

Session 1: Gender Mainstreaming--Achievements and Challenges

(Introduction)

Madam Chair, excellencies and distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Atsuhiko BEPPU, and I'm Deputy Director General for the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, government of Japan.

Because Minister of the State for Gender Equality Masako MORI has to stay in Japan due to the national Diet session, she could not join us today. So I'd like to say a few words on behalf of Minister MORI.

First of all, I would like to extend our heartfelt sympathy to the Chinese government and people, and also to extend our condolence to affected people and their families by the Sichuan earthquake on 20 April, 2013. Also I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Chinese government and the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) for having given us the wonderful opportunity to meet you and learn from you on the occasion of 5th East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting (EAGEMM).

(The Fourth World Conference on Women)

In 1995, here in Beijing, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held and "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action"--which should be called the international guidelines on the advancement of women--was adopted. In 2015, the year after next, we will reach a major milestone twenty years later and UN Commission on the Status of Women will review the implementation.

Here in Beijing, at the landmark for the first memorable World Conference on Women in Asia, we think that this discussion on the actions and initiatives toward further implementation of "Beijing Platform for Action" in this meeting is very timely and meaningful, and will lead to enhancing the presence of EAGEMM to the international community.

(Measures for Gender Mainstreaming in Japan)

According to “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”, the Japanese government is committed to concrete action for gender mainstreaming. I would like to introduce some of those efforts and content.

First of all, for legal and institutional arrangements, the “Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society” went into effect in 1999 to clarify basic concepts pertaining to formation of a gender-equal society and indicates the direction these should take.

Furthermore, as a part of the reform of the Central Government, for the strengthening of the organizations and functions of Japan’s national machinery, in 2001, the “Council for Gender Equality” was established in the Cabinet Office. The Chief Cabinet Secretary, Minister of the State, is the chairperson of this Council and its membership is comprised of twelve Ministers and twelve intellectuals appointed by the Prime Minister. “The Council for Gender Equality” takes the central role in gender mainstreaming, such as monitoring the implementation status of government measures, study the impacts of those measures, and submit the results and opinions to the Prime Minister and Other Cabinet Ministers.

At the same time, “Gender Equality Bureau” which acts as the secretariat of “the Council for Gender Equality” as well as being responsible for overall planning and coordination of various matters related to the promotion of the formation of a gender-equal society, was established in the Cabinet Office. At the reform of the central government, about one hundred and thirty Secretariats of Ministers and bureaus was decreased 25%, however, the Gender Equality Bureau was only section that was new and upgrading. The promotion of gender equality in Japan has been ongoing under the strong leadership of the Cabinet Office. Since 2005, the Minister of State to deal exclusively with gender equality has been appointed. In 2005, the first Minister of the State for Gender Equality Kuniko INOBUCHI leaded and hosted the first EAGEMM in Japan.

Under these mechanisms, we start to promote gender mainstreaming in all fields systematically. The Cabinet decides the “Basic Plan for Gender

Equality” every five years by hearing the opinions of the “Council for Gender Equality” based on the “Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society”. It means that the Basic Plan is very the Cabinet Decision and the governmental policy, and binds on every administrative branch with solid coordinating power.

New and current basic plan, the “Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality”, which takes place over the next five-year planning period in 2010 by the Cabinet, lists fifteen priority fields such as “expansion of women’s participation in policy decision-making processes”, “reconciliation of social systems and practices and raise awareness from a gender equal perspective”, and “elimination of all forms of violence against women”. “Council for Gender Equality” conducted a review and follow-up of the past plan, and four issues were pointed out, including promoting effective positive action and realizing social systems that allow more diverse lifestyles.

Therefore, to ensure this action plan is effective, it also describes under each priority field “Basic Policy Directions,” which is long-term policy direction through to 2020, “Specific Measures” which is the specific measures to be implemented by the end of fiscal 2015, and “Performance Objectives.”

Sex disaggregated data is based on those measures. The government of Japan collects and disseminates data and statistics that are disaggregated by sex. Adding to these data and statistics, combined analysis by some indicator such as income class and educational background is available to understand the situation between women and men more deeply. Various kinds of sex disaggregated data can be used to clarify progress of the “Basic Plan for Gender Equality” every year and help to analyze issues on every White Paper. As the Cabinet decides the White Paper, the government shall follow up the policy for gender equality.

