

The Second East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting: Summary

December 2007
Gender Equality Bureau

On the 6th (Thursday) and the 7th (Friday) of December 2007, Yoko Kamikawa, Minister for Gender Equality, attended the Second East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting, where she delivered a speech as well as a presentation, as one of the panelists, under the title of “Current Status of the Participation of Women in Policy Decision-making Processes in Japan and Approaches to Promote Participation in Policy Decision-making”. New Delhi Joint Ministerial Communique has been adopted at the end of the Meeting as a document of mutual agreement. The details of the Meeting are as follow.

1. Date and Venue

The 6th (Thursday) - the 7th (Friday) December 2007 in New Delhi, India

2. Themes

The Meeting had three themes: a) “Home-based workers”, b) “Violence against women” and c) “Women in decision making”. Japan participated as a panelist in the group discussion on “Women in Decision-making Processes”.

3. Participating Countries

The following 11 countries have participated in the Meeting: Kingdom of Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, India, Republic of Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Union of Myanmar, New Zealand, Republic of the Philippines, Kingdom of Thailand and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Of these, the following 6 countries have been represented by person(s) on a Ministerial level: Kingdom of Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, India, Japan, New Zealand, and Republic of the Philippines. (The same representatives as the 1st Meeting in 2006: Kingdom of Cambodia, India, New Zealand and Republic of the Philippines.)

(Reference) Countries not represented at this year’s Meeting: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Republic of Korea, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Republic of Singapore.

4. Points made in Minister Yoko Kamikawa's speech

- In terms of women's participation in decision-making processes, Japan has yet to attain a status that could be referred to as satisfactory. Aiming at making the proportion of women in leadership positions reach about 30% by 2020, a variety of approaches are being implemented.
- Under the recognition that the elimination of violence against women is of utmost importance and that it must be accomplished in the course of realizing a gender equal society, a number of measures are widely undertaken. In July this year the Law for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims was revised.
- In Japan it is currently the case that people are compelled to choose either work or home life. The government is to finalize by the end of this month a Charter and Action Guidelines to promote Work-Life Balance.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Law and The Part-Time Work Law were revised.

5. Points made in Minister Yoko Kamikawa's Presentation as a Panelist

- Approximately 70% of all working women leave their jobs at the time of their first childbirth.
- In order to ensure that women who seek to continue in employment are able to do so, we must work towards the formation of a society in which it is possible to achieve work-life balance.
- In the private sector, the number of companies in Japan making a variety of efforts to actively recruit women and realize an ideal work-life balance is gradually increasing.
- The government has set numerical targets to increase recruitment of female researchers, and is offering financial support to universities and research institutions that are engaging in model efforts.
- Within government, current efforts are moving towards the target of ensuring that by fiscal 2010 the proportion of women recruited through candidates in the Level I recruitment examination in general administrative reaches the 30% level.

6. The Outline of the New Delhi Joint Ministerial Communiqué

At the closing of the Meeting, New Delhi Joint Ministerial Communiqué has been adopted. The Communiqué articulates on practical actions to be taken on prioritized issues that follow:

- I. Women's Participation and Leadership at all levels of decision making;
- II. Violence against women;
- III. Home based workers; and
- IX. Institutional mechanisms and engendering statistics, amongst others.

7. The Schedule for the Next Meeting

The participants agreed to make East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting a biennial, instead of an annual, event. (The next Meeting will be held in 2009.)