

8. Actions for Appointing Women to Executive Positions

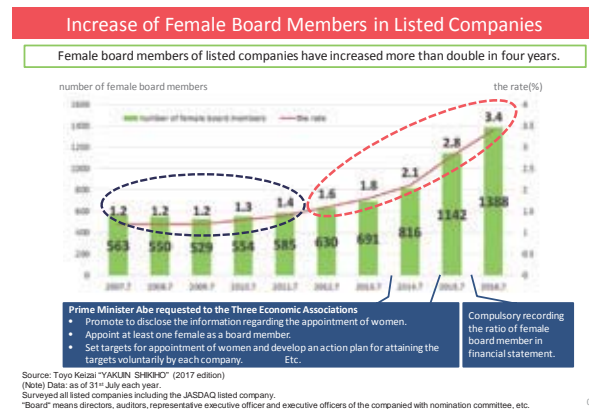
■ Current number of women executives at listed companies

The promotion of women's active participation is essential for the sustainable economic growth of Japan, and constitutes a priority issue of the Abe Cabinet. If women are involved in corporate decision-making, then diverse values will be reflected in the management of the company. At organizations receptive to diverse values, innovation will be promoted and the company's competitiveness and evaluation by society will improve. The company's value will also rise. Therefore, since its inauguration, the second Abe Cabinet has undertaken a number of efforts, including the Prime Minister's request to the business community in April 2013 to begin by appointing at least one woman to an executive position at all listed companies. As a result, the number of women executives at listed companies has steadily risen, more than doubling in four years between 2012 and 2016.

Nonetheless, the ratio of women executives at listed companies still stands at 3.4% (as of end of July 2016). In the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality established in December 2015, the government set a new target to increase the proportion of women in executive positions at listed companies to 5% as quickly as possible and to 10% by 2020, and the government is engaged in further efforts.



The Prime Minister's request to the business community



Increase of Female Board Members in Listed Companies

■ Program for training women executives

In FY2016, a Cabinet Office taskforce comprised of experts studied how women professionals could be effectively trained to serve in executive positions and what kind of environments need to be created to this end, with a view to developing women candidates for future leadership positions and increasing the proportion of women in executive positions at listed companies. In addition, the Cabinet Office reported model program proposals to train women candidates for executive positions and globally active leaders, taking into account studies on leading efforts in other countries as well as seminars for the development of women leaders conducted by overseas business school professors and experts.

■ Establishment of Informational Website on Women Executives, bulletin board on situation of women executives

The Cabinet Office established "The Informational Website on Women Executives" that centralizes and disseminates information regarding the appointment of women to executive positions at listed companies (end of September 2016). This website lists the number and proportion of women executives at approximately 3,600 listed companies by industry. In addition, it introduces the government's initiatives as well as developments in capital markets related to the evaluation of companies where women are actively participating.

Furthermore, the "Situation of Women Executives at Listed Companies in 2017."* was published in poster format. It lists the companies that are promoting the active participation of women, including listed companies that already have 10% women executives and listed companies that have one or more women directors.

These initiatives are expected to make the situation of the appointment of women executives in all of Japan visible and scale them up to the rest of the country.

* Compiled based on the situation of the appointment of women executives (director, auditor, and executive officer) as of the end of July



bulletin board on situation of women executives

■ Executive Program for Women Leaders

In January 2017, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) held a cross-company training for women candidates for managerial positions at various companies, and invited professors from Harvard Business School. This program aims to provide knowledge and training on thinking necessary for addressing global management issues for women. On the final day of the program, METI held the closing reception among political and business leaders to gain momentum for further empowerment of women at companies and to disseminate information for people in Japan and overseas.

Through these initiatives, METI has sought to create an atmosphere for strong management of Japanese companies by adding diverse perspectives.