

population. Therefore, they should be restored and bolstered. This can be achieved by, for example, tailoring activities to the demands of the times such as through the creation of organizations requiring only loose forms of participation and the alleviation of burdens on participants through NPO support.

Particularly in hilly and mountainous areas, where conventional rural communities used to play a major role in community activities such as the maintenance of water channels and ceremonial functions, the maintenance of communities has become difficult since these activities begun to stagnate. Therefore, new systems for collaboration should be constructed by establishing linkage between a wide range of entities both inside and outside the rural community such as neighboring rural communities, corporations and NPOs centering on conventional region-based communities, with the appropriate support of the government.

(3) Supporting activities by a wide range of entities

The government takes the lead in disclosing and distributing information to a wide range of private entities and addresses the creation of mutual trust among these entities. In doing so, an environment will be developed where information and communication technology can be used to support those efforts.

Furthermore, there are some cases where adequate prices need to be paid by users to allow for the continuous provision of services by private entities. In addition, it is necessary to consider systems which promote the development of various environments, in particular financial support by residents. In a case where "new public" values are found in activities of a wide range of entities, consideration will also be given to active government support for start-up activities from the viewpoint of supporting the activity infrastructure.

Moreover, there are some cases where an intermediate support organization which can deal with all entities including the government on an equal footing is required in order to put together activities of a wide range of private entities for a certain purpose and to promote mutual understanding among those entities and between them and the government. Intermediate support organizations also provide advice about organizational operations as well as funding and technical support. Furthermore, linkage and collaboration beyond area boundaries between entities with shared philosophies are effective in resolving common issues. It is necessary for the government to develop an environment that fosters the development of such intermediate support organizations and to develop human resources who can lead them. Intermediate support organizations should be selected according to each area's actual conditions. For example, region-based communities, NPOs, companies and the government participate on an equal footing to form a joint organization or utilize specialists at universities or human resources from outside the area.

Section 2 Management of National Land Infrastructure by a Wide Range of Entities

Immediate national land infrastructure such as roads, rivers and ports have been protected by local residents and private companies through daily and corporate activities and have played an

important role in shaping the national land. However, as a result of the rapid quantitative expansion during the postwar reconstruction period and the high-growth period, we have seen some deterioration of landscapes resulting from functions being rendered obsolete, idling and uniform design prioritizing efficiency. Moreover, it is expected that investment in maintenance and renovation in order to address the aging of facilities will increase. In addition, there are concerns about the awareness of stakeholders such as local residents who will carefully maintain and utilize national land infrastructure.

Under these current trends, it is important in the future to convert the management of immediate national land infrastructure into road development with good amenities, development of comfortable local communities and the promotion of local communities utilizing initiatives of local residents, NPOs and private companies. Therefore, although the national and local governments are responsible for the management of state-owned facilities, it is necessary to expand national land infrastructure management so that a wide range of entities can proactively and actively participate from a wide range of perspectives under the concept of the "new public" based on local residents' awareness as stakeholders and the spirit of CSR.

The national and local governments appropriately implement asset management of national land infrastructure. At the same time, they push forward the development of frameworks for participatory management by stipulating in a contract the roles actors have to play so that private entities can expand opportunities to maximize the effects of national land infrastructure with their own creativity and originality.

Section 3 Regional Development Through Self-Help; Ideas and Initiatives Led by a Wide Range of Private Entities

Each area promotes regional development with diverse values and amenities through self-help efforts centered on the initiatives and activities of a wide range of private entities taking the following points into account.

(1) Utilization of regional resources and information transmission

Regional resources, as a source of regional development, include the natural environment as well as cultures. Highly competitive resources should be identified, reevaluated and cultivated by focusing on resources mentioned above and by introducing objective external viewpoints. At the same time, highly competitive resources will be shared within and transmitted outside the community. In small- and medium-sized cities and hilly and mountainous area, for example, it is possible to enhance their amenities and create nature-rich residential areas by recognizing their values and utilizing their unique resources, taking into account the good quality of life and abundant nature.

In utilizing regional resources, adding value, branding and differentiation from other areas will be pushed forward. This can be achieved through the introduction of technologies and know-how from the outside the region to establish targeted linkage with universities, companies and research institutions and a combination of primary, secondary and tertiary industries (sixth industry).

Moreover, strategies will be promoted according to individual regional resources. The strategies are divided into regional level strategies where people can see each other's faces, wider-area level which includes cities and agricultural villages, national level and international level.

In transmitting a region's individuality, externally oriented amenities and efforts for regional development, information and communication technology can be powerful tools to overcome challenges in terms of space and distance. Active information transmission, information exchange and network creation at wide-area and national levels will be promoted utilizing information and communication technology. With these efforts, the support of those who regularly visit and purchase local products will be promoted. Moreover, in order to push forward direct linkage at an international level, efforts will be made to transmit information to and exchange with overseas contacts.

