

International Cooperation

■ UN ESCAP High Level Intergovernmental Meeting



Plenary meeting at the ESCAP Headquarters in Bangkok.

ESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) held the High Level Intergovernmental Meeting at the ESCAP headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, from September 7 to 10, 2004. Japan sent 14 government delegates headed by Dr. Yoriko Meguro, representative of Japan, to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

At the meeting, government representatives including the Japanese and international organizations' representatives made presentations on their achievements in improving women's status since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing, China. During the meeting, UN ESCAP also held panel discussions and a roundtable meeting to review the regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its regional and global outcomes.

The meeting adopted the report containing the Bangkok Communiqué which will serve as Asia-Pacific's contribution to the global review at the 49th session of the CSW (*Ten-Year Review and Appraisal*) in March 2005.

■ Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality 2004

Aiming at encouraging gender equality from global perspectives, the Cabinet Office held the symposium titled "Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality 2004" by inviting gender equality experts from nations/organisations that share common issues with Japan.

■ Tokyo Symposium

Approximately 150 participants attended the Tokyo Symposium on December 3 at the Center for the Advancement of Working Women (CAWW). At the beginning, H.E. Ms. Lise Bergh, vice minister for Gender Equality Issues, Swedish Ministry of Justice, delivered her keynote speech "Activities on Gender Mainstreaming in the Kingdom of Sweden," explaining gender equality situations and policy philosophies in Sweden as well as the temporary special measures by Swedish government.

After the keynote speech, the symposium held a panel discussion titled "Promotion to Women's Participation

through Temporary Special Measures," moderated by Dr. Yoriko Meguro, Sophia University. Five panelists joined the discussion, such as Dr. Hanna Beate Schoepp-Schilling, a member of UN-CEDAW (the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women); Ms. Yoon Young Sook, director general of the Women's Policy Bureau, Ministry of Gender Equality, Republic of Korea; Professor Miyoko Tsujimura, Tohoku University; Ms. Eiko Kono, Recruit Co., Ltd.; and Ms. Maryrose T. Sylvester, General Electric Company. The panelists discussed how to introduce gender quotas through legislation and how they should encourage diversity.



Panel discussion at Tokyo Symposium.

■ Fukushima Symposium

On December 5, about 220 Fukushima Prefectural residents attended the Fukushima Symposium.

After the keynote speech by Vice Minister Ms. Lise Bergh, the symposium held the panel discussion "World Initiatives on Temporary Special Measures," moderated by Ms. Makiko Arima, president of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, National Committee in Japan. The panelists joined the discussion, such as Dr. Hanna Beate Schoepp-Schilling; Ms. Yoon Young Sook; Ms. Misa Yamashita, GE Toshiba Silicones Co., Ltd.; and Professor Mitsuko Fujino, Fukushima Medical University.



During the panel discussion, Professor Fujino explained the stagnancy in gender equality in Fukushima Prefecture and urged

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the Fukushima Prefectural Government to increase the number of female officials, conduct a survey on Fukushima's working women, and reform gender awareness among top municipal officers.

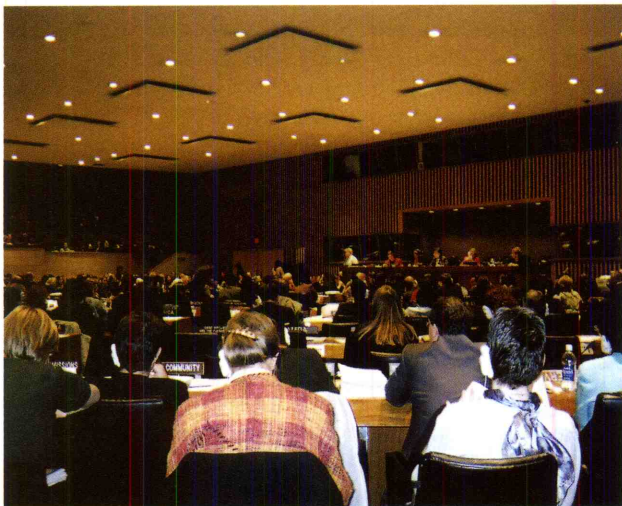
Panelists and floor participants held active discussions on their common issues. When a floor participant remarked "Recently, younger people are generally satisfied with the status quo and don't think reform is necessary," the panelists from Germany and Sweden pointed out that these two countries also have a similar problem. In addition, the panelist from GM explained that GM had the same problem even though it is a global firm.

Fukushima Symposium.



Cooperation with International Organizations

1. UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW)



CSW plenary meeting at UN Headquarters in New York.

The UN CSW is comprised of national representatives from 45 member states elected by the UN Economic and Social Council (term of office: four years). Since elected as a CSW member for the first time in 1957, Japan has maintained its member status except for the 1965 and 1976 elections.

