

Activities of Local Governments

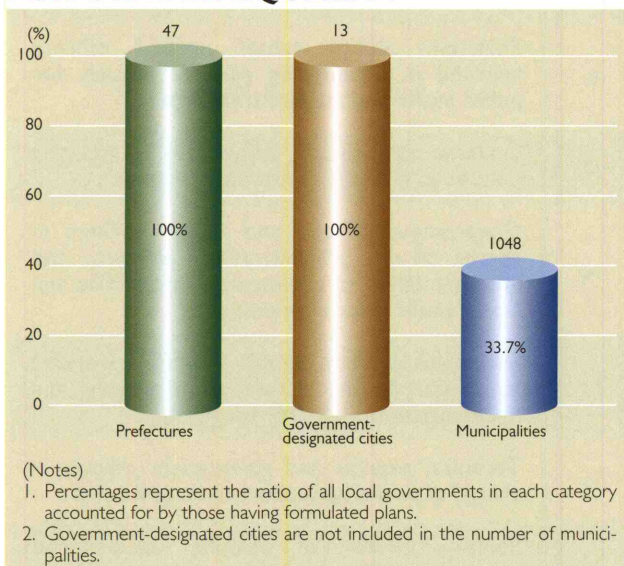
Status of the Promotion of Gender Equality in Local Public Bodies

Local governments have been promoting measures that consider local circumstances and comply with national policies toward the realization of a gender-equal society.

They have also been pressing ahead with the enactment of ordinances on gender equality. Forty-six prefectures and 252 municipalities have enacted ordinances (known to the Gender Equality Bureau as of January 19, 2005), and determined basic principles for gender equality.

Plans for gender equality have been formulated in all prefectures and 13 government-designated cities. However, no more than 34.0% of municipalities had such plans.

FORMULATION OF PLANS FOR GENDER EQUALITY



The average percentage of female members of advisory councils and committees stood at 28.3% in prefectures and 27.2% in government-designated cities, and the trend is for this to rise. Analysis of the percentage of female members of advisory councils and committees established in municipalities in accordance with laws, government ordinances or local regulations reveals that circumstances varied significantly. Although the overall average stood at 19.8%, female representation exceeded 30% in 162 municipalities, and ten towns and villages remained without a single female committee member.

Furthermore, the average percentage of women in managerial positions (positions equivalent to or higher than section chief in the central government) stood at 4.9% in prefectures and 6.4% in government-designated cities, and this is rising gradually.

This percentage stands at 7.6% on average at the municipality level. Women occupy more than 10% of managerial positions in 860 municipalities, while 1,169 municipalities (37.4%) do not have any female officers in that positions.

Women accounted for 6.9% of assembly members at prefectures and government-designated cities. 37% of municipalities do not have any female assembly member. There are 4 female governors (8.5% as of the end of December 2003) and 5 female deputy governors (7.7%) at the prefecture level. At the municipality level, there are 7 female city/ward mayors (1.0% as of the end of December 2003), 6 female town mayors (0.3% as of the end of December 2003) and one female village mayor (0.2% as of the end of December 2003).

(Note) Unless specified otherwise, figures are correct as of April 1, 2003 (March 31 in some cases).

“Japan Women’s Conference 2004 at Matsuyama”

The year 2004 was the 30th anniversary of International Women’s Year, the 20th anniversary of Japanese ratification of CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), and the 10th anniversary of Asian first World Women Conference held in Beijing, China. In such a memorable year, “Japan Women’s Conference 2004 at Matsuyama” was held on October 22 and 23 in Matsuyama City, Shikoku with the theme, “Let’s get together, talk and seek a new relationship!”

The Conference started with the keynote speech, “10 years since the World Women Conference in Beijing: What kind of role has the Plan of Action been playing?” by Haniwa Natori, Director-General, Gender Equality Bureau, followed by symposiums and sectional meetings of 15 themes. The Conference provided an excellent opportunity to discuss future directions for a new gender-equal society and seek new relationships between men and women, between citizens and the government, and between human beings and nature. This conference was very successful

because many people with common values got together, talked, and learned many things.

At the end of the conference, participants pledged to create a real gender equal society where all people are self-reliant, respect their different personalities, accept and support one another’s diverse lifestyles, and are able to live their lives to the full.



Keynote speech at the symposium