 18 • Proportion of girls and women who have undergone female genital mutilation • Laws guaranteeing sexual and reproductive rights • Proportion of women with ownership rights over agricultural land/property • Proportion of women who own a mobile telephone • Public financial allocations for gender equality	• Number of conflict-related deaths • Unsentenced detainees • Inward and outward illicit financial flows • Illicit arms dealing • Number of public officials who requested bribes, number of people who paid bribes • Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget • Inclusiveness of public institutions • Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations • Proportion of children whose births have been registered with a civil authority • Cases of disappearance and torture of media personnel and activists

which provides annual measurements and comparisons of progress made by countries in achieving the SDGs, uses an alternative set of indicators that combines selected SDG indicators with additional indicators. The report ranked Japan 18th out of 165 countries in 2021, and 19th out of 163 countries in 2022, meaning that it has met almost all of the indicators, except in areas such as gender and marine resource conservation. The problem with the indicators used in the SDR, however, is that they do not include indicators related to human dignity. The six indicators for Goal 5 "Gender Equality" do not include an indicator for violence that undermines the dignity of women and girls. Goal 16 "Peace, Justice and Inclusive Institutions" has 11 indicators but lacks indicators related to accountable and inclusive participatory institutions and the dignity of vulnerable populations suffering from physical, psychological, and sexual violence (Table 1-7).

6 Ultimate Objective of the SDGs

It is important to ask whether the implementation of the 247 indicators of the SDGs is the ultimate objective of the SDGs. If the objective is to get as close as possible to an inclusive society where no one is left behind, then the 247 SDG indicators represent only one route toward that objective. A large number of the SDG indicators are not necessarily suitable for assessing developed countries like Japan. If the traditional approach of monitoring and evaluating progress on SDG indicators is not sufficient to achieve the goal of leaving no one behind, then the reverse approach, starting from the end goal, is required.

7 Human Security Indicators

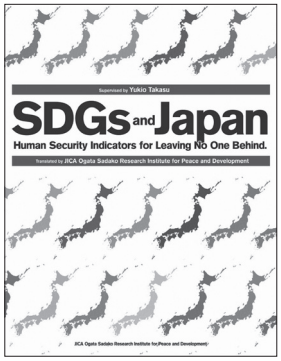
The Human Security Indicators approach starts with identifying those who are situated farthest from the goal of "a society where no one is left behind." By making visible who is left behind or likely to be left behind, and where and how this is likely to happen, the realities and priority issues of poverty, inequality, discrimination, and exclusion in each region can be brought to light, and specific goals for the period up to 2030 can be set, allowing for targeted assistance efforts. To this end, the Human Security Forum formed an Indicator Team, consisting of researchers from various fields and experts from non-profit and other organizations, to develop "Human Security Indicators for Japan." The aim was to reveal the priority issues for each region in order to achieve a society where no one is left behind.

To clarify the challenges in realizing the core objective of "a society where no one is left behind" at the local level in Japan, the Human Security Indicators for Japan were developed based on a common understanding of the UN resolution. They were structured into three domains: life, livelihood, and dignity. When using the data, the utmost care was taken to avoid the identification of any person. When selecting the human security indicators, emphasis was placed on indicators that visualize the degree to which human dignity is protected, along with feeling safe and secure, from the perspective of ensuring the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of all people.

In addition, in order to identify priority issues based on the situation and characteristics of each locality in Japan,

Table 1-7: Limitations of the Sustainable Development Report, which only monitors selected SDG indicators

Goal 5: Gender Equality (6 indicators)	Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Inclusive Institutions (11 indicators)
• Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods • Ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received • Ratio of female-to-male labor force participation rate • Seats held by women in national parliament • Gender wage gap • Female-to-male disparity in time spent on unpaid domestic work	• Homicides • Unsentenced detainees • Population who feel safe walking alone at night • Property ownership rights • Birth registrations with civil authority • Corruption Perceptions Index • Children involved in child labor • Exports of major conventional weapons • Press Freedom Index • Access to justice • Persons held in prison



it is important to visualize the issues at the level of the administrative bodies closest to their inhabitants. In this regard, in the first phase, human security indicators were developed for the prefectural level, as this is the basic unit of local government in Japan and also the easiest in terms of data collection. The results of this phase were published as *SDGs and Japan* (JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, 2020).

In the second phase, Miyagi Prefecture was selected as the first target for municipality-level indicators. This prefecture was chosen because it had suffered extensive damage from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and had a low prefecture-level human security index, suggesting that it faces significant challenges. As mentioned in the Introduction, another reason for choosing Miyagi Prefecture was the strong desire of the members of the Indicator Team to do what they could to help make Miyagi Prefecture a more comfortable place to live.

