

14. International Cooperation

- In September 2013, **Prime Minister Abe expressed his intention to strengthen support for realizing “A Society where Women Shine” in his address at the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly.** Specifically, he announced that Japan would implement ODA in excess of \$3 billion in the three years from 2013 to 2015, based on the three pillars: “Facilitating Women’s Active Role/Participation in Society and Women’s Empowerment,” “Enhancing Japan’s Efforts in the area of Women’s Health Care, as a part of promotion of universal health coverage (UHC),” and “Supporting Women’s Participation and Protecting their rights in the area of Peace and Security.” Japan has fully implemented it. Moreover, Japan implemented ODA in excess of USD 3 billion over the three years from 2016 to 2018, focusing on “Promoting Women’s and Girls’ Rights,” “Improving an Enabling Environment for Women and Girls to Reach their Full Potentials,” and “Advancing Women’s Leadership in Politics, Economy and Other Public Fields”.
- **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which was adopted by the UN in September 2015 as the successor to the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), includes a specific goal to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” Japan launched the SDGs Promotion Headquarters headed by Prime Minister Abe in May 2016, and formulated “The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” in December, as Japan’s national strategy for the implementation of the SDGs. The Headquarters decided the “SDGs Action Plan 2018” in December 2017, stipulating the basic three directions of Japan’s SDGs Model; promotion of “Society 5.0” that corresponds to SDGs, regional vitalization, and empowerment of next generations and women. Since 2018, the Headquarters have been updating the Action Plan every year building upon the previous Action Plan, to further strengthen and expand Japan’s efforts to promote the SDGs.
- The Development Cooperation Charter decided by the Cabinet in February 2015 continues to promote human security as one of a basic policy, and **upholds the “promotion of women’s participation” as one of the implementation principles of development cooperation.**
- In September 2015, **“Basic Design for Peace and Health”** was adopted as a guideline for Global Health policy under the Development Cooperation Charter. It sets a goal of achieving universal health coverage (UHC), to ensure affordable access to basic health services for all whenever they need them throughout their life. It also states that services should be provided in women-focused areas, such as nutrition improvement, maternal and child health, and sexual and reproductive health.
- In May 2016, Japan launched the **“Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment”** as one of thematic policies under the Development Cooperation Charter. The Strategy focuses on 1) promotion of women’s and girl’s rights, 2) improving an enabling environment for women and girls to reach their full potentials, and 3) advancing women’s leadership in politics, economy and other public fields. On the occasion of the G7 Ise-Shima Summit (May 2016), Japan announced its plan to train roughly 5,000 female administrative officers and assist education for approximately 50,000 female students over the three-year period of 2016-18 which is being steadily implemented. Moreover, on the occasion of the fifth World Assembly for Women: WAW! in March 2019, Prime Minister Abe announced to **provide supports of women’s and girls’ education for over 4 million people to empower women in developing countries by 2020.**
- At the Seventh **Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7)** held in Yokohama in August 2019, particular emphasis was given to support for women entrepreneurs and empowerment of women in the Yokohama Declaration 2019. In addition, in one of six plenary sessions, participants discussed the ways to empower women and youth. Moreover, Japan announced to support women empowerment through financial contribution to AFAWA (Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa) via We-Fi and JICA’s Private Sector Investment Finance.
- Japan has been **strengthening partnership with UN Women.** Japan contributions amounted to approximately US\$2 million in 2013 and has exceeded US\$24 million in 2018. Japan became the fourth largest contributor among the member countries. Through UN Women, Japan supports Middle East countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey where Syrian refugees flee. UN Women’s projects Also supports conflict affected African countries including Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Mali and, South Sudan. They secured/built women’s centers based on women’s needs including those who have suffered sexual and gender based violence. The projects provide



Syrian refugee women are getting skill training in Jordan (c)UN Women

women psychological and social support and economic empowerment such as skill training and cash for work. They also enhance women's participation in peace building, peace process and reconciliation process through projects by making resilient community with women's empowerment to prevent violent extremism, and drafting WPS national action plan for Lebanon, Sri Lanka and East Timor. Prime Minister Abe was selected as the "HeForShe champion." Moreover, the UN Women Japan Liaison Office opened in April 2015 as a regional network hub and the only one of its kind in Asia to be a network hub in the region.

