

# The Basic Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women 2024

## (The Intensive Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2024): Briefing Materials

Focusing on new and expanded measures

June 11, 2024  
Decided by the Headquarters for  
Creating a Society in which All Women  
Shine and the Headquarters for the  
Promotion of Gender Equality

**Make development of human resources aimed at furthering gender equality and the empowerment of women the linchpin of sustainable, broad-reaching initiatives in line with the four key elements below.**

### I. Further promote active participation by women in companies, etc.:

Develop female human resources who participate actively and human resources who implement initiatives in companies and other organizations

Additional support is required for companies listed on the Prime Market of the Tokyo Stock Exchange that are failing to make progress with initiatives to achieve the targets for the ratio of female executives of 19% by 2025 and 30% or more by 2030, as well as no companies with zero female executives by 2025.

⇒ **The keys are to improve recruitment, development, and appointment of female human resources and to raise awareness among senior executives, managers, and other personnel who promote the appointment of women.**

### II. Further advance initiatives to increase women's income and achieve their economic empowerment:

Develop the capacity of women throughout Japan to achieve economic empowerment and nurture the human resources to support this

Initiatives are required at the regional level to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout Japan.

⇒ **The keys are to develop people who take charge of local initiatives and improve their expertise, and to raise awareness among leaders.**

### III. Realize a society that can safeguard individual dignity, as well as safety and peace of mind:

Conduct disaster management and reconstruction from the perspective of gender equality and develop human resources to support the victims of spousal violence, sexual crime, and sexual violence

It is necessary to strengthen initiatives aimed at realizing a society that can safeguard individual dignity, as well as safety and peace of mind. This entails advancing disaster management and reconstruction from the perspective of gender equality, including conducting a review on the response to Japan's Noto Peninsula earthquake on January 1, 2024; strengthening initiatives for women, peace, and security (WPS); reinforcing measures against spousal violence, sexual crime, and sexual violence; and addressing women's health issues at each life stage.

⇒ **The keys are to increase the participation of women in disaster response, and to reinforce provision for counselling support.**

### IV. Further accelerate initiatives to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women:

Develop female human resources who will participate in policymaking and planning processes in every sphere

In policymaking and project planning in every sphere, it is necessary to take into account the different effects on men and women and their differing needs.

⇒ **The key is participation by women in policymaking and planning processes in every sphere.**

### I. Further promote active participation by women in companies, etc.:

Develop female human resources who participate actively and human resources who implement initiatives in companies and other organizations

#### (1) Strengthening recruitment, development, and appointment of women in companies

- Encourage companies to formulate action plans for reaching targets on appointment of female executives, build a pipeline of female human resources who will become executive candidates, and take steps to propagate understanding within companies of why appointing women is meaningful and necessary.

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- Create and publicize guidelines for formulating action plans and roll out the best action plans in other companies.
- Produce content to raise awareness, including compiling a collection of case studies of female executives, etc. who can serve as role models, and provide information.
- Collaborate with stock exchanges, institutional investors, and companies, etc. implementing progressive practices to offer awareness-raising (i.e., seminars), etc. for all companies listed on the Prime Market of the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

- Assist companies taking positive action to support the active participation of women and child-rearing.

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- When allocating government ministry subsidies, strive to expand and facilitate the preferential treatment granting additional points to companies taking positive action, while considering the purpose of the subsidy.

#### (2) Promote women's participation in science, technology, and academic areas

- Increase occasions on which universities and colleges of technology in each region communicate the appeal of science and engineering fields with the aim of nurturing female students who will aspire to these fields.

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- Create and publicize a "Science & Engineering Challenge" program offering examples of methods, including classes by young role models, and encourage initiatives at universities and colleges of technology in each region.

- Offer a broader range of programming-related education.

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- Promote enhanced teaching provision for junior high school technology and home economics classes (technological fields) and high school informatics classes and hold workshops for teachers on programming-related education.
- Promote education in math, data science, and artificial intelligence, including programming-related education, for a wide range of students in universities and colleges of technology regardless of whether their major is humanities or sciences.

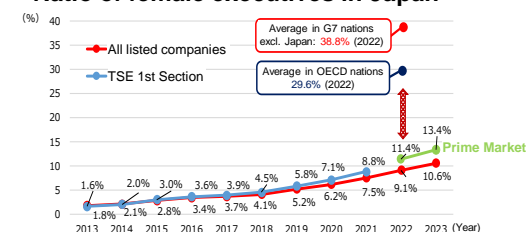
#### (3) Support female entrepreneurs

- Support female entrepreneurs, who face challenges such as limited access to networks of entrepreneurs and difficulties in fundraising.