Since the interim results were presented at an event held on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake at the Sendai International Center in March 2021, these results have been presented at several venues across the country, including briefings for the Miyagi Prefectural Government, to Miyagi Prefectural Assembly members, and to various municipal governments. At present, the Indicator Team is at work on creating municipality-level indicators for Aichi Prefecture.

8 Notable Features of the Human Security Indicators for Japan

First, it should be noted that this is the first time that comprehensive human security indicators aimed at achieving the core objective of the SDGs have been developed at the local government level in a major developed country.

In the first stage, the prefectural indicators consisted of 91 indicators, made up of 23 Life Indicators, 42 Livelihood Indicators, and 26 Dignity Indicators. The SDGs Miyagi Model was modified to take regional characteristics into account, including indicators for local economic and industrial activities, livability of the area for families raising children, consultations on child abuse, places to spend time outside school (for children), natural disasters and disaster prevention, and municipal comprehensive plans and gender equality promotion plans. Consequently, the model is composed of 99 indicators, consisting of 26 Life Indicators, 48 Livelihood Indicators, and 25 Dignity Indicators (see Chapter 3, 3-3).

Secondly, this is a pioneering, world-first attempt at quantifying human dignity. Taking the general understanding of human dignity, as reflected in international law and norms such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as the basis (that people born into this world have a value that cannot be taken away from them), the Indicator Team, with the advice of experts in various fields, took the approach of selecting indicators related to dignity from available data, including indicators on women and children. With limited data available for individual regions, the following indicators were used: violence against women and children, trust in the public sector, community ties, civic engagement, international outlook, diversity, satisfaction, emphasis on dignity in comprehensive plans and gender equality plans, consultations on child abuse, and places for children to spend time outside school (see **Table 1-9** for prefecture-level Dignity Indicators and Chapter 3, 3-3 for the Dignity Indicators used in the Miyagi Model). With regard to human dignity, we were severely constrained by the paucity of published locally disaggregated data, but we intend to make improvements going forward.

Thirdly, these are the first indicators to include subjective assessments by residents, together with objective statistical data.

Objective statistical data alone is not sufficient to understand the concerns people have and to consider effective countermeasures. By taking the residents' subjective perceptions into account and using them to complement the data, it is possible to highlight the realities of the local community (see Chapter 3, 3-5).

Fourth, the municipalities were ranked based on an index compiled from the indicators, and then visualized

Table 1-8: Human Security Indicators for Japan

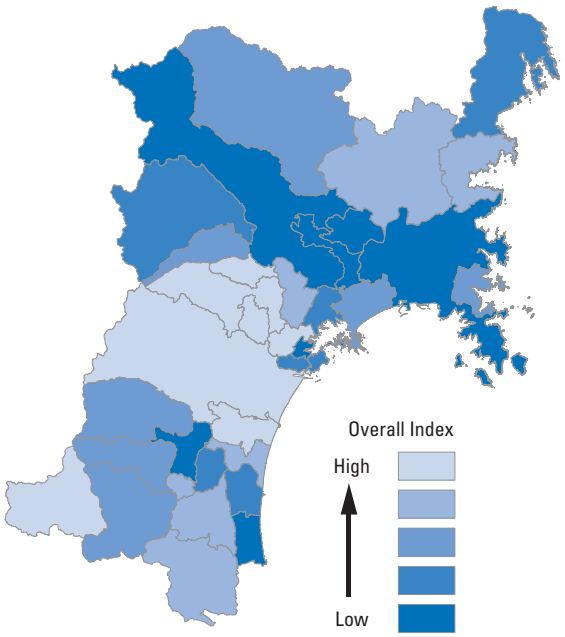
Prefecture-level Indicators (91)		Municipality-level Indicators for Miyagi Prefecture (99)	
Life Indicators (23 indicators)	Life (11) Health (12)	Life Indicators (26 indicators)	Life (13) Health, medical assistance for children, obstetrics and gynecology clinics (13)
Livelihood Indicators (42 indicators)	Economic conditions and employment (10) Education (11) Welfare (11) Lifestyle, environment, and safety (10)	Livelihood Indicators (48 indicators)	Economy, industry, regional revitalization, employment (14) Education (11) Welfare (9) Natural environment, living environment, disaster prevention, safety (14)
Dignity Indicators (26 indicators)	Women and children (7) Trust in the public sector (6) Community, civic engagement, and international outlook (11) Satisfaction with life (2)	Dignity Indicators (25 indicators)	Comprehensive plans, child abuse consultations, places to spend time outside school (6) Trust in the public sector, gender equality plans (6) Community, civic engagement, and international outlook (11) Satisfaction with life (2)

Table 1-9: Prefecture-level Dignity Indicators (26 indicators)

