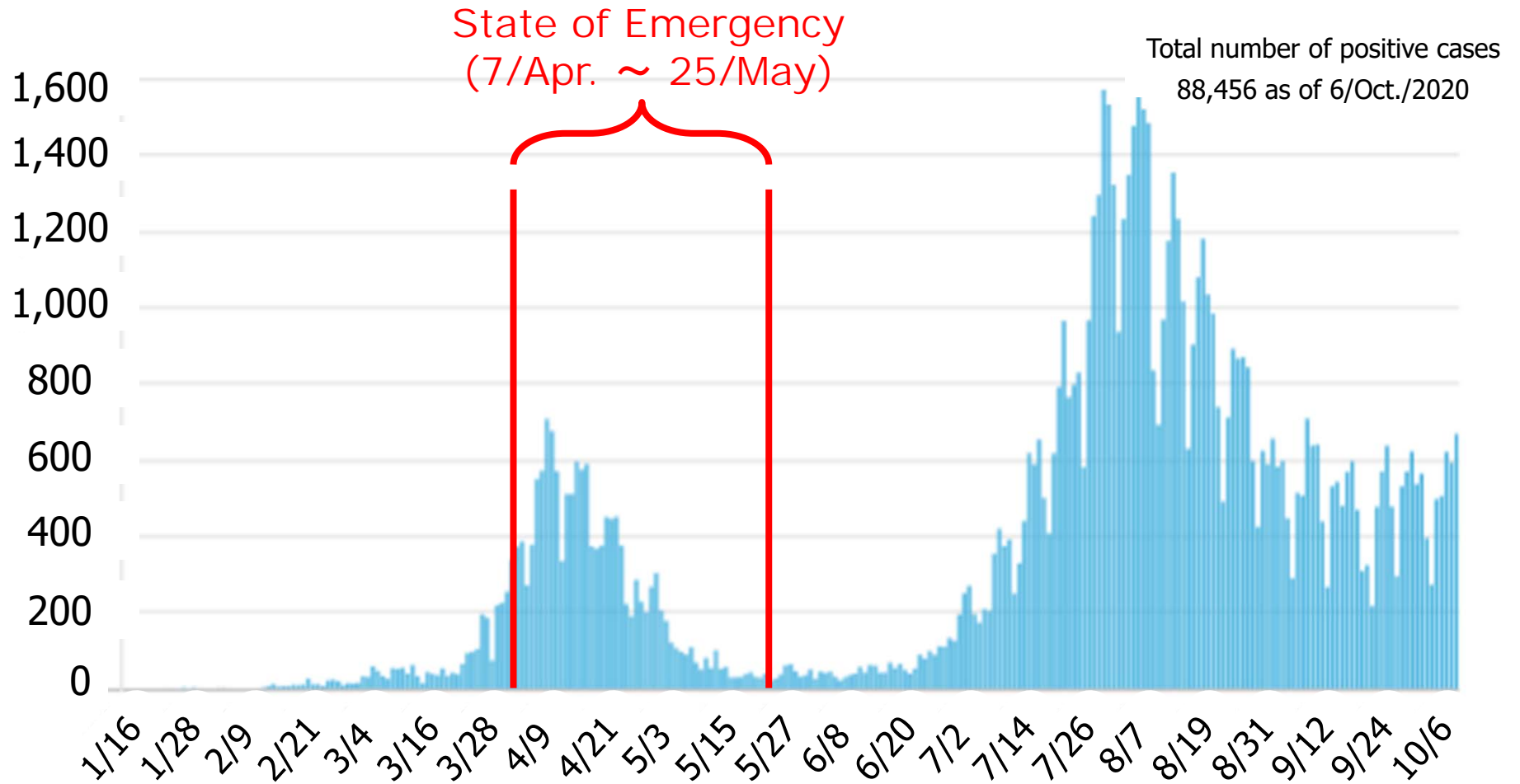




Japan Customs' Response to COVID-19

20-22 October 2020
WTO Trade Facilitation Committee

COVID-19 situation in Japan



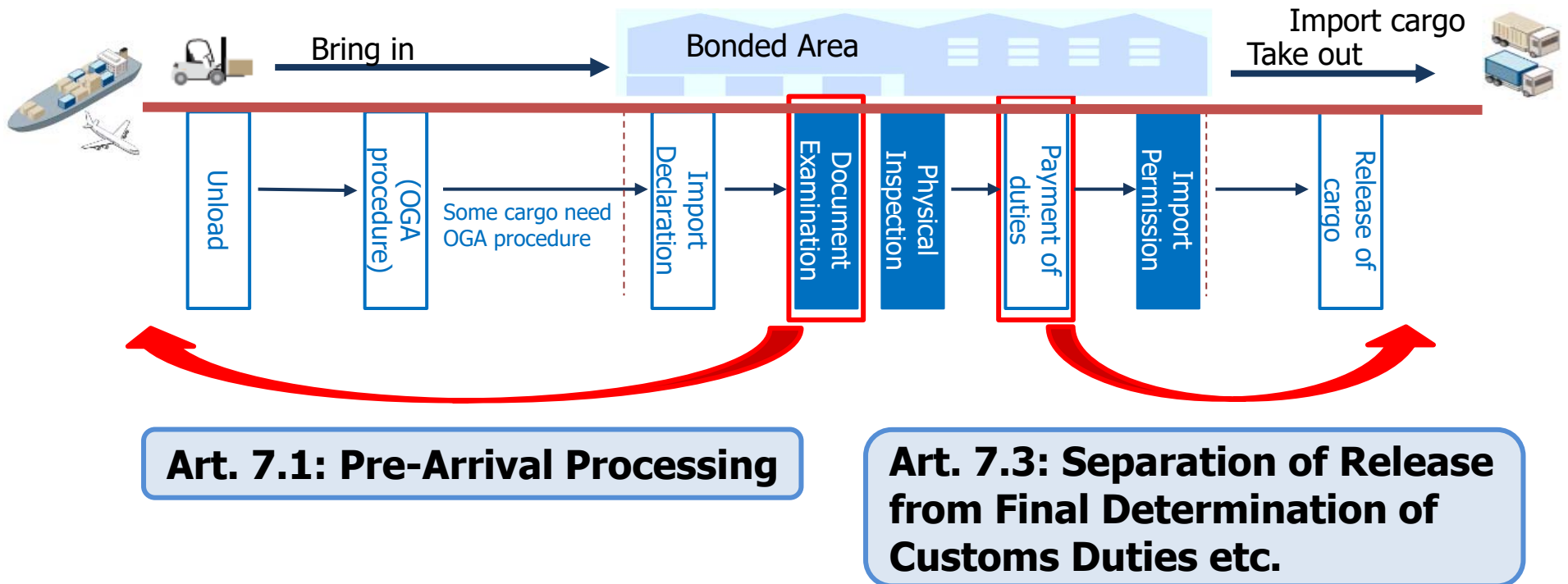
On 7th April, a State of Emergency was declared

Japan Customs' Response to COVID-19

1. Measures facilitating customs procedures for relief goods etc.
2. Measures reducing person-to-person interactions
3. Measures providing flexibility in timelines

1. Measures Facilitating Customs Procedures for Relief Goods etc.

Japan Customs has been implementing the following TFA provisions, which facilitate customs procedures.



1. Measures Facilitating Customs Procedures for Relief Goods etc.

In addition, Japan Customs has adopted the following measures to facilitate customs procedures for relief goods relating to countermeasures to the COVID-19.