Japan sent a total of 17 government officials, including the delegation head Dr. Yoriko Meguro, to the 48th session of the UN CSW, which was held in the UN headquarters from March 1 to 12, 2004.

At the session, Dr. Meguro made a presentation on the session's themes "the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" and "women and armed conflicts," explaining Japan's gender equality efforts such as education programs, temporary special measures and future generation supportive measures, as well as ODA-based or human-security-based support measures for women under armed conflict.

2. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW is comprised of 23 experts on women's issues, elected by the meeting of States Parties to the

CEDAW (term of office: four years). Since 1987, Japan has been occupying a seat at the committee. Currently, Ms. Fumiko Saiga, the Japanese ambassador to Norway, is the representative of Japan with office term from 2002 to 2006.

In January 2004, the 30th session of CEDAW adopted the general recommendation on "temporary special measures" as stated in Article 4.1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on temporary special measures. The Cabinet Office has notified the related ministries of the recommendation and posted the outline on the Cabinet Office's website. Japan invited one of the CEDAW members to attend the "Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality 2004."

3. APEC Gender Focal Point Network Meeting

The Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN) was established by agreement at the 2nd APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women. The 2nd GFPN Meeting was held in Santiago, Chile, in September 2004. Fifteen member economies including Japan, as well as three APEC fora, participated in the meeting. An Official of the Gender Equality Bureau attended the meeting as Japan's delegation, in order to mutually exchange opinions and related information on the discussion theme and Japanese current situations on gender equality with the representatives from the other member economies. At the meeting, participants agreed to i) urge APEC fora to incorporate gender perspectives into their programs, ii) strengthen gender perspectives in APEC activities at the national level, iii) urge the APEC secretariat to provide stronger supports to GFPN, and iv) provide the necessary supports in order to hold the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women biannually. They also agreed to report to the APEC Senior Official Meeting (SOM).



The 2nd meeting of APEC Gender Focal Point Network in Santiago, Chile.

■ New ODA Medium-term Policy

In August 2003, the Japanese government revised its ODA Charter, which clarifies assurance of fairness as one of the Japanese ODA's basic policies and stresses the importance of paying due attention to gender equality in all phases from the ODA policy planning through the implementation. In this context, the government formulated its new ODA Medium-term Policy in February 2005. In line with the revised ODA Charter, the Policy emphasizes "human security" as an important perspective for Japan's ODA. For example, it calls for extending assistance to the

people, including women who are exposed to threats, based on analysis of information on their needs and locations. In addressing priority issues such as poverty reduction, sustainable growth, addressing global issues, and peace-building, the Policy recognizes the importance of "ensuring equity, including the perspective of gender and considering socially vulnerable people" and expresses that Japan will actively contribute to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries, including elimination of gender gap.

■ Revision of the "Initiative on WID"

Since Japan hammered out the "Initiative on WID (Women in Development)" at the World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, in 1995, the government has been providing ODA to solve gender-related problems in developing countries, mainly focusing on the three areas: women's education, health, and economic and social participation. Ten years after the Beijing Conference, Japan revised its Initiative on WID and established a new "Initiative on Gender and Development (GAD)" to renew Japan's commitment to gender equality for following two reasons: the situations surrounding women have been changing in developing countries; and the international community has been increasingly recognizing an importance of gender mainstreaming in the development cooperation.

The "Initiative on GAD," which was formulated under the new ODA Charter and ODA Medium-term Policy, presents basic approaches on gender mainstreaming on ODA and stipulates the importance of paying due attention to gender issues in all stages of the development assistance. At the same time, the new initiative also explains specific examples of measures that integrated gender perspective for each of the ODA Charter's prioritized issues and describes policy measures that would further encourage gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries, while respecting their ownership. Japan will announce this new initiative at the 49th Session of CSW (*Ten Year Review and Appraisal*) in March, 2005, NY.

■ Seminar for Promotion of Gender Equality II

The Cabinet Office and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) held the "Seminar for Promotion of Gender Equality II" for over a month from November 9 to December 11, 2004.

Japan holds this seminar for division director or higher level officials of national machinery among developing countries. The purpose of this seminar is to contribute towards improving women's status by strengthening the functions of national machineries in each country.

This year, 16 participants attended the seminar from the 15 nations of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Iraq, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tonga, and Yemen.

Participants attended lecture on Japan's government policies, measures taken by Japan's local governments for achieving gender equality, and exchanged their views with specialist committee members of the Council for Gender Equality. The participants had active discussions among themselves, exchanging information and opinions on the



Trainees are listening for lecture.

measures taken by national machineries in their own countries. As an outcome of this seminar, the participants prepared and reported to each other the action plans their national machineries would carry out in the future.