G: Women and children - 7 indicators	H: Trust in the public sector - 6 indicators	J: Community, civic engagement, and international outlook - 11 indicators	K: Satisfaction with life - 2 indicators
G1: Number of cases of bullying G2: Average number of days children stay in temporary child protection facilities G3: Rate of children given foster care placements among those requiring care G4: Number of child suicides G5: Number of cases of temporary protection for domestic violence victims G6: Number of hours men spend on housework and childcare G7: Gender wage gap	H1: Voter turnout in national elections H2: Rate of female representatives in local assemblies H3: Degree of information disclosure H4: Number of inquiries to Japan Legal Support Centers H5: Number of lawyers H6: Number of cases of human rights infringement	J1: Number of state-designated cultural properties J2: Number of cultural facilities and community centers J3: Number of neighborhood associations J4: Rate of participation in volunteer activities J5: Number of people who made hometown tax payments J6: Number of people who made donations to major international support organizations J7: Number of registered Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) J8: Rate of increase in foreign residents J9: Number of foreign students J10: Number of foreign technical interns J11: Rate of people who would welcome an increase in foreign residents in their neighborhood	K1: Rate of people who are not satisfied with their own lives K2: Rate of people who do not believe that their lives will get better in the future

on a Geographic Information System (GIS) map. The statistical data for each indicator was indexed by municipality, with 1 representing the fewest challenges and 0 representing the most. The indicators for the Life, Livelihood, and Dignity categories were then indexed separately to produce Life, Livelihood, and Dignity indices, and these were used as the basis to compare and rank municipalities. **Figure 1-2** shows the municipalities ranked by the Overall Index, calculated from the average of the three category indices. The darker a municipality is colored, the more serious the problems it has to address (see Chapter 3, 3-4). It should be emphasized that ranking itself is not important. The intent of visualizing the data on a map is to clarify the priority issues that each municipality needs to address relative to other regions, providing a shared awareness of the issues and an opportunity for local governments, citizens, and businesses to work together to solve them.

Figure 1-2: **Overall indices for municipalities in Miyagi Prefecture**



These indicators revealed that many people in Japan and in Miyagi Prefecture are being left behind by poverty, inequality, isolation, and discrimination, and that not everyone is able to live with a sense of pride as a human being. To achieve the core objective of the SDGs, it is necessary to work toward reducing poverty and inequality and to eliminate discrimination, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of human dignity. We also need to act to create a society of coexistence, in which there is mutual respect and recognition of diversity.

9 Coexistence between Humans and Nature

There are two questions that we must respond to here. The first is whether human security is an anthropocentric concept that neglects the natural environment. Human security emphasizes the importance of guaranteeing the life, livelihood, and dignity of all people, recognizing that being born into this world as a human being has an intrinsic meaning and value that cannot be taken away. The distinctive features of this approach are that it is based on human values such as these, and that it comprehensively reassesses security threats from the perspective of individual human beings. While legal norms, such as international human rights covenants, constitutions, and national bills on human rights, affirm human values as legal rights, human security can only be considered as a code of ethical conduct.

The Commission on Human Security defines human security as the protection of core human values and the fullest development of human freedom and capabilities; in other words, the protection of the fundamental freedoms that constitute the essence of human life. Respecting human freedom does not mean that humans can freely consume the environment and resources of this planet without limits. While human security aims to secure an environment in which humans can develop their innate capacities to the fullest, it does not recognize similar goals for the other animals and plants that inhabit the earth. However, it does recognize that without biodiversity, the preservation of ecosystems, and the stabilization of greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere, humanity will not be able to maintain a secure, human way of life on this planet. Accordingly, the international community has created international legal norms and codes of conduct for the preservation of the global environment and continues to explore ways to coexist with nature (**Table 1-10**). Proponents of human security respect life, from human to all other forms, while emphasizing human dignity.

The second question is whether the SDGs may actually be harmful unless they are accompanied by fundamental systemic transformation. The SDGs have their origin in Agenda 21, the action plan of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Its starting point was the recognition that humanity could not continue to live on this planet without preserving biodiversity and ecosystems and stabilizing the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. As such, it contained ways to curb overproduction, overconsumption, and excessive burdens on resources, beginning a journey toward coexistence with nature. As interest in the SDGs grows, it is understandable that some people are critical of irresponsible activities that ignore the negative impacts on the lives of local people and the natural environment in developing countries in order to use resources, as well as of those initiatives in which the SDGs are seen only as a business opportunity for companies. However, amid a worsening climate crisis and growing inequality in the world, the

Table 1-10: **Coexistence of human beings and nature**

Human beings	The natural world
• UN Charter • Universal Declaration of Human Rights • International human rights conventions • International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women • Convention on the Rights of the Child • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities • **UN General Assembly resolutions on human security**	**Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer** **Convention on Biological Diversity:** Species: conserve the diversity of life on Earth Ecosystems: conserve habitats, sustainable use Genes: use of genetic resources, equitable sharing of benefits **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change:** To stabilize the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere **The Paris Agreement:** Establishes the 2°C target as a shared long-term goal for the world. Calls for efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C

SDGs present a valuable universal plan of action and roadmap for narrowing disparities and for achieving an inclusive society where human dignity is protected and no one is left behind. The questions to ask are whether the significance of the SDGs, as a framework for global cooperation representing the consensus of all UN member states, is truly understood, and whether substantial progress is being made toward the realization of their core objectives. However, this does not undermine the value of the SDGs themselves. Together with more drastic measures by the government and local governments, innovative efforts by companies with technology, funds, and human resources, finely-tuned activities by citizens' groups, and intellectual contributions by research and educational institutions, the weight of every individual's actions as an agent of social change should not be underestimated.