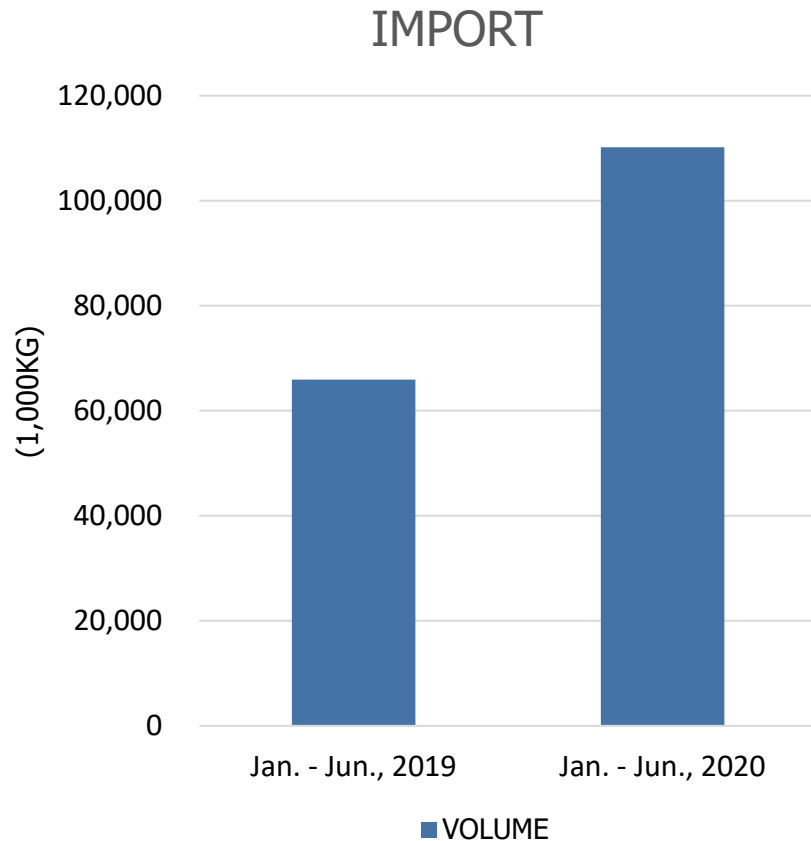
Prioritization of Customs Clearance

Simplification of Import and Export Declaration Forms

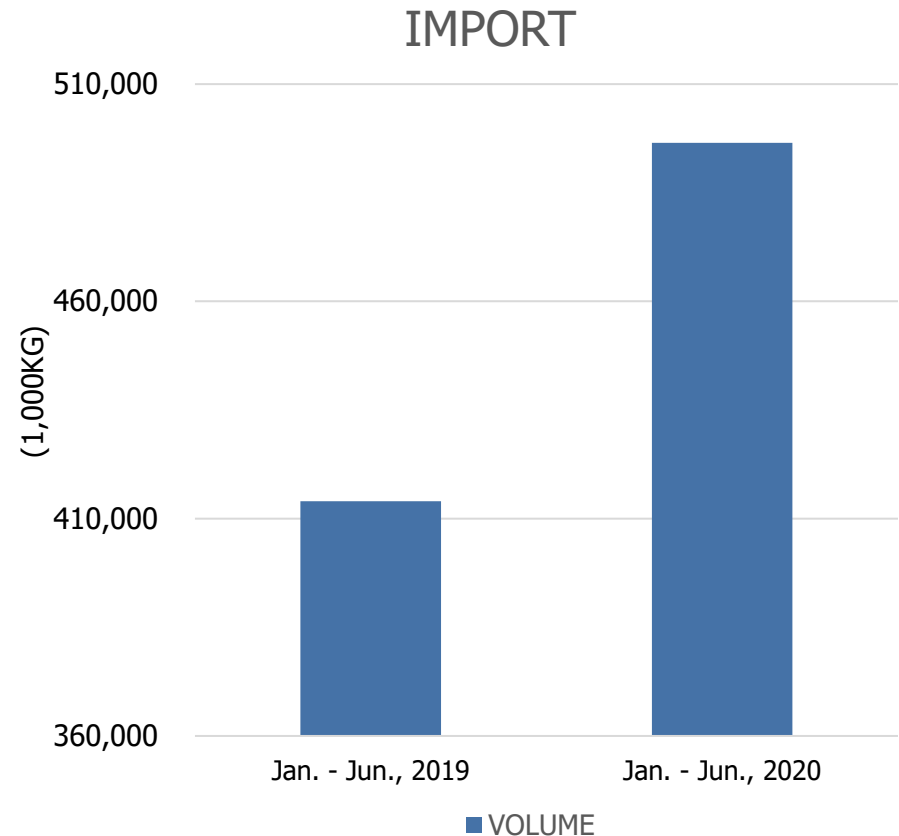
- **Temporary measures**
- **Effective Date:** 3 March 2020
- **Scope:** Relief goods relating to countermeasures to the COVID-19
- **Link to TFA:** Art. 7.8 : Expedited Shipments
Art. 10.1: Formalities and Documentation Requirements

Import Statistics of Relief Goods

A) Cellulose/paper/ textile face-masks



B) Alcohol solution, hand sanitizer, other disinfectant preparations and the like