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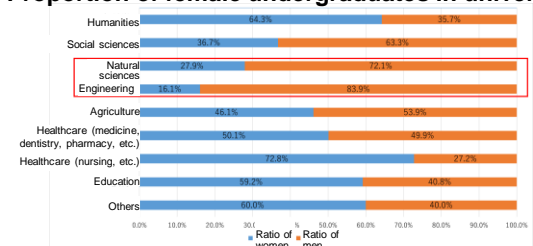
- Involve a range of stakeholders including financial institutions and core regional companies in building a network that provides consistent support to female entrepreneurs throughout Japan. Use this network to offer advice on business plans and implement a support program to match female entrepreneurs with potential backers.

#### Ratio of female executives in Japan



Notes:  
1. Graph created by the Cabinet Office based on *Yakuin shikho* published by Toyo Keizai Inc.  
2. Survey results are in principle as of July 31 each year.  
3. Executives include directors, auditors ("Kansayaku"), and executive officers ("Shikkoyaku").  
4. The reference for averages in G7 nations excluding Japan and OECD nations is the OECD's Social and Welfare Statistics.

#### Proportion of female undergraduates in universities

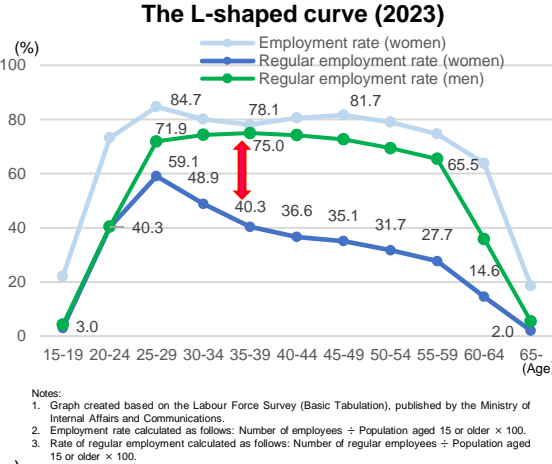


Source: Basic School Statistics for FY2023, published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

## II. Further advance initiatives to increase women's income and achieve their economic empowerment: Develop the capacity of women throughout Japan to achieve economic empowerment and nurture the human resources to support this

### (1) Promote increased income and reskilling for women

- Resolve the “L-shaped curve”—representing the phenomenon whereby many women become non-regular workers after childbirth—by supporting continued regular employment for women and pursuing initiatives to enable those who have always worked in non-regular employment or who became non-regular workers following previous pregnancy, etc., to become regular employees.
  - Support subsidies for employers that extend their initiatives to convert non-regular workers into regular employees and improve employees' pay and benefits; and offer support for reskilling and job-seeking to non-regular workers. In addition, ensure compliance with the principle of equal pay for equal work.
  - Verify which vocational training is effective for advancing the careers of non-regular workers by offering vocational training on a trial basis employing a variety of attendance schedules and training formats with the needs of employed non-regular workers in mind.
- Support the acquisition of digital skills leading directly to employment and help women find jobs in the digital field.
  - In line with the Digital Human Resources Development Plan for Women, use subsidies for women's empowerment in regions, among other means, to provide selective support for regional initiatives expected to reliably lead to employment, such as provision of integrated support from skills acquisition to matching with an employer. In addition, publicize and raise awareness of the best examples of initiatives that led to employment via a collection of case studies, and replicate such initiatives nationwide.
- Further promote the publication and analysis of pay differences between men and women. Pursue initiatives focused on larger gender pay gaps.
  - Consider expanding the obligation to publish pay differences between men and women under the Act on the Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life to general employers with 101 to 300 regular employees.
  - Promote self-inspection at individual companies, etc., including by developing tools for analyzing pay differences between men and women.
  - Focus on industries with larger gender pay gaps encouraging them to formulate action plans for each industry and implement initiatives, based on understanding of the actual situation, analysis, and clarification of the issues by the ministries with jurisdiction over each industry.
- Enable people to work without being conscious of the “Annual Income Barrier” (the threshold at which dependents incur tax and social insurance premiums).
  - Alongside working on expanding the application of employee insurance to part-time workers and raising the minimum wage, steadily implement the Enhanced Support Package to Help Overcome the Annual Income Barrier and strive to amend the pension system during the next pension system revision.