10 Impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has ravaged the world since early 2020, has had a tremendous impact on society, the economy, and human life in general, and poses a major challenge to the SDGs, which are due to be met by the year 2030. The impact of the pandemic on the global economy has been wide-ranging and severe, with global economic growth, trade volumes, direct investment, and foreign remittances declining significantly in 2020. As a result, the number of people living in absolute poverty (those living on less than 1.9 US Dollars a day) is estimated to have increased by 150 million, and the number of people living with food insecurity by 265 million (UN estimate). In addition, the number of children unable to access education due to school closures or for economic reasons reached 1.52 billion worldwide (89% of the total school-going population) at its peak (UNICEF report). In Japan, the number of elementary and junior high school students habitually absent from school reached record highs of 196,000 in 2020 and 245,000 in 2021, a result of blanket school closures and significant restrictions on school life.

Internationally, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the poorest countries, conflict-affected countries, migrant workers, refugees, and internally displaced persons have been particularly severe, while on a national level, it has had a disproportionately negative impact on vulnerable groups such as children, women, single parents, those in non-regular employment, the elderly, and people with disabilities, even in developed countries. In Japan, the difficulties faced by those in non-regular employment and single-mother households have been especially acute (see Chapter 12, 12-3). On a global level, there are concerns that recent progress in infant mortality and elementary school enrollment in developing countries has been substantially reversed, and that we may be back to 1990 levels, the starting year for the MDGs. Thus, the pandemic has had far-reaching and profound effects on the implementation of the SDGs (UN Secretary-General's Report, April 2020).

With people spending extended periods of time indoors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has also been a rise in domestic violence. UNICEF estimates that 243 million women and girls (aged 15–49) worldwide were subjected to sexual or physical violence in the home in 2020. In Japan, the number of children

Table 1-11: **Impact of COVID-19**

Particularly severe	At the global level: poorest people, migrant workers, refugees, poorest countries, conflict-affected countries At the national level: children, women, single parents, those in non-regular employment, the elderly, people with disabilities
Economic growth rate (2020)	Global -3.3% Developed countries -4.6% (World Bank)
Global trade volume (2020)	-8.3% (World Bank)
Remittances from migrant workers to home countries	-14% (World Bank)
People in absolute poverty (less than 1.9 USD per day)	Increase of 150 million to 736 million (UN estimate)
People living with food insecurity	Increase of 265 million (UN estimate) → Infant mortality, child nutrition, and elementary school enrollment: may regress to 1990 levels → Strengthening of international solidarity and cooperation required

Source: UN Secretary-General's Report (April 2020); World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects* (June 2022)

under the age of 18 who were reported to Child Welfare Centers due to suspected child abuse totaled 97,842 in 2020 (an increase of 17,590 from the previous year), and the number of domestic violence cases stood at 82,201 (an increase of 4,719 from the previous year), the largest number since records began. There has been a particularly sharp increase in suicides among female elementary and junior high school students, with the number of student suicides reaching a record high of 499 in 2020 (140 more than the average of the previous five years). In addition, while the number of suicides among men has decreased, the number among women has increased significantly since July 2020, especially among the 20-40 age group *(2021 White Paper on Suicide Prevention)*.

As such, the pandemic poses not just a threat to human health, but a truly compound threat to human security, requiring a response in all three areas of life, livelihood, and dignity. A human security approach that takes a multifaceted view of human life, livelihood, and dignity can provide an important framework for responding to complex global crises and for protecting and empowering the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

11 Build Back Better

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on our ability to meet the SDGs by 2030. Governments and UN agencies have been forced to allocate financial resources to infection prevention, health, and emergency economic measures, leading to concerns about a shortage of resources for other areas such as humanitarian assistance (food, etc.) and education. There is also an undeniable tendency for countries to prioritize their own interests in implementing emergency measures and securing vaccines. At the same time, the threat of an infectious disease to which everyone living on earth is equally exposed vividly demonstrates the fact that "no one can be safe unless everyone is safe." It is also true that, with the growing sense of global solidarity that transcends national borders, there is greater awareness of the need not just to return to the pre-pandemic status quo, but to create a more inclusive and resilient society under the slogan "Build Back Better." To this end, it is important to reaffirm international and national action plans on the SDGs, guided by the core objective that no one should be left behind. To realize this goal, there is a need to redouble efforts in local communities, focusing on vulnerable groups that have been severely impacted by the pandemic, as well as to strengthen international cooperation. Using human security indicators to bring to light the priority issues of local communities will be an effective way to do this.

