

June 30, 2016 (Thu) 8:45

APEC WEF 2016 High Level Policy Dialogue on Women and the Economy

Keynote Address for High Level Policy Dialogue

[English]

- Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.
- I'm Fumiko Hayashi, Mayor of Yokohama. I'm very grateful to be able to give the keynote address here again this year. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Chair, Minister Marcela Huaita Alegre, and everyone else involved.

- I have participated in discussions related to women and the economy since Yokohama hosted the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in 2010. The empowerment of women was added to the growth strategy for the first time at this leaders' meeting. The following year, in the San Francisco Declaration adopted under Chair Clinton, priority areas were specified and we promised to take concrete action among all APEC economies.
- Since then, the Women and the Economy Forum has evolved to promote not only discussion but action. By sharing issues and best practices, we improve our efforts, encourage networking among participants in diverse positions and steadily advance women's economic participation across all of APEC.
- However, the extent of this participation varies by economy and region and even as IT development and economic globalization make progress, we have not reached a point where all women can express their individuality and ability. Barriers are still firmly in place. We are still only half-way to success.

- As mayor of Yokohama, Japan's largest municipality with a population of 3.73 million, I have worked hard to advance measures in line with citizen life and break down all kinds of barriers.
- Aiming to be Japan's easiest and most rewarding city for women to work in, we are pioneering efforts to eliminate childcare waiting lists. Using "The act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace" enforced this spring in Japan as a tailwind, we are also prioritizing efforts to change labor customs such as long hours and increase the number of women in managerial and executive positions.

- Furthermore, Yokohama was among the first to focus on the risk of women being forced to bear both the burden of child-raising and parent care, and began to conduct field surveys and take action. These measures have pressured the government to survey all of Japan.
- It is because we are a city in tune with actual citizen life that we can uncover latent issues and implement highly effective measures that address needs. I am convinced that our efforts and achievements will help solve nationwide issues and spread even beyond national borders.

- The initiatives we've advanced to empower women also lead to increased diversity and are drawing many people and businesses to Yokohama. We are the top municipality in Japan for number of foreign company headquarters and academic or R&D institutions.
- Additionally, next May, Yokohama will host the 50th annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank, a leader in support for Asia's development. Yokohama and the ADB have long been deepening their partnership in developing sustainable cities, and we will strengthen the movement to empower women over the coming year.

- I have learned much from the discussions here in Lima this year and I hope to continue to play my part in supporting the global empowerment of women.
- If we all come together as governments, cities, international institutions, companies, NPOs and otherwise to combine our strength, there is no barrier we cannot overcome. The APEC-WEF framework has that power. Let us continue to strive to reach that day in which the global empowerment of women is nothing out of the ordinary.
- Thank you.

(approx. 600 words)