### (2) Support workers in balancing work with childcare or long-term care for elderly or sick relatives

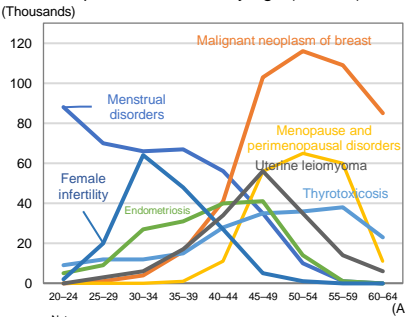
- Enable both men and women to balance childcare or long-term care with career development and eliminate the uneven childcare burden on women, primarily by promoting flexible ways of working and encouraging men to take childcare leave.
  - To ensure smooth enforcement of the amended Act on Childcare Leave/Caregiver Leave and the amended Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children, which include measures to achieve flexible ways of working and expanded disclosure obligations regarding the ratio of men who take childcare leave, publicize these acts, promote understanding of them, and provide subsidies and support from experts on labor management.
  - Use briefings on the Act on Childcare Leave/Caregiver Leave to publicize and raise awareness among companies and workers including senior executives and managers that: (i) in addition to childcare leave, there are other schemes that help workers balance their commitments, (ii) such schemes can be used by both men and women, and (iii) it is important to maintain work-life balance not only while using such schemes, but also subsequently.
  - Provide subsidies for small and medium enterprise (SME) operators if they pay assistance benefits to colleagues who take over the work of workers on childcare leave or working reduced hours, or if they introduce schemes to enable flexible working during the childcare years or implement initiatives to enable workers to easily take long-term care leave and return to work afterward.
  - Encourage employers to create the conditions for diverse ways of working according to workers' individual needs, such as reducing long working hours, publicizing the best examples of using the “diversified regular employment” system and optional four-day work weeks, and supporting introduction of those systems.
  - Conduct public relations activities to encourage companies to provide housekeeping services as part of their employees' welfare programs.

### (3) Support women in balancing work with health issues

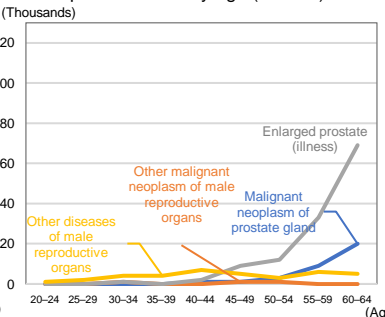
- Support women's active participation in the workplace by preventing working women from having no choice but to leave due to women's health issues at each life stage including menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth, menopause, etc.
  - Add items that would help with early detection of menstrual symptoms, menopausal disorders, etc. to the questionnaires for employer medical checkups pursuant to the Industrial Safety and Health Act (taking due care to safeguard privacy) and promote use of the updated questionnaires.
  - Promote the utilization of Femtech products and services in companies, etc. and replicate the best examples of their use in other companies.
  - Gather the best examples of companies and health insurance associations that are addressing women's health issues and achieving results, and widely publicize their achievements to other companies, etc. Do so by choosing from among entities officially certified as stocks or organizations committed to health and productivity-focused management, or as Nadeshiko Brands that are outstanding companies in terms of encouraging women's empowerment in the workplace. Consider relaxing the criteria for entering the SME category of Japan's KENKO Investment for Health program so that initiatives spread to SMEs as well.
  - Conduct discussions regarding further promotion of women's empowerment, including efforts among employers to address health issues specific to women, as part of discussions on extending and revising the Act on the Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life that will cease to be effective on March 31, 2026.
  - Ensure that all government ministries take the lead in providing health education for their own workers as part of efforts to promote understanding of men's and women's differing health issues among corporate employees.

### Differences in men's and women's health issues

Total number of people with illnesses specific to women by age (in 2020)



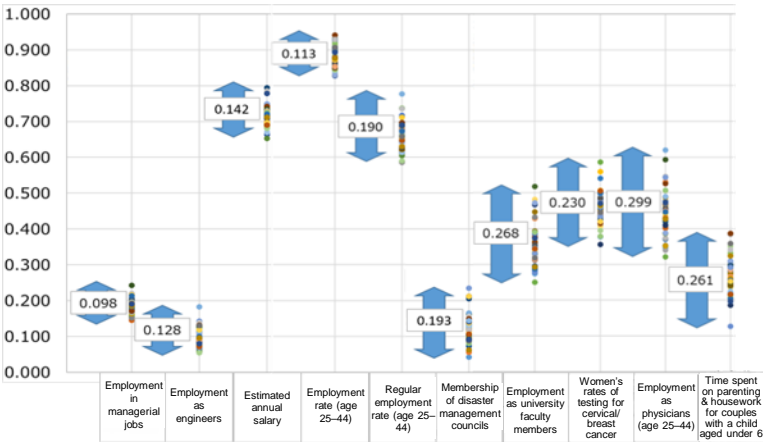
Total number of people with illnesses specific to men by age (in 2020)