Written by Yukio Takasu

1-2 What Is Dignity and How Is It Measured?

1 Dignity in the Human Security Indicators

As discussed previously, the Human Security Indicators are categorized into three areas (Chapter 1, 1-1). The first is "Life." The first and most important thing for a human being is to live out their natural life. All people wish to avoid premature death, to be spared from unnecessary suffering, and to live healthily. The second is "Livelihood." So long as someone is alive, they want not only to survive, but also to have a decent standard of living. As such, they want to receive the education they need and work when they are able to. Or, perhaps, they want to lead a respectable life and not be embarrassed to appear in front of others. These desires are common to all.

Furthermore, the Human Security Indicators have a third component: dignity. In addition to freedom from fear and freedom from want, the freedom to live with dignity has often been a central topic in the debate over human security. However, when one tries to quantify it as indicators, measuring dignity is not easy. At least, it does not appear to be easy. This marks a contrast with life and livelihood, where the indicators are easy to understand, there are many statistical resources, and the criteria are relatively easy to choose. So, what is dignity? Although we understand intuitively that it is very important, many of us may have trouble when asked to explain what it is all about.

However, it could be said that the indicators concerning dignity are the most representative of human security or the SDGs. This is because the Dignity Indicators are directly related to the goal of creating "a society where no one is left behind" (see Chapter 1, 1-1). Therefore, when you create human security indicators for your respective localities, it is important to pay particular attention to what you choose for indicators relating to dignity. This section provides some points on what to think about when conducting this work.

In the Miyagi Model, the Dignity Indicators are made up of four categories: G (Dignity of Women and Children), H (Trust in the Public Sector and Gender), J (Community Engagement), and K (Satisfaction with life) (Chapter 3, 3-3). In this section, we will consider why these are important and why they can be grouped together as indicators for dignity. After first revisiting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we will trace these four categories of indicators in reverse order, from K to G, and explain the main points of the concept of dignity by linking it to each category.

2 "Noble, Solemn, Inviolable"

Our starting point is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, which is accepted as customary international law by most nations in each corner of the world. The Preamble of the Declaration begins with the following:

> "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world..."

Meanwhile, Article 1 is worded as follows.

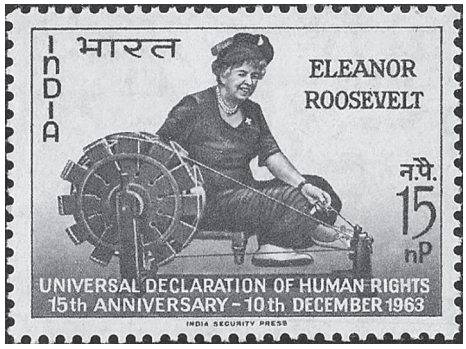
> "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

All people living in this world are equal in dignity and rights. Every human being has irreplaceable value, and none is superior or inferior to another. A human being is an end in itself, not a means to some other end. This should be the basis of all laws of human society. This was emphasized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because in the first half of the 20th century, humanity experienced two world wars and witnessed the cruel tragedy of tens of millions of deaths. Each and every human being is important. No matter what the noble cause, we must not regard people as mere means to an end and deprive them of life so lightly. This is a lesson that humanity learned through the senseless deaths of countless people in the world wars.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, dignity and rights are enshrined as paramount. Subsequently, the

substance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights became international law in the form of human rights conventions and protocols, and many countries around the world accepted dignity and rights as central pillars of their constitutions (**Figure 1-3**). The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany is a well-known example, but the values of dignity and rights are also strongly reflected in the Constitution of Japan. UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/290, adopted in 2012, outlines a common understanding on human security and states that human security helps Member States to identify and address widespread and cross-cutting challenges to people's survival, livelihood, and dignity, including "the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair" (1-1 of this chapter, **Table 1-3**).

Figure 1-3: Stamp commemorating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (issued by the Government of India in 1963), Wikimedia Commons



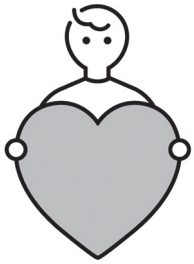
In the authoritative Japanese dictionary, the *Kojien*, the word "dignity" is defined as "noble, solemn, and inviolable." The Japanese word for dignity, *songen*, uses the Chinese characters for "noble" and "solemn."

We look up to that which is noble and solemn — in other words, we pay it respect. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, however, it is not a few "noble" human beings who have dignity, but all human beings. Accordingly, it follows that we should value every human being and treat each of them with respect. From the perspective of dignity, no particular person or people should ever be disregarded, ignored, or left behind.

