

Responses to the Questionnaire to Governments

Part One: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

The Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality that was approved by the Cabinet on December 27, 2005, lays out 12 important fields and also set the long-term policy direction until 2020. It also includes concrete measures that are to be implemented by the end of FY2010. In particular, the Basic Plan establishes a numeric target to promote the expansion of women's participation in policy decision-making processes, that is, "to expand women's participation in every field so that women will have at least 30% of the leadership positions in all fields of society by 2020," and promotes the efforts.

Since the Basic Plan was formulated, a review of the legal system and the planning and implementation of new measures have been promoted in each field with the aim of realizing a gender-equal society.

In order to promote the expansion of women's participation in policy decision-making processes, various targets have been established including the following: in 2004 a target was established to increase the ratio of women recruited who passed the Level I recruitment examination for national public employees to approximately 30% by around FY2010; in 2006 a target was set to increase the ratio of female members in national advisory councils to 33.3% by the end of FY2010, and to ensure that by 2020 either male or female membership of such bodies does not fall below 40% of total membership. In addition, based on the recognition that more strategic measures are necessary to expand the participation of women, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality adopted the Program for Accelerating Women's Social Participation in April 2008.

In the field of employment, the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment was revised in 2006 to prohibit discrimination against both men and women and to prohibit dismissal or other disadvantageous treatment due to reasons such as pregnancy and childbirth. In 2007, the Law Concerning the Improvement of Employment Management of Part-time Workers was revised to ensure the balanced treatment of part-time workers and regular employees according to their actual working styles and to encourage the conversion of part-time workers to regular employees. This Law was revised with the aim of creating a work environment in which part-time workers can effectively make use of their capabilities. In 2005 the Plan of Support for Women's Renewed Challenge was adopted, which sets out concrete measures such as creation of a local environment in which women can engage in new challenges, support for learning and skills development, support for re-employment, support for starting of new businesses and promotion of social participation, as well as provision of comprehensive information and implementation of surveys by the government. Under this Plan, which was revised in 2006, comprehensive support is provided to women who resume their careers or start new businesses.

In 2007, the Charter for Work-Life Balance, the Action Policy for Promoting Work-Life Balance, and "Japan's Strategy to Support Children and Family" were adopted with the aim of promoting efforts by the government and the private sector to provide support to both women and men so that they can balance work and family/community life and to support the development of the next generation.

Regarding the elimination of all forms of violence against women, the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims was revised in 2007, and in 2008 the Basic Policy were revised pursuant to the enforcement of the revised Act. Enhanced measures were implemented to prevent spousal violence and to protect victims while also providing support to assist victims in becoming self-reliant.

As part of measures for the prevention and eradication of trafficking in persons and for the protection of trafficked persons, the Inter-Ministerial Liaison Committee regarding measures to combat trafficking in persons was formulated in 2004 and the Action Plan of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons was created. In 2005, the Law Concerning Partial Amendment to the Penal Code was enacted as legislation to ensure that people involved in trafficking in persons are severely punished. It includes the

establishment of trafficking in persons as a crime and measures for dealing with cross-border trafficking in persons.

The measures set forth in the Basic Plan have been steadily promoted by each ministry through the enrichment of the legal system and the implementation of the policy measures described above. In March 2008, three years after the adoption of the Plan, the Council for Gender Equality summarized and published an interim report on the implementation status of the measures, related statistical data, and future challenges in order to assist in the comprehension of the status of efforts regarding the current implementation of the Plan and the implementation schedule, etc. Based on this report, the above-mentioned Program for Accelerating Women's Social Participation was adopted and efforts for

child-rearing and daily living, support for finding employment, securing childcare costs through the establishment of childcare costs consultation centers, etc., and economic support such as the provision of child rearing allowances, and enhancement of the Mothers with Dependents and Widows Loan Fund.

in society (including women who have broken off their careers for child-rearing) who seek to challenge themselves in new areas. In this way opportunities to learn new skills are being enhanced.

(2) Enhancement of programs at the National Women's Education Center (NVEC)

The National Women's Education Center (NVEC) is the only national center in Japan working to vitalize women's education that will promote the formation of a gender-equal society.

In order to further enhance the provision of information about the empowerment of women, the "Women's Information Portal 'Winet'" was launched in FY2006 as a comprehensive portal for information for and about women (<http://winet.nwec.jp/>).

In addition, the Women's Archives Center was opened at NVEC, in June 2008, with the aim of collecting, organizing, storing and providing historical materials pertaining to women who have made a particular impact in vitalizing women's education and in the formation of a gender-equal society, and about administrative policies and measures on women's education and gender equality. In October of the same year, the Women's Digital Archive System (<http://w-archive.nwec.jp/>) was constructed, which catalogues the contents of the Women's Archives Center and features digitized images of part of the archived materials.