(4) Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women at the regional level

- Promote the empowerment of women in regional companies and develop people to take charge in this regard.
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    - Collaborate with organizations such as the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Central Federation of Societies of Commerce and Industry, the Japanese Bankers Association, and the Regional Banks Association of Japan to publicize and raise awareness of the best examples among regional companies, including finding out about initiatives at leading companies promoting and supporting women's empowerment at the regional level.
    - Facilitate cooperation between the National Women's Education Center (NWECC) and regional Centers for Gender Equality (the Centers) so that NWECC provides training to help improve the expertise of the Centers' personnel and gathers information and holds discussions to develop training programs and materials to be used by the Centers in their training for companies and business associations. The aim is to enable the Centers to collaborate with organizations such as regional companies and business associations, schools, and nonprofits to develop people to take charge of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women at the regional level.
    - Conduct research on effective methods for building a new information platform to enable NWECC and the Centers throughout Japan to share the necessary knowledge and know-how with each other. This would include organizing statistical data on employment; aggregating information received from the Centers all over Japan about the gender-equality situation and related issues in various regions; and providing the results of analyzing such information to the Centers nationwide.
- Develop community leaders and raise their awareness as they will be key to implementing initiatives in local government bodies.
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    - Develop leaders and people to take charge of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women at the regional level by making use of subsidies for women's empowerment in regions. Use these subsidies for appointing women, for supporting measures to develop female community leaders such as heads of community associations and members of disaster management councils in local government bodies, and for replicating positive examples of women's appointment to disaster management councils across other locations.
    - Roll out examples of progressive practices that contribute to women's political participation in local assemblies.
    - Use regional symposiums and other means to replicate the best examples of local governments promoting women's empowerment and encourage stronger commitments to empowering women among male leaders.
- Promote ways of working that are unconstrained by gender roles by eliminating people's stereotypical perceptions of gender roles and unconscious biases, as well as seeking to change mindsets and promote understanding among corporate PR representatives, managers involved with HR and business control, and senior executives in every region of Japan.
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    - Disseminate information about the existence of an "old boys' network" using a variety of content on websites, social media, etc., and raise awareness by, for instance, holding workshops for organizations such as local government bodies and business associations.

Spreads in female-to-male ratios among Japan's 47 prefectures



Note: The figure above is extracted from documents for the first meeting of the working group on the functional enhancement of NWECC and the Centers for Gender Equality.

III. Realize a society that can safeguard individual dignity, as well as safety and peace of mind:  
Advance disaster management and reconstruction from the perspective of gender equality and develop human resources to support the victims of spousal violence, sexual crime, and sexual violence

(1) Advance disaster management and reconstruction from the perspective of gender equality

- Review the disaster response to Japan's Noto Peninsula earthquake on January 1, 2024, and use findings for future disaster response.
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    - Review the response to this disaster based on the Guidelines for Disaster Prevention and Reconstruction from the Perspective of Gender Equality, identify the issues and initiatives that need to be addressed in the future, and compile a report.
- Increase the participation of women in disaster response and raise awareness among local government leaders and community members to promote further participation of women.
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    - Promote women's participation in disaster response at both the national and local government levels, given that the assignment of female staff to disaster and crisis management departments during normal times enables them to respond quickly and appropriately to the different needs of women and men when a disaster occurs.
    - Expand training on disaster management from a gender perspective for those involved in disaster response (including those in leadership positions) in order to incorporate women's perspectives into disaster management policies and measures.
    - Offer disaster management-related education for children according to their developmental stages to help them understand that women and men are affected differently at each stage of a disaster and that women's participation and leadership are important for improving community disaster prevention capabilities.

Guidelines for Disaster Prevention and Reconstruction from the Perspective of Gender Equality (checklist of facilities at shelters)

Source: Women's Perspective for Strengthening Disaster Response Capabilities: Guidelines for Disaster Prevention and Reconstruction from the Perspective of Gender Equality (May 2020), published by the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office.