3 Caring for Oneself

Every human being has dignity. You have dignity, as do I. Another way of putting it is that every person possesses an inner value that is unconditional and inviolable. A starting point for the practice of dignity, then, would be to value oneself, recognizing that one is born with inherent dignity (**Figure 1-4**). Since we all have equal value as human beings, one should not imagine oneself as being inferior to others. As such, having pride in one's existence and confidence in oneself is the foundation of human dignity. The greatest denial of one's dignity is thus to take one's life, i.e., suicide (which is also included in the Life Index). This will be discussed again later.

Figure 1-4: Caring for oneself



Whether or not people value themselves appropriately is seemingly a subjective matter, so let us ask people directly about it. You ask them if they are proud of themselves and if they are able to maintain their self-esteem. "Are you satisfied with your life so far? Do you feel a sense of purpose in life? Do you have hope for your future?" These are questions we asked in our questionnaire, and some of the results were selected as indicators. These were then aggregated under category K (Satisfaction with life) and compared by location, alongside scores calculated for subjective self-fulfillment and social connectivity (Chapter 3, 3-5). For these, we asked how people evaluate their own lives, as distinguished from an evaluation of the state of society. People's attitudes to life will vary depending on the place of residence, generation, gender, occupation, etc.

There is one thing to note here. While we examine people's satisfaction with their lives, we must be aware that every human being is both an individual and a social being. A person is a member of several groups at the same time, and if they feel that a group to which they belong is being humiliated, disrespected, or discriminated against, their self-affirmation may be undermined. Alternatively, they may become more inclined to protect themselves and the group because of such setbacks.

In his book *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), political scientist Francis Fukuyama argued that dignity in Western thought has two aspects: individual dignity and group-based dignity. According to Fukuyama, now that the Cold War era is over, the latter, or the desire for group recognition, has become even more salient.

When people feel they are being left out as a group, they sometimes become furious and express their collective will in violent ways. In the United States, it is said that the frustrated "white working class" has become President Trump's main base of support. As if to counter this, the BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement also gained momentum. Even though political claims about "our dignity" are well-founded, Fukuyama says that to prevent them from contributing to a cycle of hatred, it is necessary to return to the principle of universal recognition of the dignity of every citizen, which he calls the democratization of dignity.

4 Caring for Others

Whether a person is proud of themselves depends a great deal on whether or not they feel they are receiving the proper respect from others. In a society where men who look down on women act as representatives of everyone, all women will feel that their pride has been hurt. If a particular local culture is insulted, it may take a heavy toll on the self-esteem of those who were born and raised in that place. Being demeaned by someone you believe yourself to have a close relationship with makes it hurt all the more. Children who are bullied in the classroom and people who suffer daily violence at home at the hands of a parent or spouse are clearly deprived of their human dignity. Even when we try to live confidently in a way that is true to ourselves, we can still be robbed of our pride as human beings by the thoughtless acts of others.

Therefore, the next step to widely spread the spirit of dignity is for everyone to adopt an attitude of caring not only for themselves but also for others, and to take responsibility not to hurt others. That is, respect should be given to all others, since all human beings are equal in dignity. If you only take care of yourself, it is nothing but an arrogant attitude (**Figure 1-5**).

Figure 1-5: Caring for others

The ability to care for others is a matter of the quality of relationships between people. In the languages of a wide area of sub-Saharan Africa, the word for human being or humanity is *ubuntu*, which means "I am, because you are." Human beings are born out of, and are contingent upon, their relationships with each other. The Japanese word for human being, *ningen*, is also expressed as "between people," a view of human beings very similar to that of *ubuntu* (in Chinese, the same word means "society," and *ningen* was once used in Japan in that sense as well).

Ubuntu in Africa extends not only to relations between the living, but also between the living and the dead. This is an important point to consider when thinking about the meaning of dignity. Although the dead do not have rights (dead people cannot be legal claimants), we do indeed believe that the dead have dignity. We are inclined to think in that way, at least. This is because even after the people with whom we have shared time and space have left this world, the relationship between those people and ourselves remains. In *Dignity: Its History and Meaning* (Harvard University Press, 2012), philosopher Michael Rosen focuses on the expression of respect as an important aspect of dignity. We try to treat the dead body of a person or a fetus with respect and care. While ways of showing respect vary from culture to culture, treating the dead with respect is a norm which is common to all societies.

When all members of a community are esteemed and respected, the recognition will be reciprocated and dignity will prevail in that society. Category J (Community Engagement) deals with this dimension in particular. People gather in the community, preserve the memory of the traditional local culture, and engage with each other. It also means that places are available for these things to happen. In such communities, it will be easier

to establish relationships where people naturally voice their concern if they see an isolated elderly person or if they notice that a child has been left on their own. Even when people face severe disasters, community ties are not necessarily severed; on the contrary, they may be dramatically strengthened. After every major natural disaster, whether in Tohoku or elsewhere, we have witnessed and reaffirmed the power of community.