(The Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality)

As I mentioned before, we have rich measures towards “gender mainstreaming” in Japan. One of the characteristic frameworks is the “Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality”, which is inaugurated with a view to promoting the exchange of information and ideas

as well as to facilitating necessary coordination among all sectors and levels of society, in order to promote national activities to create a gender-equal society. This is a nationwide network for corporation and partnership among women's organizations, media, economic organizations, educational bodies. One of the examples is that the concrete and practical activity which in collaboration of the government and stakeholders to enhance the understanding of "Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)". "WEPs" is the result of collaboration between UN Women and the UN Global Compact, in order to strongly back up enterprises' independent efforts of women's economic empowerment.

(Concrete measures)

We have promoted various measures based on the "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality"; I would like to introduce some of them.

As for promoting effective positive action, we have actively promoted to achieve the target of "increasing the share of women in leadership positions to at least 30% by 2020 in all fields in society" ("30% by 2020 target"). Therefore, for instance, aiming for the participation of women in policy decision-making process, the government outreaches to some major political parties to consider the introduction of positive action, and also makes efforts to recruit and promote of female national public officials. Last month, Prime Minister Shinzo ABE asked the three tops of biggest economic organizations to promote more women to executive and management positions in workplace.

To realize social systems that allow more diverse lifestyles, we have actively promoted to achieve a "work-life balance for men and women". In 2010, following an agreement among related ministers, economic circles, labour circles and local governments, the government set a new "Charter for Work-life Balance". In the "Charter", we set numerical targets by 2020 and took policies positively for promoting and supporting public awareness through the national campaign, establishment of institutional framework and environmental improvement. In addition, we have actively promoted the expansion of the number of children in nursery schools, promotion of fathers

to participate in child care, and expansion of support service for child care to support the balance of work and family.

Moreover, we have actively promoted the elimination of violence against women. The “Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims” was enacted in 2001. Reporting, consultations, counseling, temporary protection and self-reliance were provided for victims by law. The Act was revised in 2004 and 2007 for its enhancement; expand the scope of protection orders. We have also promoted various measures comprehensively according to forms of violence such as domestic violence, sexual crimes and trafficking in persons as well as created a foundation for raising public awareness toward eliminating violence against women.

In March 2011, from the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake we learned a lot of things from a gender perspective.

Some of the issues that became visible were: most of the persons responsible for temporary housing were men, with few examples of women independently involved in running communities and less participation of men in group meetings.

CSW56 last year adopted a resolution titled “Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters” by Japan’s initiative.

It is emphasized internationally the absolute importance of ensuring women’s equal opportunities for participation in every phase of disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery.

Japan is currently experiencing population decline and aging population together with a falling birthrate. It is feared that a decrease in the labor force population will materialize. Women’s empowerment brings new ideas, innovation, and economic revitalization in various areas. Promoting women’s empowerment and participation is essential for revitalizing a strong economy in Japan.

Prime Minister Shinzo ABE leads policies and programs positively for using women’s potential and promoting social participation to create a Japan

in which women shine.

(Toward 2015)

In 2015, it will be 20 years from the adoption of “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”. It is the final year of the Millennium Development Goals and it is also the year which the new framework will be launched. In Japan, it is the year of the start of a new Basic Plan for Gender Equality.

There is not much time left. We need to follow-up and accelerate our efforts.

In this meeting, we need to share good practices and issues and provide feedback to each country. We think it's important that East Asian countries have great impact to international society by sharing the recognition toward Beijing +20 and Post 2015.

Session 2: Eradication of Violence Against Women

(Introduction)

Chairperson, I would like to begin by introducing Japan's initiatives regarding "Eradication of Violence Against Women" based on the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake which hit Japan on 11 March, 2011.

(Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality)

In Japan, the Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society was promulgated and enacted in 1999, and since then we have made basic plans three times, which means every five years, based on the Act, to promote the creation of a gender-equal society by steps as well as comprehensively.

The Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality, which was approved by the Cabinet in 2010, covers the issue of "Elimination of all forms of violence against women" as one of the priority fields. In the basic plan, we indicate performance objectives which are decided under core concepts such as:

1. Violence against women is a serious human rights infringement, and an important task to be overcome to form a gender-equal society.
2. Diversifying of forms of the violence against women by widespread use of the internet expresses to respond promptly and effectively in a new way.
3. It is absolutely necessary to respond sensitively based on the forms of violence as well as victims' identities and other factors so as to ensure the action plan is effective.

(Response to spousal violence)

Under the "Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims" that was enacted in 2001, 222 (as of March 2013) "Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers" were set up all over the

country. Regarding “the number of spousal violence counseling and support centers at the municipal level” is 47 right now--almost half our targeted number--compared to 21 as of 2010 when the Third Basic Plan was approved.