(2) Wide ranging participation in regional development; gradual institutionalization

In carrying out regional development, efforts to use skilled human resources from outside the areas including baby boomers with experience and know-how will be pushed forward. Elderly and female residents have already participated in regional development. However, taking into account in the declining and aging national population, the creation of situations that allow for the inclusion of a broad range of entities including young people, residents who commute to outside the region and non-Japanese residents in regional development will be further promoted so that they can be motivated to get involved in activities. This can be achieved by establishing flexible forms of participation in NPO and voluntary community activities. These opportunities should lead to the development of human resources to take part in regional development.

Moreover, regional communication that transcends boundaries of generation and nationality will be promoted, and the loose institutionalization of companies, NPOs, local residents and external human resources will be pushed forward. This can be achieved through seminars, workshops and symposiums, and councils where human resources who are successful in different fields and can gather as the core of regional development. Innovation should be encouraged through exchange between a wide range of entities through these efforts.

In restoring and strengthening regional communities, the utilization of information and communication technologies is effective. In doing so, the construction of a warmer relationship will be promoted utilizing information and communication technology as well as relationships unique to the areas where people can see each other's faces.

In order to utilize information and communication technology, the elimination of blind zones of mobile phones and areas where broadband is unavailable will be pushed forward. Efforts for the further improvement of the capacities of all local residents - including women and elderly people - to utilize information and communication technology will be promoted.

(3) Securing of funds through "Small circulation of funds" and "Purposeful investments"

In pushing forward regional development, the securing of funds is an important issue. On the other hand, among personal financial assets deposited in regional banks, the proportion actually invested into the areas is not high. Therefore, the securing of funds from the viewpoint of a

“small circulation” of funds will be promoted. This includes external investment and the creation of systems which foster the reinvestment of funds in the region giving investors a real sense of participation.

As for loans to regional companies and community businesses, both lenders and borrowers are faced with the problem of lenders not always being familiar with judging work performance and repayment capacity. Therefore, region-based financing will be promoted utilizing continuous information-sharing relationships between lenders and borrowers. In doing so, it is expected that various measures will be taken including new schemes such as community credit using the mutual assurance of the areas. Moreover, the active utilization of complementation of regional financial institutions' screening capabilities (technical assistance) by existing financial institutions and specialized human resources will be promoted.

Moreover, it is effective to push forward the concept of “purposeful investments.” This indicates the securing of funds by demonstrating the spirit of CSR, which is now wide-spread, to the areas and cultivating motivation to contribute to the areas that individuals from the areas or local residents already possess.

Therefore, awareness will be raised of this opportunity to contribute to regional development. In order to specifically cultivate motivation, various measures will be implemented by developing an environment that facilitates private funding including direct and indirect support from the government. Also, these measures include systems which promote active contribution to regional development, systems by which companies and employees can jointly contribute to the areas including companies matching employees' contributions, public issues which seek buyers specifying a project, NPO banks, community funds and organization of community development funds.

(4) The role of the government in regional development

The government's role in regional development ranges from efforts to attract factories to managing and supporting private entities' initiatives and business minds. Municipalities promote collaboration with a wide range of private entities and take a role in a broad range of services for residents. Prefectures play a role in duties which exceed the boundaries of municipalities. The government will shift from uniform support to management and support for creating new community images, and the development of an environment fostering competitions to enhance the individuality of regional strategies through knowledge and originality in collaboration with prefectures and municipalities. Moreover, in order to implement them, the securing of wide-area transportation/information services is required in order to avoid a bottle neck situation of specific needs for interregional movement and exchange. Furthermore, the development of consultation systems concerning region boosting by establishing linkage between ministries and agencies will be promoted.

On the other hand, in rural communities where maintenance and survival itself are a concern following significant population decline and aging, interactions between residents and the areas are weakening following a reduction in single-person elderly households and a decline in

community functions. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to pay constant attention and to have an understanding of the actual conditions of rural communities and the concerns and desires of residents. Based on this, the government will, for example, consider the future course of public investment/land use promoting consensus building with residents on future images of rural life including merger/restructuring of functions to central rural communities. At the same time, the government provides necessary support for services which meet local residents' demands with regard to their daily lives, utilizing the power of the private sector in medical/welfare services and the transportation of daily necessities, disaster prevention measures for particularly dangerous areas such as snow disposal measures in heavy snowfall areas, handing down unique traditional cultures and customs. Moreover, as for housing, housing lots, farmland and forests, whose resource management level has considerably decreased, consideration will be given to certain measures and systems for promoting their management and utilization from the viewpoint of national land conservation, and the necessary support will be provided.

Furthermore, as for areas facing geographical, natural and social challenges, it is the government's role to support them in accordance with their actual conditions.

As mentioned above, the government should be aware of its own role and appropriately instigate initiatives and activities of a wide range of private entities. It is expected that this will lead to the promotion of regional development by the "new public."