Community engagement, community ties, and mutual aid can be the foundation of dignity. At the same time, however, community ties can be constraining. If a community lacks openness, those who are excluded from the network may be stripped of respect and esteem. We know all too well that the flip side of strong community ties is that ostracism can occur (something that happens not only in rural villages, but also in workplaces and groups of friends in urban areas). If a community excludes those with backgrounds which are different from the majority, it contradicts both the fundamental principle of human rights laws and the objective of the SDGs of achieving a society where no one is left behind. No matter how high the Community Engagement Index is, human dignity will not have been achieved if some people are excluded from the community network.

A useful indicator to measure whether a community is open and dignity is shared by all is to examine attitudes toward foreigners. Accordingly, the second half of category J (Community Engagement) contains indicators relating to the international outlook of an area. In a community where the number of foreign residents (especially young people of foreign origin) increases and where they are welcomed by the local residents, everyone, whether they are visitors from neighboring towns or migrants from Tokyo, will be able to live comfortably. In such an open and diverse society, we may also expect to see the development of innovative entrepreneurial activities (this is also related to Livelihood Indicators; see Chapter 13).

5 Democratic Institutions Fostered by Dignity

Let us return again to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where dignity and rights are placed side by side. Are dignity and rights the same thing, or are they different? While both refer to the value that all humans are born with (and indeed, some would argue that rights and dignity are the same), I believe there are subtle and possibly fundamental differences. Generally speaking, rights seek to empower people through legislation, whereas dignity addresses moral imperatives that are deemed important, with or without legal provisions. There is also a view that takes a somewhat narrower approach to dignity and seeks to realize the "right to be treated with respect." This is to protect people's dignity (the right not to be insulted) through legal action against things like thoughtless abuse on the internet, vicious bullying, and hate. While such moves are both important and necessary, it may not be appropriate to bind them too tightly by law, since so much of caring for oneself and for others, and the negation of such rights, take place in intimate spheres. Rather, perhaps people could give life to written clauses of human rights legislation by placing a high value on dignity as a fundamental life attitude.

Human rights laws and bills of rights have been developed over time as global and national legislation, but it is important to make them work in practice rather than remain just beautiful words on paper. To this end, it is essential for people to vote in elections to choose their representatives, respect legal orders, make new laws if necessary, and put democratic institutions into operation. Thus, the indicators at the top of category H (Trust in the Public Sector and Gender) include voter turnout in national and gubernatorial elections. It then measures whether women, who make up half of the electorate, are able to participate in decision-making processes at various levels of local government.

According to the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who addressed the concept of dignity directly in his essay, dignity is an intrinsic value that is equally imparted to all human beings, and the source of this value is "autonomy." When Kant refers to autonomy, he means that humans can create and follow their own internal moral laws. By carefully considering what one should do, one can bring oneself closer to that ideal state, and ultimately, this is where the basis of human self-respect and dignity lies. Having people think carefully, create their own rules, and then follow them on their own, are also the basic principles of self-governance for every community.

This emphasis on dignity must also be reflected in economic and social policies. At the end of *SDGs and Japan*, there is a discussion of the importance of coordinating self-help, mutual support, and public assistance in conjunction with disaster prevention thinking, in order to create a society where no one is left behind. In their book, *Good Economics for Hard Times* (Public Affairs, 2019), Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo underscored the significance of social policy that does not leave the poor behind, and they won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2019. The book places particular emphasis on the idea of dignity. Every member of society needs to think of how to help those who are seeking help (this also relates to the Livelihood Index). Then, what is important is to design institutions in a way that respects the self-esteem and agency of the people who need help, and encourages their participation, rather than just providing charity in one direction, from the top down.

6 Dignity of Women and Children

Cultivating an attitude of respect for oneself and others, and working together to build fair and caring institutions where everyone is treated with respect — as we have discussed, this is what is necessary in order to create a society that embraces dignity. There is something very important here — that society will not change simply by confirming the general principle of equal treatment of all.

We try to understand the circumstances of those whose dignity has been stripped from them and want to change people's attitudes, institutions, and policies, so that the conditions in which these people find themselves can be radically transformed. It is precisely when dignity is lacking that we appreciate its importance. This is why the entire society must address the challenges faced by those who are left behind and those who are at risk of being left behind, and change social structures and public attitudes in a way that benefits these people and puts them center stage. Only when such changes in attitudes, institutions, and policies come to pass, will we realize that we are closer to achieving a society of dignity.