## (2) Reinforce measures against spousal violence, sexual crime, and sexual violence

- Further reinforce efforts to prevent violence by spouses or others, to protect and support victims, and to develop and publicize a consultation system, considering progress in enforcing related legislation such as the amended Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims and the Act on Support for Women Facing Difficult Problems.
  - ⇒ • Build on progress in enforcing related legislation by developing a consultation system that victims of all kinds can access without hesitation and bolstering collaboration among spousal violence counselling and support centers, the police, child guidance centers, private organizations, medical associations, healthcare professionals, and the Japan Legal Support Center, including use of statutory councils.
  - Implement offender programs as part of support provided to victims in every region by means of subsidies and training to promote understanding among those providing victim support at the prefectural level.
- Establish throughout society the understanding that sexual acts without consent are sexual violence and improve measures to eliminate sexual crime and sexual violence, as well as support for victims/survivors.
  - ⇒ • To make One-stop Support Centers for Victims of Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence easy for all kinds of people to use, including children, young people, and men, subsidize prefectural authorities to ensure the centers' stable operation, improve counselling staff's expertise and capacity to provide assistance, and make use of a range of consultation methods, as well as implementing comprehensive measures to prevent the sexual victimization of children or young people.
  - In addition to accurately assessing how application of the Penal Code is progressing following its amendment, make steady progress on discussions aimed at promptly conducting research on the current situation with regard to sexual victimization, including the difficulty of reporting incidents pursuant to the Penal Code's supplementary provisions.

## (3) Provide support for women facing difficult problems

- Provide comprehensive support according to the needs of each individual woman facing difficult problems in line with the Act on Support for Women Facing Difficult Problems enforced in April 2024.
  - ⇒ • Strengthen the capabilities of women's counselling and support centers and women's self-support facilities, provide training and improved pay and benefits for women's counselling and support officers, and promote cooperation between private organizations and local government bodies.

## (4) Provide support for lifelong health

- Take action on "period poverty," promote and further utilize Femtech, consider the use of emergency contraception, promote the participation and empowerment of women in sports, and support female doctors.
- Expand capacity to provide medical services at the (provisionally named) National Center for Women's Health. In addition, by focusing research on women's lifelong health issues centered around the National Center and pursuing "gendered innovation," implement initiatives to support health during the menopause and at other times, in line with the differences between men and women. (Establish comprehensive measures)
- Offer training and raise awareness about women's health issues among healthcare professionals (e.g., internal medicine, psychiatry [depression], orthopedics [osteoporosis]), and implement initiatives to support health in line with the differences between men and women, including pre-pregnancy care.

## IV. Further accelerate initiatives to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women:

Develop female human resources who will participate in policymaking and planning processes in every sphere

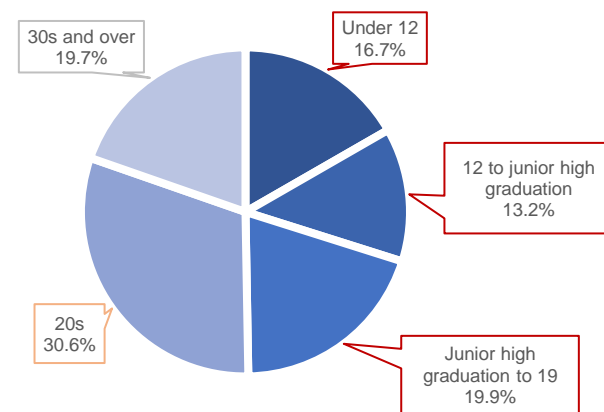
### (1) Promote formulation of governmental plans from the perspective of gender equality

- During policymaking and project planning in every sphere, take into account the different effects on men and women and their differing needs when discussing options and drawing up plans. As the basis for such policymaking, consider what differences exist between men and women and try to gain an understanding of how the related data differs for men and women.
- Facilitate women's participation in policymaking and planning processes in every sphere.

### (2) Promote gender equality in the field of politics and public administration

- To help gain a more realistic understanding of the barriers to women's participation in politics, conduct more detailed research on the challenges women face in this regard, and use the results for publicizing and raising awareness of the issues.
- Roll out examples of progressive practices that contribute to women's political participation in local assemblies. (Reposted)
- Set numerical targets for the proportion of women at each level of seniority in each government ministry. Publish these targets, along with related initiatives and progress, in a format that would be easily understood by women aspiring to positions as civil servants in each government ministry.

## Age at the time of victimization of those who consulted "One-stop Support Centers for Victims of Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence"



Notes:

1. Graph created based on the report of the survey on support provided by One-stop Support Centers for Victims of Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence, published by the Cabinet Office (March 2023).
2. Percentages represent the people consulting centers between June and August 2022, excluding those whose age at the time of victimization was unknown.