

## 5. Recent Efforts for Promoting of Policies Related to Gender Equality

### ■ Active Participation by Women

- ▶ It is stated in the “Japan Revitalization Strategy –JAPAN is Back,”decided by the Cabinet in June 2013, that the core of the growth strategy is to make it possible for women to actively participate in society by sufficiently employing their dormant, great abilities. Specific measures were incorporated in the strategy from three perspectives: [i] granting incentives to companies engaged in promoting women’s active participation and supporting the balance of work and child-rearing, etc.; [ii] supporting women in active participation corresponding to their life stages; [iii] improvement of an environment where men and women can balance work and child-rearing/life. The Government has been implementing the measures, in collaboration with the related ministries and economic circles, etc., in order of precedence.
- ▶ In the “Japan Revitalization Strategy Revised in 2014 – Japan’s challenge for the future –,” decided by the Cabinet in June 2014, various measures were newly incorporated in order to unleash the “power of women,” which has been the greatest potential of Japan , to the utmost extent, and to realize a society in which women shine, from the following perspectives: (i) improvement of an environment of support for childcare and housework; (ii)improvement of an environment to promote recruitment and appointment of women in companies, etc.; (iii) review of the tax and social security systems to make them neutral with respect to the working style.
- ▶ In March 2014, “The Council for Supporting Women to Shine” was held for creating a nationwide movement, led by Prime Minister Abe, aimed at realizing a society in which women can shine and at developing the momentum to support women’s active participation in a society as a whole.
- ▶ In June 2014, “The Group of Male Leaders who will Create a Society in which Women Shine”was organized by male leaders in Japan, and issued “the Declaration on Action.” In the declaration, members stated that they would commit themselves to increasing the motivation of many women, and to making it possible for women to utilize their abilities maximally from three points of view, “Taking actions and sending messages ourselves,” “Disrupting the status quo,” and “Developing networking.”
- ▶ In September 2014,“WAW! Tokyo 2014” (World Assembly for Women) was held in Tokyo to develop international momentum for promoting women’s active participation. About 100 leaders in Japan and abroad, who take active roles in issues concerning women, attended the assembly. 12 proposals entitled “WAW! To Do” were compiled.



WAW Tokyo 2014

- ▶ In October 2014, the Government set up the “The Headquarter for Promotion of Women’s Empowerment” aimed at unleashing the “women’s empowerment,” which has been the greatest potential of Japan, and revitalizing of Japanese society, through realizing wishes of women. the Headquarters compiled measures to be implemented by spring 2015 as the “policy package for creating a society in which all women shine.”
- ▶ The Government submitted to the Diet a bill on the facilitation of women’s active roles in the workplace, which is aimed to promote efforts for women’s active participation in national government, local governments and the private sectors.

## ■ Work

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Many women are employed as part-time, dispatched or and fixed-term workers. Therefore, improvement of their employment conditions is essential in order to advance economic empowerment of women.

- ▶ In October 2012, the Act for Partial Revision of the Act for Securing the Proper Operation of Worker Dispatching Undertakings and Improved Working Conditions for Dispatched Workers was enforced with the aim of protecting dispatched workers and ensuring their stable employment.
- ▶ The Act for Partial Revision of the National Pension Act, etc. in order to strengthen the Financial Ground and Minimum Guarantee Function of the Public Pension System was enacted in August 2012. The revisions will be enforced in October 2016 to expand the coverage of the employees’ pension system and health insurance system to short-hour workers.
- ▶ In April 2013, the Revised Labour Contract Act was fully enforced. The Revised Act introduced the following three new rules: [i] a mechanism that converts fixed-term labour contracts into open-ended labour contracts as requested by the workers in case in which fixed-term labour contracts are renewed repeatedly; [ii] statutory status of the doctrine of “yatoi-dome” that is established by precedent (termination of labour contract by employers is prohibited under some circumstances) ; [iii] a rule that prohibits the imposition of working conditions on fixed-term contract workers unreasonably different from those of open-ended contract workers on the grounds of fixed-term labour contracts.
- ▶ The Act for Partial Revision of the Act on Improvement, etc. of Employment Management for Part-Time Workers, which includes the further reinforcement of measures to ensure equal or balanced treatment of part-time workers with regular workers, and to make part-time workers understand and feel more satisfied with their treatment, was established in April 2014 and will be effective in April 2015.

