

The 1st Meeting  
of the ASEAN +3 Committee on Women

Bandar Sri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

*“Reducing the Feminization of Poverty with  
the Rights Based Approach”*



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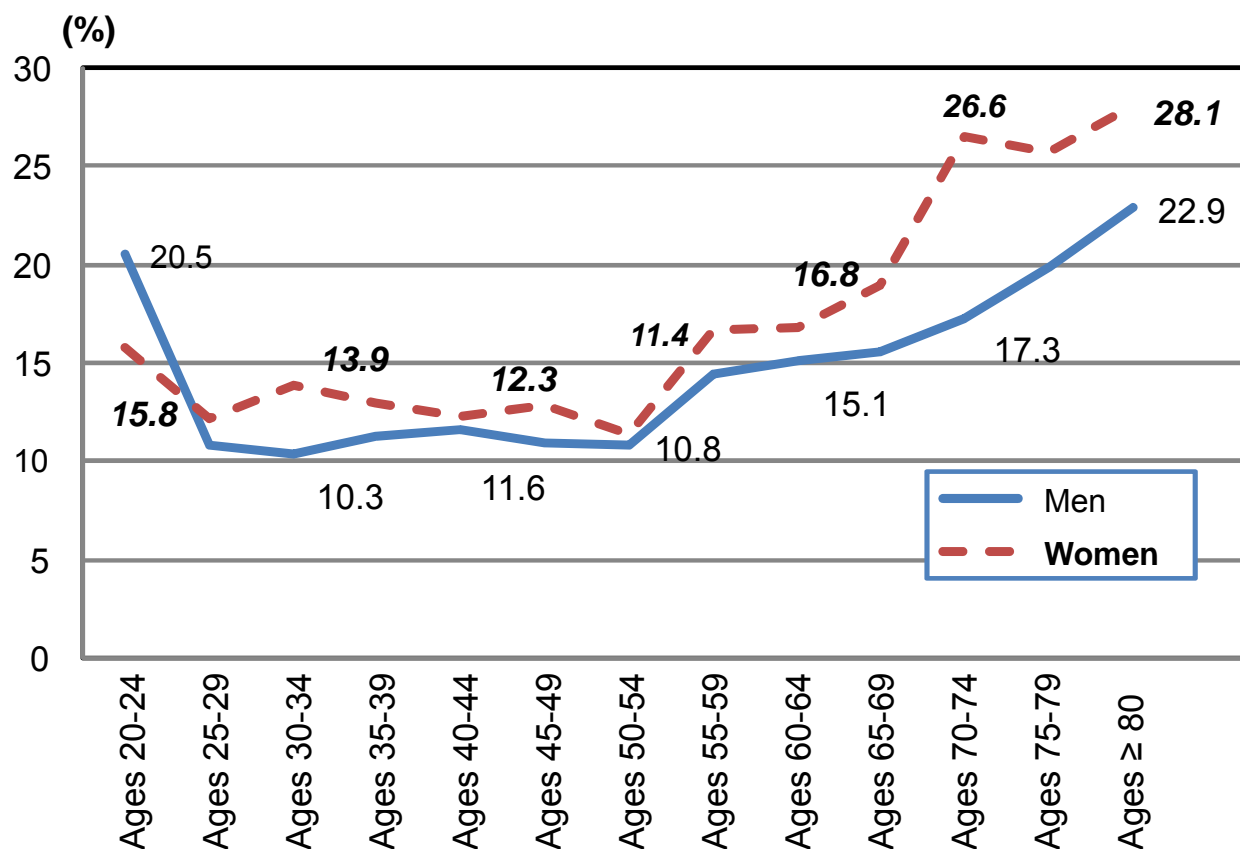
# 1. Introduction

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- Council for Gender Equality
  - A Japanese government consultative body to address important national issues
  
- Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Gender Impact Assessment and Evaluation
  - Monitoring the implementation of government measures
  - Studying the influence of government measures on men and women
  
- “Actual Situation of Men and Women Facing Financial Difficulties in the Context of New Trends in the Economy and Society”
  - Studying the actual situation and background of people with financial difficulties and the implementation status of government measures, from a viewpoint of gender equality

## 2. Actual Situation of Financial Difficulties Faced by Women (1)

- Higher poverty rates for women than for men in most age groups
- The disparity widens as they age.



Source: Data from “Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions (2007)” by Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare

Note: The relative poverty rate is defined as the share of the population in households with incomes below 50% of the median.