So, who should we prioritize when we try to work with those at risk of being left behind? The prefectural data presented in *SDGs and Japan* shows us important areas that should be worked on. Various indicators were combined to identify urgent issues for each prefecture. In the case of Miyagi Prefecture, in addition to recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake, the report pointed to emergent problems such as low female employment rates as well as issues related to children, including a high rate of students who are habitually absent from school, a high number of reports at Child Welfare Centers, and a high number of bullying at school. Taking such statistical evidence into account, we decided to pay special attention to the problems faced by women and children when developing the Miyagi Model. If we look at the larger picture of society, it is safe to assume that male adults in full-time employment generally do not fall into the category of those left behind. Of course, it is not enough to simply and exclusively focus on women and children. The reality is that there are many cases where diverse human attributes and social challenges intersect, such as children with disabilities, foreign women living in Japan, and so on. At any rate, in the case of the Miyagi Model, it seemed urgently necessary to focus first on the circumstances of women and children, and use them as a lens through which to view the overall picture of social problems and dignity in the region.

From there, as the start of a series of Dignity Indicators, categories G (Dignity of Women and Children) and H (Trust in the Public Sector) directly incorporate indicators from the perspectives of children and gender, respectively. G includes an evaluation of municipal comprehensive plans, focusing on how each municipality is trying to address the challenges faced by women, children, and those at risk of being left behind, and tries to make an objective evaluation to the extent possible. For Chapters 6–9 on local initiatives and Chapters 10-13 on thematic issues, we asked local Miyagi residents working on issues facing women and children against the backdrop of the 2011 earthquake to write about their activities on the ground. We hope that these chapters will give the readers a better understanding of whose dignity these indicators are focused on, and in what ways they can be used to help restore the dignity of vulnerable populations, including women and children.

7 The Urgency and Breadth of Dignity

In this section, we have discussed the importance of dignity, focusing on self-esteem, community engagement,

trust in the public sector, and the serious situation faced by women and children. Although dignity is related to a broad range of areas, at the core are pressing issues regarding the life and death of individual humans. Category G includes indicators such as deaths by suicide among children, deaths by suicide among women, child abuse, and secure places for children, all of which relate to problems that cannot wait for slow improvement. While calculating these indicators, even if there is only one case of a child committing suicide per year in a particular town, it is hard not to think about the circumstances that drove that child to suicide.

The starting point of the discussion about dignity was the idea of having pride in oneself. The premise of self-esteem is that a person has infinite potential, that they can choose their own life, that they are who they are as a result of their choices, and that the people who are important to them (and more broadly, the society around them) appreciate and approve of who they are now. A situation in which a person's options in life are almost nil, and they believe that their only course of action is to take their own life, is one in which human dignity has been fundamentally denied. It is particularly shocking for the entire society when a child, who should be bursting with future potential, ends their own life. Although the suicide rate for the population as a whole is part of the Life Index, the rate of death by suicide among vulnerable people such as women and children are specifically added to category G at the beginning of the Dignity Indicators because there is a specific urgency to these issues that should be distinguished from suicide in general.

We should continue to think about the meaning of dignity and try to create and revise measurement tools as resources to realize the core objective of the SDGs. One difficult question regarding dignity that cannot be given a clear-cut answer is "death with dignity." This means allowing people, who are not expected to recover, to discontinue life-prolonging treatment so that they can die with dignity as a person. However, there are still many outstanding issues, such as whether the unchanged intent of the individual can always be confirmed, how "death with dignity" differs exactly from suicide, and what constitutes human autonomy in the first place. Against the backdrop of an aging society with fewer children, we are entering an era in which the questions of how to live well and how to die well are both being asked in the daily lives of most people.

Figure 1-6: Fishing boats at Kesennuma port, waiting to set sail (photo: Maki Onodera)

While we may feel a sense of reverence for life itself, we may also sense a kind of dignity about the natural surroundings in which the life of living things emerges. The feelings of awe and reverence that people have held toward the sea and mountains since ancient times could also form part of the Dignity Indicators. This is because, while the basis of dignity is pride in oneself, the source of one's pride may include the community to which one belongs, and this is likely to extend to the accumulation of local history in which people have interacted with their environment (the indicator for designated cultural properties might be closer to this realm of "community dignity"). A local legislator, Tomoyuki Miura of Kesennuma City, who contributed to this book (Chapter 10, 10-3), once said, "Even though the sea took the lives of many people with the tsunami, I still feel a sense of veneration toward it" (**Figure 1-6**).

By valuing both ourselves and others, we can foster communities that are kind and accommodating to the people who live there, as well as open to people from the outside world, and rethink social systems from the perspective of those who are at risk of being left behind. I believe that the concept of dignity provides an excellent starting point for undertaking these activities. I hope that readers will make the best use of the Miyagi Model to discuss the depth and breadth of the meaning of dignity, and to consider what indicators are appropriate for measuring dignity in their locality.

Written by Yoichi Mine