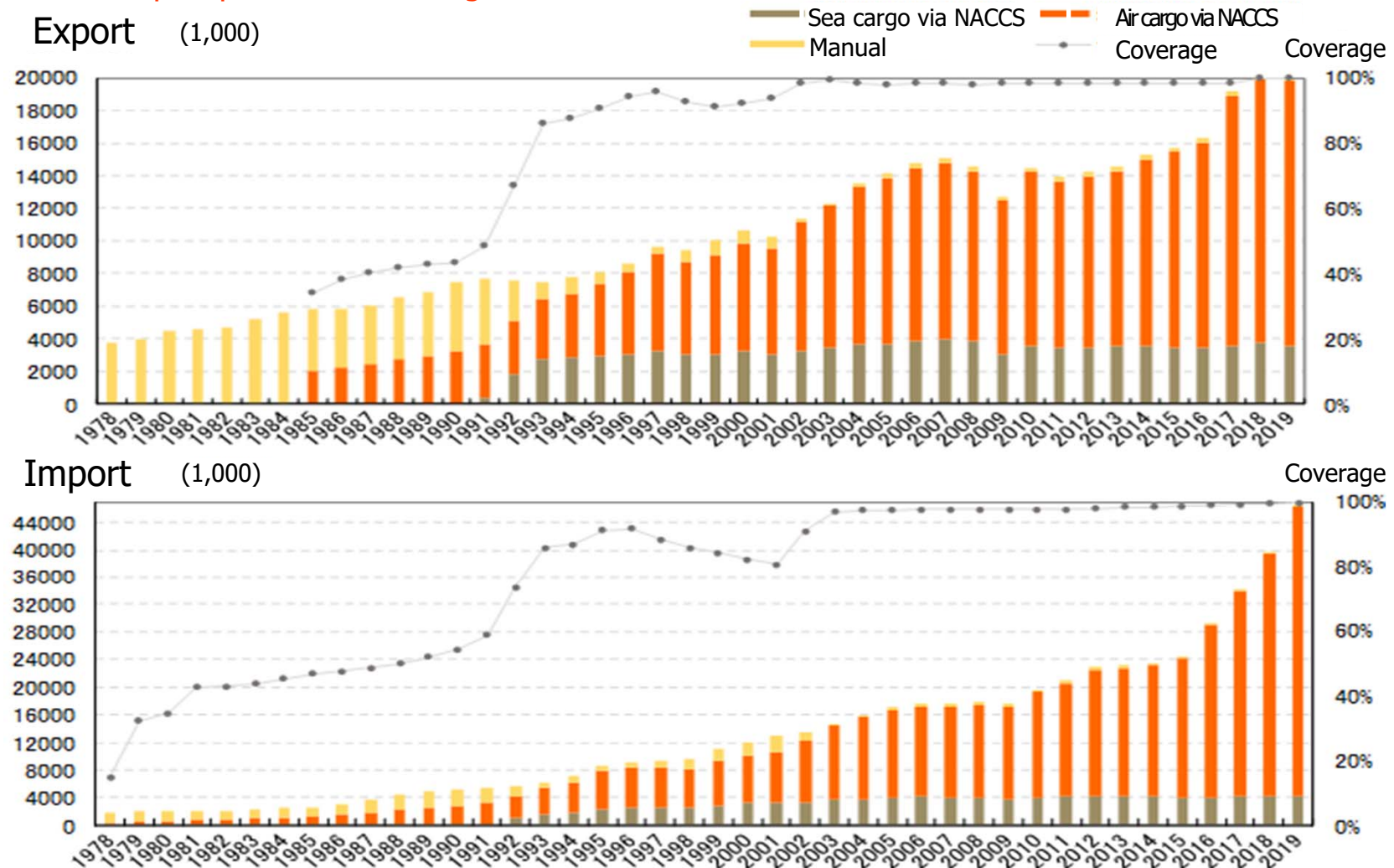


2. Measures Reducing Person-to-Person Interactions

Art. 10.4: Single Window

SW in Japan enables traders to submit declarations and data electronically.