## 2. Actual Situation of Financial Difficulties Faced by Women (2)

- Higher poverty rates, particularly in aged single women and mother-child families
- Transmission of poverty to the next generation observed in mother-child families

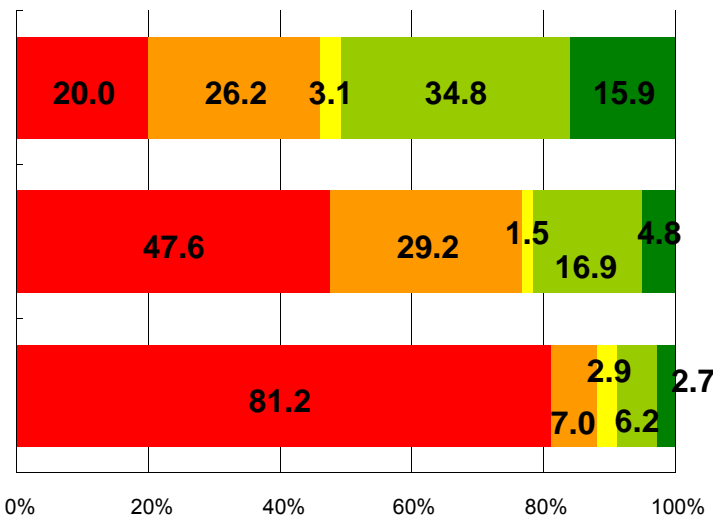


# 3. Background Information of Women with Financial Difficulties (1)

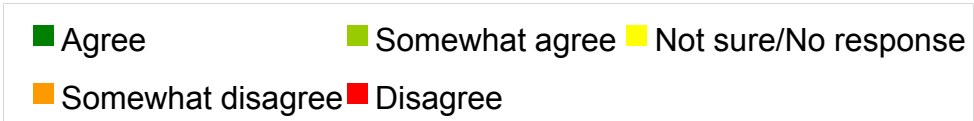
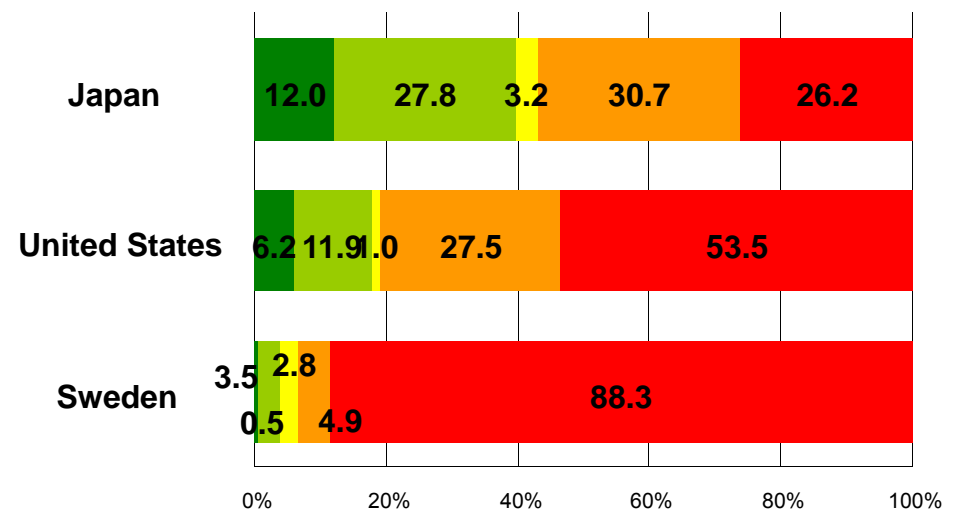
Deep-rooted “Stereotypical views of gender roles”

Pros and cons of the idea “men work outside and women stay at home taking care of the family”

