

## **East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting: Summary and Outcomes**

The East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting was held on Friday June 30 and Saturday July 1, 2006 at the Keio Plaza Hotel in Tokyo. Below is a summary of the meeting and its outcomes.

### **I. Summary**

1. A meeting of Ministers responsible for gender equality issues in East Asian countries was held in Tokyo on the theme, “Toward Gender Equality in East Asia.” Views were exchanged on issues relating to the importance of gender equality and ways and means to promote gender equality, and the meeting concluded with the adoption of the Tokyo Joint Ministerial Communiqué.

2. Representatives of 16 countries (The 10 ASEAN nations of Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Union of Myanmar, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand, and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, together with Australia, People’s Republic of China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand) and two international organizations (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) took part in the meeting, including 14 ministerial-level participants. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Kuniko Inoguchi, Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs of Japan.

3. In the opening session on June 30, Dr. Inoguchi delivered an opening address and Dr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, made a keynote speech. This was followed by Session 1, with reports from all representatives on the subject of Progress of Gender Mainstreaming in Each Country and Problems to be Solved. The meeting

then moved on to lively discussions on specific themes: Work-life Balance and Gender Equality in Session 2 and the Function of National Machinery in Session 3. Theme-based discussion continued on July 1, followed by discussion of the draft Joint Ministerial Communiqué. Session 5 featured a guest speaker, Mr. Morio Ikeda, Senior Advisor to Shiseido Co., Ltd., who gave a presentation entitled, “The Importance of Gender Equality in Companies.” In the closing session, the Tokyo Joint Ministerial Communiqué was unanimously adopted.

## **II. Outcomes**

1. Japan took the initiative in inviting participants for this first meeting of East Asian Ministers responsible for gender issues and acted as chair for the meeting, which was attended by representatives of 16 countries and two international organizations including 14 ministerial-level participants. The meeting provided a forum for informative reports from each country and meaningful discussion on a range of themes. Given the success of the East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting, the participants unanimously adopted the Tokyo Joint Ministerial Communiqué, which included the decision to make such a ministerial meeting an annual event.

2. All participants confirmed the deep significance of holding a ministerial meeting on the theme of gender equality in the East Asian region and appraised the meeting as a historic step towards major progress in gender equality, peace and development in East Asia.

3. The participants agreed on sharing best practice and the importance of work-life balance and strengthening national machinery.

4. As well as agreeing to develop a regional partnership for gender equality and the empowerment of women that becomes an example of good practice that can be presented to the international community, participants entrusted the host country with

the task of conveying the Tokyo Joint Ministerial Communiqué to the United Nations and other relevant organizations.

5. It was decided that the next meeting would be held in 2007 in India and the third meeting would be held in 2008 in the Republic of Korea.