(3) Enhancement of academic and career guidance

The government endeavors to enlighten female students, including those from university and high school, and enable them to make appropriate career choices by posting information on websites related to positive action and through holding awareness raising seminars and other events.

C Women and health

(1) Support lifelong health for women

The "Study Group on Women's Health Promotion" which was established in December 2007 by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, engages in research into the status of women's health and deliberates lifelong women's health management issues. In addition, the ministry designated the days from March 1 to 8 each year as "Women's Health Week" and various awareness raising programs are being implemented.

(2) Promotion of measures for early detection of uterine and breast cancers and prevention of osteoporosis

Based on the Cancer Control Act that was enacted in June 2006, the government formulated the Basic Plan to Promote Cancer Control, which was approved by the Cabinet in June 2007. Based on this Basic Plan, with regard to breast cancer, which is on a rising annual trend and is the cancer with the greatest prevalence among women, and also uterine cancer, which it has been pointed out is occurring increasingly among younger people, the government is making efforts to achieve early detection and reduce the mortality rate, through the promotion of uniform oncological medical care and cancer screenings.

In addition, with regard to osteoporosis, based on the provisions of the Health Promotion Law, checkups

Furthermore, in order to ensure that advanced medical treatment is appropriately provided during the high-risk pregnancy and child-birth periods and for newborns, in all prefectures of Japan the government

purposes of finding employment or renting an apartment. In FY2008, the temporary protection costs for victims at Women's Consulting Offices were enhanced, and in FY2009, a training scheme for specialized interpreters to assist foreign victims of violence was initiated. In this way a number of measures have been taken to strengthen the protection and improve self-reliance of victims.

In case of an application for permission to extend the period of stay or change the status of residence from a foreigner who is separated from her spouse or has been divorced because of the spousal violence, the permission is to be granted taking individual circumstances into consideration. Additionally, in the case in which the foreign victim of violence is subject to a deportation procedure, a judgment is to be made to grant special permission taking individual circumstances into consideration to remain in Japan from the perspective of granting the victim a stable legal position.

For the purpose of supporting the self-reliance of victims, program proposals are being prepared and implemented on a pilot basis to provide living accommodation to victims and their children who are living in local areas. In order to expand such programs to other local areas, the results of the pilot programs are being gathered and compiled.

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2) Appropriate application of related laws and ordinances

In June 2005, the Diet approved the ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In addition, as part of efforts to develop legislation to deal with crimes of human trafficking and other infringements of personal liberty, the Law Concerning Amendment to the Penal Code, including the establishment of legal penalties for the crime of buying or selling human beings, was approved unanimously by the Diet and enacted. .

In June 2005, the government also implemented amendments to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, which include establishing a definition of trafficking in persons; clarifying that victims of trafficking are eligible to be granted special landing or residence permission; excluding victims of trafficking from deportation for reason of prostitution or activities other than those permitted under the previously granted status of residence; and making the perpetrators of trafficking in persons subject to denial of landing permission and deportation. These amendments came into force in July 2005. Over the four-year period from 2005 to 2008, special residence permission was granted to a total of 104 foreign women who were the victims of trafficking and in violation of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act.

In order to improve the situation in which foreign women who are the victims of trafficking are exploited by being coerced into prostitution and other acts in the entertainment business or sex-related industry, the Act Partially Amending the Law on Control and Improvement of Amusement Business was enacted in November 2005. The amendments to this law include adding the crime of buying or selling human beings as a reason for denying a license for operating an entertainment business; and also make it obligatory for proprietors of entertainment restaurants and bars to confirm the date of birth, nationality and authorized status of residence of their employees. This amended law came into force in May 2006.

3) Promotion of appropriate treatment from the standpoint of victims

In order to enhance protection for victims of trafficking, since FY2006, the government has been providing support for medical costs (limited to cases in

ministry and agency, whereby a target has been set of around 30% for female national public employees to be recruited through the Level I recruitment examination (requiring knowledge and skills gained through university-level education and practical abilities by utilizing them) for clerical officers in the fields of administration, law, economy, as a rough i

implementation through cooperation with relevant ministries.

Japan participated in the “Third World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents” held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in November 2008. At the opening ceremony, the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan delivered a speech on behalf of the host country of the Second Congress in Yokohama, expressing an active commitment to work on sexual exploitation of children in cooperation with the international community.

Part Three: Development of Institutional Framework

1. Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality

On December 27, 2005, the Cabinet approved the Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality as the basic plan based on the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society. The Second Basic Plan incorporates 12 important fields, and sets out the basic policy direction until 2020 and concrete measures to be implemented by the end of FY2010 for each field.

