

APEC Women and the Economy Forum (WEF)
APEC Business Efficiency and Success Target Award

Statement of Ms. Fumiko Hayashi,

Mayor of City Yokohama

September 5th, 2018

- Good morning Deputy Director Natalia Strigunova, ladies and gentlemen. Let me express my sincere congratulations on the holding of the third APEC BEST Awards.
- I attend this event every year, and I am always moved by the passion that drives these women to conduct business on their own terms and contribute to the betterment of society. I have been eagerly looking forward to the BEST Awards again this year.
- Entrepreneurship is presently in the limelight as a business model with a lot of potential. Large corporations are supporting startup companies, collaborating with small and medium enterprises, and otherwise actively cooperating regardless of business scale, as they seek innovative ideas and to explore new possibilities.
- For entrepreneurship in particular, women's sensitivities can create new value and promote innovation. That is why I have focused on supporting female entrepreneurship ever since I took office as mayor.
- To women starting a new business, the City of Yokohama provides low-interest loans, and shared office spaces. To women looking to expand their existing businesses, we offer business support through expert consultations. Since 2016, we have also entered partnerships with various large-scale shopping centers to provide exhibition and sales space to these women, leading to the expansion of their sales channels.
- Assistance is provided in accordance to the development stage of each business. Thanks to this program, over the past seven years, a total of 267 women have started their own businesses, of which 85% are still active today.
- Yokohama City's policies have attracted attention from overseas as well. Ever since the *Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 5)* took place in Yokohama in 2013, we have been conducting exchanges with business women from Africa and learning about each other's policies. To date, we have hosted a total of 88 business women and government officials from 20 different countries.

- Women's entrepreneurship is directly linked to the realization of a sustainable society. Through their development of new types of goods and services, women can achieve economic empowerment and contribute to solving societal issues.
- Now, *TICAD 7* will take place in Yokohama next August, and we are determined to use this opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with Africa in order to realize a society in which women leaders can thrive.
- Women entrepreneurs, your energy and courage do not only affect those of us who seek to establish a business, but it inspires us all.
- This November, we will be inviting to the Women's Networking Conference in Yokohama Ms. Veronica Peshkova, who is one of the creators of the BEST Awards, and women in Yokohama will have the opportunity to learn from globally successful entrepreneurs.
- I am confident that Ms. Peshkova's speech will be highly motivating, not only for entrepreneurs, but also for working women and students.
- The APEC BEST Awards is full of the hope and determination of all its participants to change society for the better. I am confident that the encounters you have today will help you achieve success on the international scene. Thank you very much.