## ■ Work-life Balance

- ▶ With the aim of eliminating the issue of children wait-listed for admission to day care centers by the end of FY 2017, when the need for nursery care is expected to peak, the Prime Minister Abe publicized the Plan to Accelerate the Zero Childcare Waiting List Project in April 2013. Under this Plan, the Government will secure the capacity by 200,000 children in the first two years up to the end of FY 2014 and by a total of 400,000 children in five years up to the end of FY 2017.
- ▶ To address the issue of female national public employees' quitting their services due to the transfer of their spouses, which is one of the major causes hindering career continuance, the Act on Leave for National Public Employees Who Accompany Spouses was enacted in November 2013.
- ▶ The Employment Insurance Act was partially revised to facilitate both men and women to take child care leave. Based on the partially revised Act, the childcare leave benefit rate was raised from 50 % to 67 % of wage for the six months of the child care leave.
- ▶ The Act for Measure to Support the Development of the Next Generation, which had been enacted as a temporary legislation until the end of FY 2014, was revised and enacted in April 2014. The revised Act included the 10-year expansion of its valid period and the creation of the new certification (special certification) system, to promote further efforts for supporting the development of the next generation.

## ■ Men, Children, People Facing Living Difficulties, and the Elderly

- ▶ The Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities was revised in 2011 to add the provisions to the effect that “the measures to support the independence and social participation of persons with disabilities shall be systematically formulated and implemented through a coordinated framework of cooperation in accordance with the sex, age, state of the disability, and lifestyle of a person with a disability” to the basic policy for measures in consideration of women with disabilities.
- ▶ The Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities was enacted in June 2013. The Act stipulates that “ necessary and reasonable accommodation for removal of social barriers shall be provided according to the gender, age and state of the disability of the relevant person with disabilities.”
- ▶ The Act on Special Measures concerning Support for Employment of Mothers in Fatherless Household and Fathers in Motherless Household was enforced in March 2013. Based on the Act, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) is endeavoring to enhance employment support measures for such mothers and fathers and to ask private business operators for cooperation.
- ▶ In June 2014, in order to create a “comprehensive local care system” whereby medical, long term care, prevention, habitation, and livelihood support services are provided comprehensively so that the elderly can continue to live in familiar areas with peace of mind, the Amendatory Law to the Related Acts for Securing Comprehensive Medical and Long-Term Care in the Community was enacted.

## Violence against Women

- ▶ The Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims was revised in July 2013 to cover violence by intimate partners who share the principal place to live and victims thereof in the same way as spousal violence and victims thereof.
- ▶ The Anti-Stalking Act was revised in July 2013. Major revision includes restriction on the act of continuously sending e-mails, etc.
- ▶ The Government decided the Second Comprehensive Measures to Eliminate Child Pornography, which summarizes measures the Government should take at an early date at a Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime in May 2013.
- ▶ The Act on Punishment of Activities Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children was partially revised in June 2014. The act of possessing or storing child pornography or electromagnetic records of these for the purpose of satisfying one's own sexual curiosity, etc. has become subject to punishment.
- ▶ The Government revised its Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in December 2014 in order to make further efforts against TIP. The Penal Code, relevant laws and regulations have been strictly applied against perpetrators in order to prevent and eradicate TIP and protect victims, and efforts have been made to realize appropriate regulations and penalties. In addition, in order to further improve protection of victims, the Government has been collaborating with the governments in other countries, international organisations and NGOs.
- ▶ In December 2013, based on the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment, the guidelines that stipulate measures against sexual harassment in the work place was revised to clearly state that words and actions based on a sense of gender-based role-sharing are also included in the causes and background.



'Purple Light-up,' as an activity of the Campaign for Eliminating Violence against Women in 2014

## Education and Research Fields

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- ▶ The Courses of Study (government guidelines of school curriculum), revised in 2008 and in 2009, continue to emphasize the importance of respect for human rights, equality, understanding and cooperation between men and women, and building a family under mutual cooperation between men and women.
- ▶ The 4th Science and Technology Basic Plan, decided by the Cabinet in August 2011, set up a goal to increase the percentage of female researchers in the natural science field as a whole to 30%.
- ▶ The Comprehensive Strategy on Science, Technology and Innovation, decided by the Cabinet in June 2013, set a goal to increase said percentage at universities and public research institutes to 30 % by 2016. This goal has been continued and included in the Science and Technology Basic Plan 2014, decided by the Cabinet in June 2014.