(12 Important Fields)

- 1 Expand women’s participation in policy decision-making processes
- 2 Review social systems and practices and raise awareness from a gender-equal perspective
- 3 Secure equal opportunities and treatment between women and men in the field of employment
- 4 Establish gender equality for realizing dynamic rural areas
- 5 Support the efforts of men and women to harmonize work with their family and community life
- 6 Develop conditions that allow the elderly to live with peace of mind
- 7 Eliminate all forms of violence against women
- 8 Support lifelong health for women
- 9 Promote gender equality in the media

monitored such issues as Official Development Assistance (ODA), the adoption and dissemination of international norms and standards, measures for capacity-building and lifelong learning to facilitate diversity of choices, and support to the elderly for living independently, and provided opinions to related ministries.

In addition the Council has also engaged in research and discussion on expansion of women's participation, follow-up to the Second Basic Plan on Gender Equality, violence against women, work-life balance, and promotion of gender equality in the local communities.

As the Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality is scheduled to be entirely revised in FY2010, on March 26, 2009, the Council for Gender Equality was consulted by the Prime Minister regarding the basic concept for the formulation of the next plan. Based on this request from the Prime Minister, the Council is currently researching and examining issues concerning the formulation of the next plan.

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announced to provide basic data that contributes to an understanding of the time spent on such activities as housework, childcare and nursing care, etc.

Part Four: Main challenges and actions to address them

1. Expand women's participation in policy decision-making processes

With regard to efforts being implemented following set targets, such as the recruitment of female national public officers, the proportion of women as a whole has reached a relatively high level. However, the proportion of women serving in managerial positions in both the public and private sectors and the proportion of women taking executive positions in all sectors remain at a low level. Looked at as a whole, the expansion of the women's participation in policy decision-making processes is still only very gradual, and in international terms Japan's ranking in terms of the Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM), Gender Gap Index (GGI) and other indices remains low. Given this situation, based on the Program for Accelerating Women's Social Participation and others it is necessary to proceed with the strategic implementation of measures.

2. Review social systems and practices and raise awareness from a gender-equal perspective

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Business Agreements) set out the management policy of a family-run agricultural business, as well as stipulating the roles of each member of the family, working conditions and environment. The number of the concluded Family Management Agreements is gradually increasing, by various efforts such as clearly providing a position for the Family Management Agreements in the national farmers' pension scheme (Farmers' Pension Fund system), and enhancing the government subsidy system for premiums. (Number of households with a Family Business Agreement: 2003: 25,151; 2008: 40,663).

The above mentioned developments lead to the annual increase of the number of entrepreneurial activities by rural women (2002: 7,735 cases; 2007: 9,533 cases) , such as the processing of local agricultural products and their sale in farmers' markets direct to consumers . In this way, rural women play a significant role in revitalizing rural areas. However, micro-industries with an annual sales turnover of less than 3 million yen account for 60% of these ventures. Thus, a challenge will be to scale up and, at the same time, sophisticate these entrepreneurial activities by rural women..

Moreover, the percentage of women serving on agricultural committee members and as board members

Given this situation, from now the development of detailed and attentive measures will be required that are mindful of the needs and lifestyle differences between women and men. These include a response that promotes employment for elderly women who are experiencing financial difficulties, creation of social participation opportunities for elderly women in a wide range of activities, and the promotion of measures that seek to prevent the need for nursing care that take into account the differences between women and men.

In terms of measures for persons with disabilities, it is necessary to carry out the comprehensive and appropriate support corresponding to individual needs of persons with disabilities according to their sex and age, and the state of their disabilities, etc., to promote independence and social participation of persons with disabilities. Therefore, the investigations of needs of persons with disabilities including sex-disaggregated data have been implemented, and will also be done continuously.

7. Eliminate all forms of violence against women

Social awareness of violence against women is still insufficient and further active publicity and awareness-raising, etc., are required. In addition, public awareness campaigns are needed, including raising awareness among the younger generation about the prevention of violence.

The number of cases of spousal violence and the number of protection orders issued are rising year by year and related ministries and agencies need to cooperate with local governments to steadily promote measures to protect victims and assist them in becoming self-reliant, based on the revised Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims.

With regard to trafficking in persons, although preventive measures implemented in accordance with the Action Plan of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons have had a certain effect in reducing the number of victims, private sector organizations bear a large part of the work to support victims, and promoting comprehensive measures and protection of victims through public-private cooperation, as well as strengthening international cooperation, is needed.

An increase in the number of reported cases of sexual harassment is being witnessed, and the government recognizes the need for further measures. Under the revised Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment, measures have been strengthened to protect victims of sexual harassment that to plan in sexual harassment prevention measures (Article 65 of the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment).