Men



Women



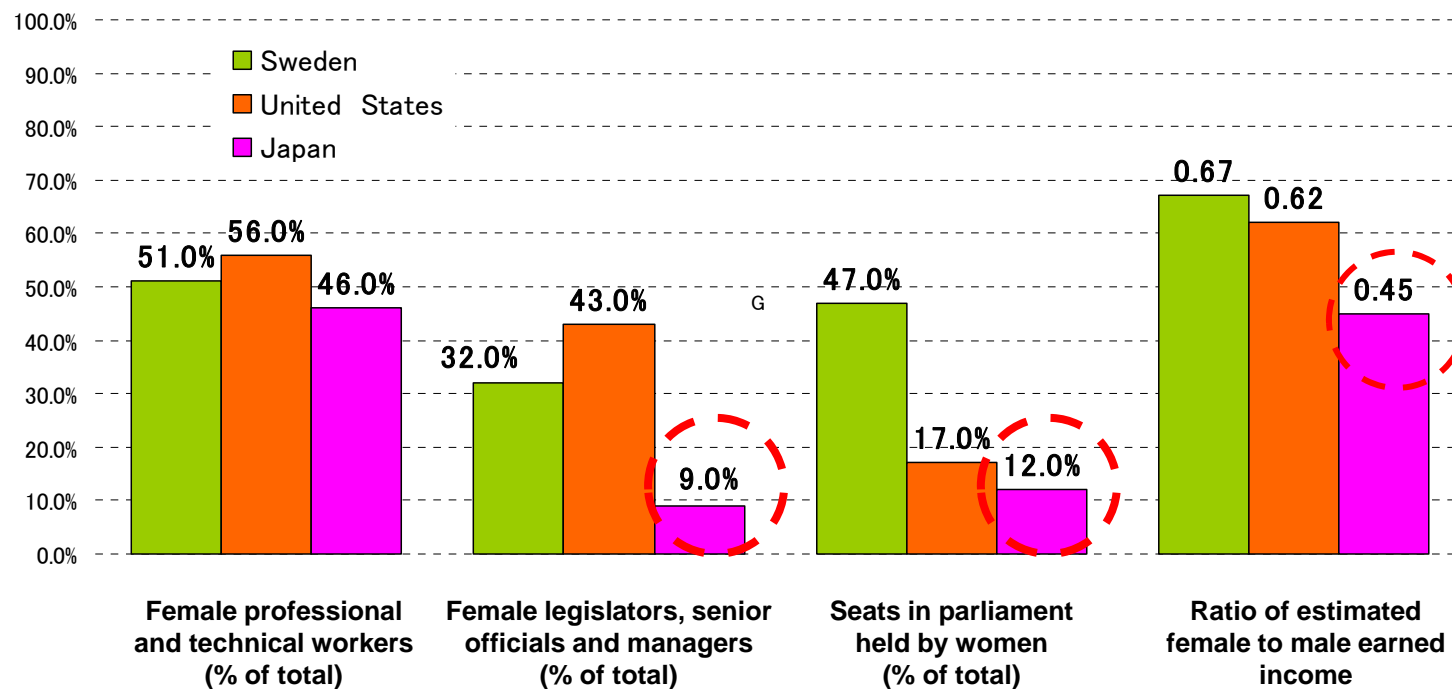
# 3. Background Information of Women with Financial Difficulties (2)

## □ Participation of women in the policy decision-making processes

“Few women in decision-making processes”

“Large wage disparity between men and women”

[Gender Empowerment Measure]



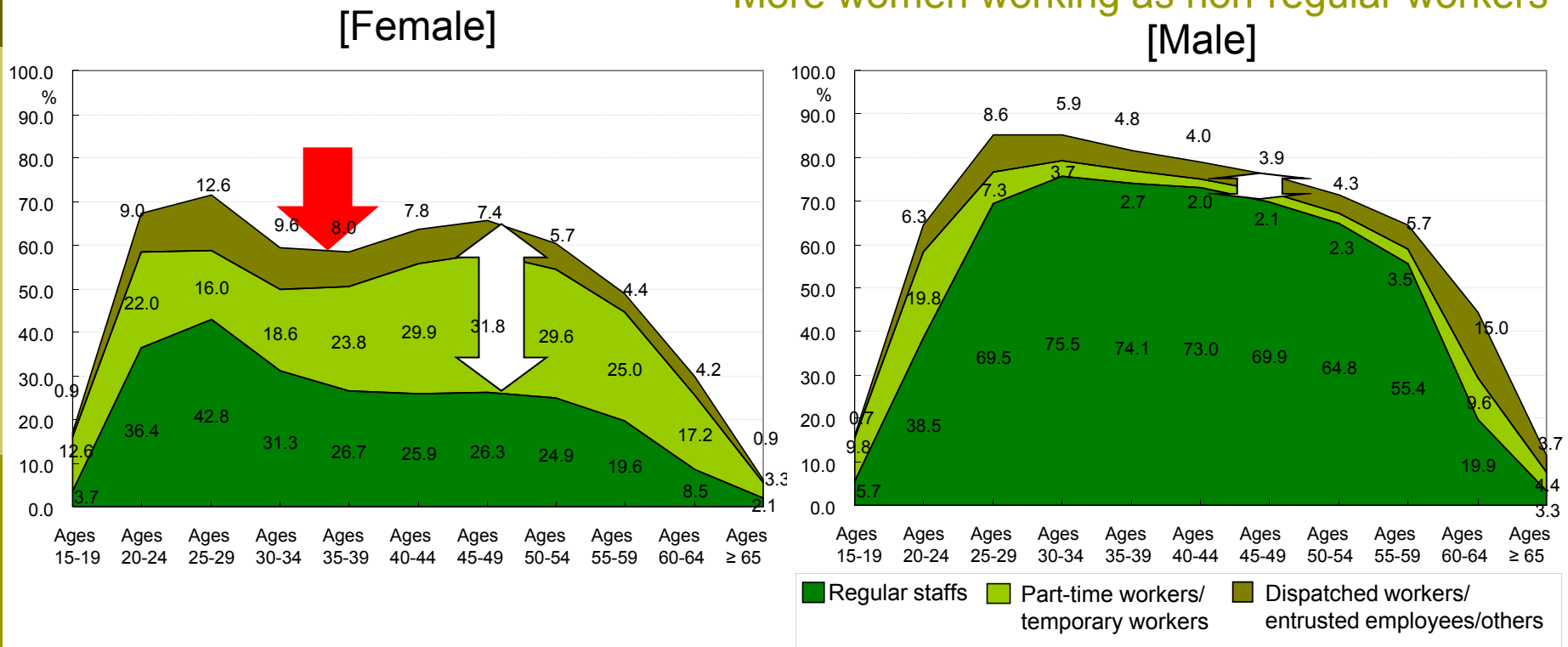
Source: “Human Development Indices: A statistical update 2009,” United Nations Development Programme