■ Seminar for Promotion of Education for Girls and Women

The National Women's Education Center (NWECC) held the "Seminar for Promotion of Education for Girls and Women" for about four weeks from February 11 to March

11, 2004, commissioned by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Eleven participants from nine countries (Burkina Faso, Haiti, Iran, Mali, Mauritania, Peru,

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Senegal, Yemen, and Zimbabwe) attended the seminar.

This seminar aims at identifying the present situations and problems in terms of women's education and acquiring philosophies and information that are necessary to eliminate gender educational gaps in developing countries.

International Training Course on Processing Women's Information

The National Women's Education Center (NWEC) held the "International Training Course on Processing Women's Information" for 10 days from September 28 to October 7, 2004. This program provides training sessions for female government officials and female NGO leaders in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan. This year, 25 trainees from 19 nations participated in the program.

This program aims at enhancing women's skills to use spreadsheets, presentation software, HTML, and other various information-processing techniques for sending women-related information in an effective manner. In order to deepen understandings on Japan's women-related facilities and women issues, NWEC held "Presentation and Exchange Session with Women from the Asia-Pacific Region" in cooperation with CAWW (Center for the Advancement of Working Women). In this event, the trainees and Japanese participants exchanged viewpoints and deepened their mutual understandings.

Through lectures and discussions on Japan's female education programs and women's problems, as well as site visits to Japan's elementary and junior high schools, participants deepened their understandings about educational policies that would contribute to improving women's status.



Training session on data processing.

Women's Empowerment in the Rehabilitation Development Process in the Philippines

Before the September 1996 peace agreement between the Filipino government and the anti-government groups, the Mindanao Island in the southern Philippines suffered from 30-year long armed conflicts that significantly devastated the socioeconomic structures of the island. Particularly, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is one of the poorest areas in the Philippines because it was the bloodiest battlefield during the armed conflicts.



Women participated in the planning process of reconstruction development project.

As ARMM still suffers from deteriorated poverty problems due to the past fierce battles, Japan has launched the ¥2.5 billion loan project via JBIC to restore basic infrastructures under the ownership of regional residents. This yen loan project has financed community development programs (e.g., education, healthcare, and water supply/sewage systems projects) and local infrastructure development projects, including road repair works and community center construction projects.

Even after the armed conflicts, women suffer from severe conditions as widows are usually faced with poverty. In addition, women might suffer spousal violence if their husbands are spiritually wounded due to their bitter battle experiences. In this context, gender perspectives are absolutely necessary for rehabilitation and reconstruction aid projects. In the case of this ARMM project, community groups consisting of local residents will play leading roles in the planning and implementation phases. By encouraging widows to actively participate in the project, Japan supports women's empowerment, expecting that women will play important roles in the peace creation process. As women are more likely to fall into poverty, Japan also pays due attention so that women will surely benefit from the reconstruction project.

WID-RELATED TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR 2004

No.	Training Course	Period	No. of trainees	Target
1	OISCA Rural Life Improvement and Community Development for Women	Jan 19 - Dec 18	15	Advocates of agriculture and lifestyle improvement and/or local female supervisors
2	Seminar on Women in Environment and Development	Jan 19 - Mar 10	10	Government officials and NGO workers in charge of environment conservation and/or women issues
3	Seminar on Women's Entrepreneurship Development - Training for program managers	Feb 24 - Mar 27	8	Government officials and NGO workers promoting economic empowerment of women
4	Seminar for Promotion of Education for Girls and Women	Feb 11 - Mar 11	11	Government officials and managerial staff in charge of developing and promoting education for women and girls
5	Community Health Services	Mar 22 - Jul 9	8	Government officials and NGO workers with experience in administration of public health programs
6	Counter-measure for Improvement of Maternal & Health Indices II	Apr 26 - Jun 13	9	Physicians and/or senior medical officers involved in formulating national policies for public health and medical treatment
7	Seminar on Policies to Mainstream Gender for Government Officers	Jun 14 - Jul 18	12	Government officials engaged in formulating policies to improve the status of women
8	Seminar on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health	Jun 22 - Jul 18	14	Government officials and NGO workers in charge of the administration, planning, and implementation of adolescent reproductive and sexual health education programs
9	Reproductive Health Seminars for NGO Senior Officers	Aug 31 - Sept 26	13	Senior government officials and NGO workers responsible for the administration, planning, and implementation of RH/FP programs
10	Empowerment of Rural Women II	Aug 30 - Nov 6	12	Technical experts and government officials in charge of providing support to rural women
11	Seminar on Promotion of Gender Equality II	Nov 9 - Dec 11	16	Senior officials of national machineries promoting gender equality
12	Nutrition and Diet Improvement for Women Leaders II	Nov 16 - Jan 30	8	Officials of national and public institutions involved in providing guidance on nutrition, hygiene and improved dietary habits