- Japan has been strongly supporting the projects implemented by **the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG-SVC) on Sexual Violence in Conflict** and cooperating with other stakeholders in the international society. Japan has contributed US\$ 11 million (the second-largest contribution) to the Office from 2014 to 2019 and has been enhancing its cooperation with the Office regarding the response to sexual violence in conflict. We have provided support to their projects which enhance access to justice of victims and host country's judicial system in Middle East and African countries, such as DRC, Central Africa, Somalia and Iraq. In August 2019, SRSG Ms. Pramila Patten held a meeting with the former Foreign Minister Taro Kono in the occasion of her visit in Japan for TICAD7.
- In May 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Secretary General of NATO, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen agreed on **dispatching a Japanese staff to the NATO Headquarters as Japan-NATO cooperation in the field of women, peace and security** in the meeting. A female Self Defense Force (SDF) officer was dispatched to the NATO Headquarters in December of the same year (the second female SDF officer has been dispatched since July 2017). In the office of the Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, these officers have contributed to incorporating the perspective of gender equality in various activities of the NATO and provided advice for encouraging women's participation. From November 2019, the third female SDF officer was dispatched to the NATO HQ Consultation, Command Control Staff to promote Japan-NATO cooperation in new fields.
- In 2015, **Japan launched its first National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and relevant resolutions and the revised second edition of NAP was adopted in March 2019.** The plan targets for both international and national settings to implement WPS agenda, and focuses not only in conflict but also natural disaster situation. Japan has produced annual reports for monitoring and evaluation of implementation of NAP with review by external Review Committee consisting of NGOs and experts. In April 2019 at the Foreign Minister's Meeting, G7 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Partnership Initiative was launched to advance implementation of WPS agenda. Sri Lanka became a partner country for Japan, where we support to draft WPS National Action Plan and provide empowerment support for female headed household including conflict affected widows due to Sri Lanka's internal conflict.
- **In the G7 Ise-Shima summit, Japan led the discussion on gender issues as a priority agenda.** The G7 leaders endorsed the "G7 Guiding Principles for Capacity Building of Women and Girls" and the "Women's Initiative in Developing STEM Career (WINDS)," focusing on women's empowerment through education, training and promoting women's active role, especially in the field of natural science and technology. Also, the "G7 Ise-Shima vision for Global Health," which was adopted under Japan's initiative, refers to women's health and endorses the need for achieving universal health coverage (UHC) to ensure health services to all individuals throughout life.
- At the following G7 Summits, gender equality has been one of the priority agendas. The G7 Biarritz Summit was held in July 2019 under the French Presidency, the gender equality was discussed under the theme of Fighting Inequalities. As a result, "Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" was adopted. In the session on Africa, the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in Africa was discussed and the document of "Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship in Africa" was issued as annex.
- In June 2019, Japan hosted G20 Osaka Summit and the leaders discussed women's empowerment as one of the main issues. Three topics were mainly discussed and included in the Leader's Declaration: Women's labor participation promotion, Enhancing support for girls and women's education including STEM area and engagement with women business leaders and entrepreneurs. In addition, as a part of official programs, Japan held the Leaders' Special Event on Women's Empowerment where the leaders of G20 and international organizations participated and they reaffirmed G20's commitment to women's empowerment.
- In July 2017, **the government of Japan concluded the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol** which aims to prevent, suppress, and combat such crimes as well as to facilitate international cooperation to protect victims. Through the conclusion of the Protocol, the government has enhanced its cooperation with foreign governments to jointly address trafficking in persons, of which women and children are prone to become victims.

- In March 2019, Japan held the fifth **World Assembly for Women (WAW!)** concurrently with W20, one of the engagement groups of G20, with 3,000 participants and 82 top leaders and experts from all over the world discussed gender mainstreaming in different fields.



WAW! 2019
(Photo provided: Cabinet
Public Information Office)

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JICA has been promoting “gender mainstreaming,” a comprehensive approach to incorporate the perspective of gender in all stages of planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation in all programs and projects to clarify gender-based development issues. JICA is focusing on five priority areas to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment: 1) promoting women’s economic empowerment, 2) ensuring women’s rights and security, 3) promoting women’s education and lifetime health, 4) promoting gender-responsive governance, 5) promoting gender-responsive infrastructure.

“Project for Strengthening the Operation of Hotline for Counseling and Supporting Trafficked Survivors” (2018-2021)”

The issues concerning trafficking in persons (TIP) are getting increasingly serious in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Women and children, both girls and boys, are especially vulnerable and trafficked women may require different support as they may be trafficked for brokered marriage and sexual exploitation. JICA has been working on TIP issues since 2009 through Technical Cooperation Projects in the Region, focusing mainly on “protection and reintegration of trafficked persons” and “prevention of trafficking.”

In Vietnam, JICA carried out “Project for the Establishment of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Hotline in Viet Nam” (2012-2016) and supported the establishment of Anti-TIP hotline on preventing TIP and supporting trafficked persons at the Central level and in the target provinces. Continuously, JICA has been implementing “Project for Strengthening the Operation of Hotline for Counseling and Supporting Trafficked Survivors” (2018-2021) to support strengthening Referral/information sharing systems through cooperation between relevant agencies at the central and provincial levels, operating Anti-TIP Hotline in regional call centers in three regions in the country, and raising public awareness of the Anti-TIP Hotline.

Besides Vietnam, JICA has been implementing “Project on Capacity Development and Promotion of Networking on Assisting Victims of Trafficking” (2018-2021) in Myanmar, and has implemented “Project on Capacity Development on Assisting Victims of Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-regional Countries” (2015-2019) in Thailand, as the second phase respectively. Also, the Thai project had actively put efforts for knowledge sharing in the Region, and organized the 9th “Mekong Regional Workshop” in January 2019 in which “effective social reintegration” was discussed among the concerned officials and practitioners from the Mekong countries. In addition, the training program “Promotion of Networking among ASEAN Countries on Anti-human Trafficking” is organized in Japan every year, inviting officials and practitioners from related organizations in ASEAN countries, and comprehensive support for strengthening the regional cooperation is explored.



Operation center in Hanoi, Vietnam



Lecture about counselling in
Myanmar

Photo: JICA