# 3. Background Information of Women with Financial Difficulties (3)

## □ Labor force participation rates by sex

“Difficulty for women to continue working”

“More women working as non-regular workers”



Source: “Employment Status Survey 2007,” Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Note 1: Employees excluding executives of companies or corporations

Note 2: “Regular staffs” are officers and employees; and “dispatched workers/entrusted employees/others” are dispatched workers from temporary labor agencies, contract employees, entrusted employees, and others.



### 3. Background Information of Women with Financial Difficulties (4)

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#### □ Violence against women

Tendency of being combined with various other difficulties

<Difficulties that keep victims of spousal violence from being independent (examples)>

- Having insufficient money to meet immediate living expenses 54.9%
- Not recovered from physical and psychological damage 52.9%
- Cannot transfer residential registration to the new address to keep it confidential 52.6%
- No appropriate job available 36.7%
- No skills for any job 26.6%

Source: "Survey Report on Support Services to Help Spousal Violence Victims Become Independent," Cabinet Office (April 2007)

### 3. Background Information of Women with Financial Difficulties (5)

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- Increasing tendency of poverty rates resulting from changes in the economy and society

⇒ Poverty among women becoming visible

#### <Changes in economy and society>

- **Changes in families**

Increase in “single household” and “single-parent household”

- **Changes in employment and jobs**

Increase in non-regular jobs

Increase in unemployment without a safety net

- **Globalization**

Financial difficulties in female foreign residents and their children

## 4. Measures Initiated by the Government (1)

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### □ Measures to address an immediate financial crisis

⇒ “Fund for Child-rearing”

¥100 billion (USD 1 billion) in 2008

Improvement of childcare facilities and child-rearing environment

Additional ¥150 billion (USD 1.5 billion) in 2009

Aid for mother-child families, including childcare services

### <Specific measures>

- Provision of an environment where it is easier for mothers of single-parent families to work, and employment support services
- Childcare services during job training

## 4. Measures Initiated by the Government (2)

- Empowerment of women throughout the life cycle
  - ⇒ Supporting women in their life planning by providing information on diversified subjects to help women live independent lives

### <Specific measures>

- Provision of learning opportunities taking local circumstances into account
- Presenting various living options for each life stage
- Providing information on work-life balance

## 4. Measures Initiated by the Government (3)

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### □ Movement toward a concerted effort to provide support

⇒ Seeking a concerted effort among support organizations to address diversification of difficult situations and expansion of needs


#### <Specific measures>

- To help women with multiple difficulties become independent, cooperation among relevant support groups is necessary.
- The establishment of local networks has become increasingly important. To assist young people with difficulties, an act requiring all relevant organizations to cooperate with each other was established (2009).

# 5. Future Issues to be Addressed

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- **Issues regarding the enhancement of abilities to become independent**
  - Consistent career and vocational education from elementary and secondary education stages
- **Issues regarding stable employment and working conditions**
  - Continuing efforts to provide equal access to employment opportunities for men and women
  - Promotion of work-life balance
  - Improvement of support services for those seeking reemployment
  - Neutral taxation and social security systems for women to choose a job
- **Issues regarding the formation of environments where parents and children can live at ease**
  - Attentive support services that take the circumstances of mother-child families into account
  - Consideration of providing preschool and high school education free of charge in addition to compulsory education
- **Issues regarding what the support infrastructure should be like**
  - Public relations activities and educational campaigns to change public awareness of gender roles
  - Provision of one-stop services for each support area and mutual cooperation among relevant fields



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**Thank you very much  
for your attention.**