Key tasks of the Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers are 1) consultation, 2) introduction to community resources for providing tangible support and to contact the related institutions and organizations, 3) counseling, 4) ensuring the safety as well as temporary protective custody of victims and their accompanying family members in emergencies, and 5) providing information and support for promoting self-reliance.

Not only spousal violence but all forms of violence against women tend to be hidden, because the victims keep their worries to themselves and consult with nobody. However, consultation leads to support, so we really consider strongly that we should let as many people as possible know the existence of spousal violence counseling and support centers. It's also important to build a consultation system that affected women can consult with ease.

(24-hour hotline consultation)

To consider such a consultation system, we conducted experimentally a project named “Purple Dial” from 8 February to 27 March, 2011 for 48 days.

This trial project featured a nationwide 24-hour hotline consultation on violence against women; 20,000 people, including men and foreign residents, called in. And disaster-affected people also made calls, because the Great East Japan Earthquake hit Japan during the period; we discovered some challenges on violence against women in disaster areas. It is necessary to take responses to give disaster-affected women the opportunity to speak out about their anxieties, problems, and violence against women caused by increasing stresses from life as evacuees, and from the general worries of life and living under such severe environments.

(Project for Consultation about Women's Worries and Violence in Disaster

Affected Area by the Great East Japan Earthquake)

To respond to this challenge, we decided to start the Project for Consultation about Women's Worries and Violence in Disaster Affected Area by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

This project is being conducted in the three worst-affected areas, starting from May 2011 in Iwate Prefecture, September 2011 in Miyagi Prefecture, and February 2012 in Fukushima Prefecture. The starting day was different among them. Not only because of the extent of damage, but also because the preparation period for collaboration on this project varied across areas.

I would like to share three main points of this project:

1. In cooperation with local authorities and civil society organizations, the Cabinet Office established a temporary counseling service desk for women's everyday worries and violence against women by telephone and/or interview. Because the numbers of local consultants were limited, the service was run in cooperation with consultants throughout Japan. They, who worked to rectify women's worries and violence against women at local governments or nonprofit organizations, were given training before hiring.

2. In cooperation with local NPOs, consultants provided friendly and face-to-face consultation services by visiting evacuation centers and temporary housing and holding group works and counseling meetings.

3. Furthermore, consultants referred concrete community resources for providing tangible support and contacted the related institutions and organizations.

In a sense, this project made a multisectoral network.

Many different types of problems were consulted. 90% cases were related to general worries of life and living and 10% cases were on violence against women. Although there are differences by times and prefectures,

most of their problems included domestic violence. There still are about 400 cases per month, and this project is now ongoing in this new fiscal year.

(Tendency of consultations)

Regarding the tendency of “consultations on violence against women,” it seems that situations were getting worse due to stress caused by damages such as “increased violence as partners became more dependent on alcohol.”

As for “general worries,” disaster victims feel a lot of worries, loneliness, and a sense of loss after the disaster; here we have seen a variety of anxieties due to the harsh situations of affected people.

What are the lessons learned here? We haven’t conducted a detailed analysis yet, but we could say there are three advantages to providing consultation services for both general worries and violence.

First, consulters are able to speak out about their problems or troubles related to violence against women without hesitation, after they built trusting relationships with counselors by beginning to consult their familiar worries or troubles.

Second, we can figure out the economic problems or psychological anxieties behind the violence against women.

And third, by creating schemes that specialize in public organizations and institutions and CSOs working together, we are able to try solving worries and problems, as I mentioned above.

We are going to develop helpful materials by examining the contents of the consultations and follow-up responses of cases, among other information. We would like to promote further future domestic measures. To expand the good practices nationwide and indeed worldwide, we should learn more from this project.

CSW56 last year adopted a resolution titled “Gender Equality and the

Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters” by Japan’s initiative.

It is emphasized internationally the absolute importance of in every phase of disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery, 1) ensuring women’s equal opportunities for participation in these processes, 2) special attention is given to sexual and gender-based violence and to the prevention of various forms of exploitation, including the risk of trafficking, 3) the protection of and care and support to the victims of violence and the provision of legal and other relevant services for victims of violence

The biggest lesson we have learned is whatever we cannot do in usual condition let alone in an emergency situation.

I would appreciate it if this experience could be helpful for promoting further future domestic measures in usual condition of your respective countries.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Session3: Elimination of Gender Discrimination on Employment

(Introduction)

Chairperson, I'd like to speak for a few minutes about the latest measures undertaken by the Japanese government, especially those to promote women's activities regarding the agenda on this session "Elimination of Gender Discrimination on Employment."

