

APEC WEF
Statement by H.E. Hirohisa Takagi,
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Opening Remarks

Thank you, Your Excellency Minister Huaita. I would like to thank Vice-Minister Mendieta (PPWE Chair), Ms. Torriani (PPDWE Chair) and the distinguished delegates for giving me this opportunity to speak at the APEC Women and the Economy 2016 Forum. I would also like to express my gratitude to the government of the Republic of Peru for hosting this wonderful forum as an APEC Member Economy.

Cooperation throughout APEC towards the empowerment of women in economic fields is of great significance. Thus, the Government of Japan has contributed much to the APEC as well as implemented variety of measures within Japan.

The Gaining Momentum of Women's Empowerment in the Japanese Workplace

As the core of our growth strategy, we believe that the issue of women's empowerment is of the utmost importance. In the past 3 years, the number of female workers has increased by around 1 million, and the number of women in executive roles has almost doubled in Japan. Especially in the past year, this number increased by 40%. Women's empowerment in the workplace is gaining momentum.

Today, I would like to talk about 4 initiatives we have taken in recent years within Japan to break the barriers to the economic integration of women and promote women's empowerment.

Firstly, in last December, the Japanese Cabinet approved the "Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality". This plan aims to comprehensively and systematically promote policies of gender equality. It emphasizes the

reformation of the labor practices based on “men-oriented working styles”, and fostering measures to increase the recruitment and advancement of women to expand women’s participation. Furthermore, the Plan lists 71 performance indices so that this Plan in itself functions as a positive action that has a specific goal and timetable.

Secondly, in April, “the Act on Promotion of Women’s Participation and Advancement in the Workplace” fully entered into force. With this act, large companies are obligated to identify and analyze women's participation from the time of recruitment to promotion, and to devise action plans that includes numeric targets based on the data, and publish their results. As such, it drives positive actions of an unprecedented scale, and marks the entry of a new stage of employment in Japan.

Thirdly, based on the Act, in March, the Government of Japan determined the guidelines to evaluate companies that promote a work-life balance in the public procurement process of 5 trillion yen scale in sight. This will become a new incentive for companies to promote work life balance which is a prerequisite for women's participation. With the view of promoting corporate social responsibilities as well, the government will encourages to take similar measures in the procurement of Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games and private companies.

Lastly, since June last year, we have started to draw up "The Intensive Policy to Accelerate the Empowerment of Women" every year. Based on the Intensive Policy, the government sets the priority measures to be taken, which will be incorporated in the budget requests to be made by the governmental agencies

International Measures by the Abe Cabinet

Next, I would like to talk about three international measures we are taking.

Firstly, in the APEC we have been working on two projects that focus

on promotion of women's leadership. The effects that women's participation in workplace, particularly enhancement of the ratio of women's representation in leadership and promotion to board member, have on company growth are a concern for each economy. We expect that through the steady implementation of these projects, we can foster and promote awareness about these effects in the APEC.

Secondly, since 2014, the Government of Japan has hosted the World Assembly for Women annually with an aim of creating a society where women shine in Japan and the world. Last year, around 150 leaders from 42 countries and 8 international organizations have gathered and had a comprehensive discussion about topics such as "Women and the Economy" and this year's proposal was sent out as UN document: named "WAW! To Do 2015". The conference will be held again on the 13th and 14th of December this year.

Thirdly, I would like to introduce the discussions about women's empowerment that took place at the G7 Ise-shima Summit and ministerial conferences at the end of May.

The importance of "mainstreaming", which would reflect views of gender equality and empowerment of women in all policy areas, is recognized within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the first country to host the G7 Summit after establishing SDGs, we have taken initiative to promote women's participation and advancement at the Ise-shima Summit and all ministerial conferences.

More specifically, we have developed the "G7 Guiding Principles for Capacity Building of Women and Girls" towards sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth and peace. This guideline emphasizes the importance of support for women through education and training.

We have also devised the "Women's Initiative in Developing STEM Career ", we call it "WINDS", to promote women's empowerment in the field of natural science. In addition, Prime Minister Abe has announced plans to conduct human resource development program for about 5,000 female officials and professionals and improve learning environment for about 50,000 female students over the next three years from 2016 to 2018.

Closing Remarks

I believe that everyone here can empathize with the initiatives Japan has been taking and the thinking behind these initiatives. We will continue to cooperate with APEC Member economies, the private sector, civil society and international organizations in various forum including APEC and the UN. We will utilize every opportunity to share our best practices and take initiatives to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

Thank you for listening.

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