## Disaster Risk Reduction and Reconstruction

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- ▶ With regard to measures and responses necessary from the perspective of gender equality, the Cabinet Office issued the Guidelines for Disaster Planning Response and Reconstruction from a Gender Equal Perspective, which serve as guidelines for local governments and related organizations.
- ▶ At the 56th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women(CSW) held in March 2012, Japan submitted a draft resolution “Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters,”aiming to share experiences and lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake that hit Japan in March 2011 and other natural disasters with other countries to facilitate measures against disasters giving due consideration to women. The Resolution was adopted in consensus. Japan also submitted a draft resolution following up the adopted resolution at the 58th Session of CSW held in March 2014, and the resolution was adopted in consensus.

## International Cooperation

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- ▶ In order to contribute to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Japan announced concrete contribution measures in the field of health and education at the UN General Assembly in 2010.
- ▶ At the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), which was held in Japan in June 2013, a focus was placed on women, and the outcome document positioned the empowerment of women and youth as one of the fundamental principles, and efforts based on these principles have been steadily implemented. Moreover, Prime Minister Abe announced Japan’s intention to focus on the empowerment of women and youth in Japan’s foreign diplomacy with African countries on his visits to African countries in January 2014.
- ▶ The Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan was held in Japan in July 2012. Ensuring women’s rights and elimination of violence against women were set as the goals and indicators to be implemented by the Government of Afghanistan in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMFA) annexed to the Tokyo Declaration, which was publicized as the outcome document. Currently the international community is following up the progress made by the Government of Afghanistan.

- ▶ In September 2013, Prime Minister Abe expressed his intention to his strengthen supports for realizing “A Society in which Women Shine” in his address at the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Specifically, he announced that Japan would implement ODA in excess of \$3 billion for the three years from 2013 to 2015, based on the three pillars : “Facilitating Women’s Active Role/Participation in Society and Women’s Employment,” “Enhancing Japan’s Efforts in the area of Women’s Health Care,” and “Supporting Women’s Participation and Protecting their rights in the area of Peace and Security,” and this policy is now being steadily implemented.
- ▶ In September 2013, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) began to formulate the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, regarding the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and other relevant resolutions. MOFA is holding small consultation group meetings, consisting of the representatives of MOFA and other ministries and of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in order to develop the final draft of the NAP.

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JICA has been promoting “gender mainstreaming,” a comprehensive approach to incorporate the perspective of gender in all stages of planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in all programs and projects to clarify gender-based development issues. JICA is focusing on five priority areas to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. 1) Promote women's economic empowerment, 2) Ensure women's rights and security, 3) Promote women's education and lifetime health, 4) Promote gender responsive governance, 5) Promote gender responsive infrastructure.

#### **Project on Strengthening of Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) for Protection of Trafficked Persons in Thailand (2009-2014) / Project for the Establishment of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Hotline in Viet Nam (2012-2015) / Project on Capacity Improvement of Recovery and Reintegration Assistance for Trafficked Persons (2012-2015)**

The issues concerned with trafficking in persons (TIP) are getting increasingly serious in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. It is important to understand that women and children, both girls and boys, are especially vulnerable. Trafficked women may require different support as they may be trafficked for brokered marriage and sexual exploitation. JICA has been working on TIP issues since 2005 through conferences and workshops, and has been implementing Technical Cooperation Projects in Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam.



JICA's projects focus mainly on "protection, recovery and reintegration of trafficked persons" and "prevention of trafficking." In order to protect trafficked persons effectively and efficiently, the Thai Government introduced Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) approach in which various agencies and experts from multiple disciplines such as the police, prosecutors and social workers come together to tackle the issue. The project aims to strengthen its function and provide effective protection to trafficked persons. Also in other two countries, the projects are aiming to develop capacity of related organizations for the prevention of trafficking and for supporting victims.

### **The Urgent Development Study on the Project on Rehabilitation and Recovery from Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines (2014-2016)**

In November 2013, Typhoon Yolanda hit the central part of the Philippines. Following the several disaster relief teams dispatched for emergency support, JICA commenced "the Urgent Development Study on the Project on Rehabilitation and Recovery from Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines" with the Government of the Philippines. The project aims to support the formulation of a mid-term reconstruction plan for rebuilding communities resistant to disaster. In addition, a series of quick impact projects (QIPs) are also underway to respond to the needs of people who have lost the means to make a living and are in straitened circumstances. The QIPs include; Regenerating livelihoods by women's groups, Sales promotion for improvement in livelihood, rehabilitation of daycare centers. On planning the QIPs, the project obtained useful information about the situations in the affected areas and needs of the affected people from female staff at the local administration, which has supported women's groups since before the disaster and has kept in contact with them.



Photo : JICA