(The "Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment Between Men and Women in Employment" and the "Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society")

In Japan, the "Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment" was enacted in 1985, to prohibit gender discrimination in terms of education, provision of certain social benefits, retirement age, resignation, and dismissal. Furthermore, it was amended in 1997 to prohibit discrimination on recruitment, hiring, promotion and demotion. And also the "Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society" was enacted in 1999 and developed the "Basic Plan for Gender Equality" three times based on the Act to promote comprehensive and planned formation of a gender-equal society. Now under the "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality," which was approved by the Cabinet in 2010, we are taking actions to secure the performance of the Act, as well as to correct a gender gap by promoting "positive action" to expand women's participation in policy and decision-making processes in all fields of society, to solve the gender wage gap, to revise the treatment between men and women in employment, and to support continuous employment and reemployment to eliminate so called a M-shaped curve problem, that the women's labor force participation rate declines in their early 30s at the time of child-rearing.

(The results of these measures)

In recent years, the situation in Japan of women's activities is gradually expanding by these governmental measures and by changes in the

industrial structure of the country. For example, the number of women employed for the middle and long-term is increasing mainly in the growth fields of medical care and welfare. Also, the proportion of private corporations with one and more female executives is increasing in large corporations; for instance, the proportion to those with more than 1000 employees rose from 20% in 1996 to 26.7% in 2006. On the other hand, women's labor force participation rate still shows so called the M-shaped curve that bottoms out in the 30s, as approximately 60% of female employees stop working at the time of their first childbirth. More than half of female employees are irregularly employed and tend to be marginalized under the traditional labor model in which only the men are employed. The gender wage gap tends to be reduced, however; if we take the wages of male regular employees as 100, the average wages of female regular employees in 2012 was 70.9. The gap remains wide compared with other OECD countries. Furthermore the proportion of corporations with female executives is increasing, however their number to the total number of executives is just 1% of all listed corporations, compared to 10% in leading countries of the West. I have to say that this situation of women's activities in our country is at a low level and the speed of the improvement is very slow compared with the West.

(Latest Measures by the Japanese Government)

The Japanese government, for these reasons, will continue to promote equal opportunities and treatment between men and women in employment and take actively the measures to build a society in which working women can forge their own careers, and one in which both men and women find it easy to reconcile jobs and child-rearing so that women can participate in all aspects in society and demonstrate their abilities there.

The Abe Cabinet considers women's active participation to be a central pillar of the Growth Strategy scheduled to be formulated by the middle of this year. Now, at the "Forum for Promoting Active Participation by Young People and Women," being held at Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's initiative, to utilize women further in the workforce, we will hear the views of relevant people about measures to support corporations and others, to support

women's continuous employment and reemployment, and to improve the environment so that women and men can both work and raise children, and will formulate specific measures in cooperation with related ministries. Moreover, to achieve the governmental target of "increasing the share of women in leadership positions to least 30% by 2020 in all fields in society," Minister of State for Gender Equality Masako Mori has requested every ministry and government office to actively promote hiring and assignment of female national public employees, the number of which remains extremely low, because our government has to take the initiative with aim of achieving the numerical targets in the Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality.

(Efforts by Japanese Corporations)

Efforts by corporations are required to secure equal opportunities and treatment between women and men in employment as well as governmental measures.

The promotion of diversity, including the promotion of women's activities, is essential, especially to develop global businesses by corporations. 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 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.

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.

Twenty eight years ago, the "Equal Employment Opportunity Law" was promulgated to prohibit discrimination against women in the area of employment in Japan. Also, 16 years have passed since the law was revised to prohibit discrimination against women in recruitment, hiring, promotion,

and so on. In Japan, the numbers of female workers as comprehensive workers has increased. However, it takes some 20 years for female workers in companies in Japan to be promoted to management positions. Many employers hire most new employees straight out of college, as opposed to mid-career hiring. Companies deal with human resource development in-house. So now it is time that some female workers become managers.

The Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) teamed up with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry to select companies that have made outstanding achievements in “advancing women's roles” in the workplace and announced these companies this February, as a list called the “Nadeshiko Label.” 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 “their priority.”

This April, at the request of the government, the criteria for items of “Report on the corporate governance” of listed companies were revised. Each stock exchange and financial instruments exchange is actively encouraging all listed companies to disclose the proportion of women on their board voluntarily. Some companies have already disclosed. We continue to encourage for companies to disclose this information.

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.

(Closing)

The government regards promoting industrial competitiveness and employment and human development as high priorities that are inseparable

from economic revitalization. In particular, showing appropriate prescriptions for the issue of employment of women has become a problem of vital importance.

In addition, the promotion of women's empowerment is essential to respond to various issues, such as reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake.

We will continue to work hard to empower women and to responsibly build a gender-equal society.

Thank you.