

APEC Women and the Economy Forum  
High Level Political Dialogue  
By Masako Mori  
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(Introduction)

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Her Excellency Linda Amalia Sari Gumelar, Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of the Indonesia, and distinguished delegates:

I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to speak at the High Level Political Dialogue on APEC Women and the Economy Forum.

Furthermore, I would like to pay my respect to the government of Republic of Indonesia for hosting this remarkable forum.

(Active participation by Women in Japan)

I believe that the activities of women will give rise to a new vitality in Japan.

We will advance our efforts to create a country in which all women can shine, with confidence and pride in the lives they are leading. This is the basic policy of the Abe Cabinet.

The Abe Cabinet considers women's active participation to be a core of the Growth Strategy. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abe, concrete actions are being taken toward it.

The “Forum for Promoting Active Participation by Young People and Women” was held, at Prime Minister Abe’s initiative, to utilize women further in the workforce.

As a result, the forum recommended taking specific measures, as follows, in the outcome document published in May.

- Granting incentives to businesses that strive to support the promotion of women’s participation and balancing work and child-rearing.
- Support for participation that corresponds to women’s life stages.
- Creation of an environment in which both men and women can balance work with child-rearing and their daily lives.
- Promotion of efforts such as expanding hiring and appointing female government employees.

These specific measures were included into ‘New Growth Strategy: The Formulation of "Japan Revitalisation Strategy-Japan is Back,"', which was approved by the Cabinet meeting in June.

The three central pillars of the new strategy are: 1) Reducing the number of women who quit their jobs due to pregnancy, childbirth, or child-rearing, 2) increasing the ratio of women in leadership positions, and 3) realizing women’s full potential and harnessing their many talents.

We aim to raise the working rate of women, in between the ages of 25 and 44, by 5 percent from the rate in 2012 by implementing measures on the new strategy.

To promote active participation by women, efforts by corporations are required, as are governmental measures.

In April, Prime Minister Abe asked the three heads of Japan’s biggest economic organizations to promote more women to management positions and to set a target of at least one female executive per listed company.

Following the request by the Prime Minister, some member companies of an economic organization have already begun taking actions to promote women to management positions.

Regarding female employees as board members and women taking part in important decision-making processes within their corporations, top management, including the board of directors, will be expected to weave women's education, training, and assignment into its management—particularly personnel strategies—and to promote such forward-thinking policies. And we hope that female executives will become role models for female employees below managerial positions and will be a force to promote women's activities within corporations.

On the other hand, it is necessary for companies to approve measures to promote active participation of women by markets.

The Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) teamed up with the government to select listed companies that have made outstanding achievements in “advancing women's roles” in the workplace and announced these companies this February in a list called the “Nadeshiko Brand.” This measure allows companies to pay attention to and consider what the advancement of women means within their own organizations. Investors will be able to make informed decisions about women's empowerment of the company and the performance of that company in addressing the challenge. It is meaningful for the evaluation from the view of “mid and long term increasing in value of companies.”

This April, at the request of the government, the criteria for items of for details on a “report on corporate governance” of listed companies were revised by each stock exchange and financial instruments exchange. This measure encourages all listed companies to disclose the proportion of women on their board voluntarily to the capital markets. Some companies have already disclosed. We continue to encourage companies to disclose this

information.

In addition, the government launched a project to back up and accelerate diversity management efforts by companies. ‘The Diversity Management Selection 100 project’ commends companies selected as excellent in diversity management, and publishes a collection of best practices of the commended companies.

Increasing the value of companies through women’s empowerment is one of the “invisible values” that does not appear as financial information. We expect that companies will disclose the information positively because the information disclosed in capital markets since "visualization" is meaningful for both of companies and investors from the point of view of corporate governance.

(Actions to be taken in APEC)

As we carry on taking actions on women and economy in APEC, it will be crucial for economies to implement measures on promotion of active participation by women, especially by taking steps to turn “invisible values” into “visible values.”

I would like to take a look at the issue of disaster and women here. In disaster areas by the Great East Japan Earthquake, which hit Japan in 2011, many women played an important role in rescue operation, medical assistance and fire fighting, as well as in restoration and reconstruction.

Based upon disaster experiences in the past, including the Great East Japan Earthquake, the government of Japan drew up ‘The Guideline on Disaster Prevention and Reconstruction from the Perspective of Gender Equality.’ The guideline requests local governments to promote women’s participation at every opportunity, such as processes of decision making on disaster prevention and reconstruction policies, setting up projects as

leading roles, and ensuring safety and security in evacuation sites with respect for human rights of men and women

I hope the measures being taken by the government of Japan will contribute to the growth of the APEC region; cumulatively then could be a good role model for other economies in the region to implement their own unique policies.

(Closing)

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the APEC Secretariat and to the government of the Republic of Indonesia for hosting the APEC Joint SME-Women Ministerial Meeting as a first attempt to empower women in small and medium-sized enterprises.

I fully expect that the declaration by the joint meeting should promote economies to take concrete actions, under the APEC Leaders' Growth Strategy, to promote the economic empowerment of Women.

The People's Republic of China will host APEC next year.

We expect the People's Republic of China to continue activities for "Women and the Economy" based upon the result of this forum. We will give our support as much as possible.

I would like to thank you all for listening so attentively.