Export and import permissions through NACCS

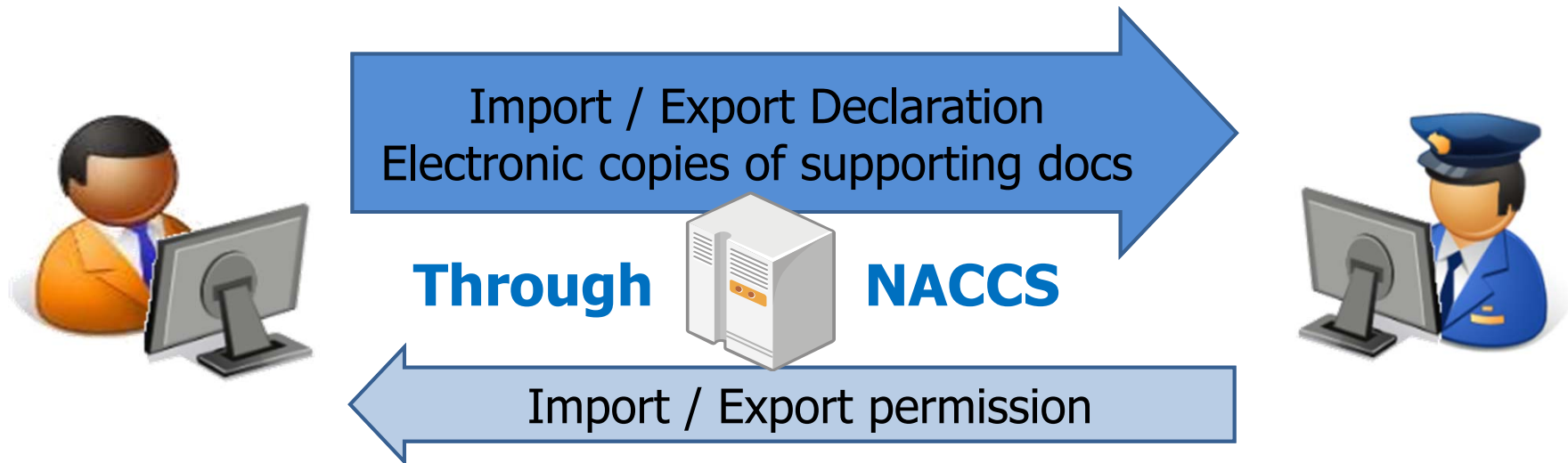


2. Measures Reducing Person-to-Person Interactions

TFA Art. 10.2: Acceptance of Copies

Since 2013, Japan Customs has allowed traders to submit electronic copies of supporting documents in PDF format through NACCS and the coverage of the documents has been expanded.

Invoice, Bill of Lading, Air waybill, Sea waybill, Insurance policy, and Certificate of Origin etc. (as of Oct. 2020)



3. Measures Providing Flexibility in Timelines

There are two types of measures which can be used to provide traders and other stakeholders with flexibility in timelines of customs procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(1) Deferment of Submission of C/O Due to Disaster

- **Measure:** Deferment of submission of C/O when importers have unavoidable reasons for deferring approved by the Director-General of regional customs, such as a disaster
 - * In principle, an importer needs to submit C/O at the time of import declaration.
 - * This measure can be applied to various cases, including COVID-19 related ones, when specific requirements are met.
- **Benefits:** Alleviation of burden on those affected by disaster

3. Measures Providing Flexibility in Timelines

(2) Extension of Time Limit Due to Disaster

- **Measure:** Extension of time limits for customs procedures, including those for payment of customs duties in certain cases, due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Temporary measures**
- **Effective date:** 11 May 2020
 - * Minister of Finance designated the influence of COVID-19 infections as a designated disaster across Japan under the Customs Act on 11 May 2020.
 - * This measure is applied retrospectively to the procedures affected by COVID-19 infections on or after 1 Feb. 2020
- **Benefits:** Alleviation of burden on those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic

◆ Customs Act

Art. 2-3: Extension of Time Limit Due to Disaster

- The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake struck Japan on 17 Jan. 1995 and caused massive damage to the area around Kobe City.
- On 17 Feb. 1995, the special temporary act to alleviate the burden on those who had been affected by the earthquake was enacted. It includes a measure to extend time limits for payment of customs duties.
- On 29 Mar. 1996, the Customs Act was amended to create Art. 2-3 so that the Japanese Government could adopt the above-mentioned measure in a more flexible manner.

Conclusion

- ◆ **To prepare for possible similar future crises, it will be useful to share and learn from the WTO members' experiences regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of the implementation of the TFA.**
- ◆ **It is found that the measures stipulated in the TFA are effective to tackle the challenges posed by the pandemic due to the way that they enable traders to obtain relief goods etc. smoothly and operate with limited person-to-person interactions.**
- ◆ **Therefore, there is no doubt that accelerated implementation of TFA provisions will enhance the members' ability to combat the pandemic.**



Thank you for your kind attention