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Women Today

Requests to Japan from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

1. Deliberation on the Japan's Report at the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

On February 16, 2016, a deliberation was held regarding the progress in Japan's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the United Nations Office in Geneva, for a total of five hours in the morning and the afternoon. Inviting the Japanese government delegation, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is the monitoring organization for the Convention, conducted a "constructive dialogue" to examine measures to ensure a full implementation of the Convention in Japan.

Japan ratified the Convention and it became effective in the country on July 25, 1985. Since then, Japan has submitted the Convention implementation reports to the United Nations eight times, and the deliberations were held four times in total (in 1988, 1994, 2003 and 2009). In February this year, the fifth deliberation was held for "the Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" submitted by the Japanese government in September 2015.

CEDAW consists of 23 experts from around the world chaired by the first Japanese, Ms. Yoko Hayashi, since February last year. In Trusted deeply by all members, she is demonstrating excellent leadership and I am truly proud of her.

2. CEDAW Japan Report in 2016 and NGOs

You may feel that international human rights laws, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, are irrelevant to you and that they are issues to be handled somewhere far away from you in international society. Nevertheless, each one of you is covered by the Convention, and the Japanese government has an obligation to ensure that you are covered by the Convention. The Japanese government reports on the progress of implementing the Convention, and has a constructive dialogue with CEDAW. In 2010, however, CEDAW issued a statement regarding relationships with NGOs and stressed NGOs' roles in implementing the Convention.

For the deliberation held in February, the Japan NGO Network for CEDAW (JNNC), which consists of 45 NGOs, sent a NGO joint report to CEDAW. In addition, 80 members from the JNNC went to Geneva at their own expense to give their views as NGOs directly to the Committee. They also observed the deliberation at CEDAW very attentively.

3. Requests from CEDAW

The deliberation was followed by the release of requests to Japan, which were announced in the form of "Concluding Observations" on March 7. Serving as an evaluation of CEDAW's monitoring results, the Concluding Observations include "Principal areas of concern and recommendations," consisting of 51 articles giving details on what the Japanese government needs to do during the next four years.

In the document, the Japanese government has been requested to conduct a follow-up on the following two articles, as well as to take



Yasuko Yamashita

President, Japanese Association of International Women's Rights

Ms. Yasuko YAMASHITA

necessary measures within two years to implement the Convention and provide written information on the undertaken steps. The first article is Paragraph 13 (a) "Amend the Civil Code in order to raise the legal minimum age of marriage for women to 18 years to equal that of men; and revise legislation regarding the choice of surnames for married couples in order to enable women to retain their maiden surnames; and abolish any waiting period for women to remarry upon divorce." This is the recommendation that CEDAW has constantly made to Japan since the first deliberation, and was designated as a follow-up article in the previous deliberation as well. It seems that CEDAW feels frustrated with the slow progress in Japan. The second article is Paragraph 21 (d) "Adopt legislation to prohibit and sanction sexist speech and propaganda advocating racial superiority or hatred, including attacks on ethnic and other minority women such as Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women as well as migrant women" and (e) "Regularly monitor and assess the impact, through an independent expert body, of measures taken to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes and prejudices against Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women and migrant women." This request shows the basic approach of "Leave no one behind" in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the United Nations set in 2015.

4. Optional Protocol — Absolutely Necessary

What I have paid the greatest attention to in the Concluding Observations is the following: the CEDAW has requested the Japanese government to be aware that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the legal framework. In Paragraph 7, the Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention. In Paragraph 8, the Committee notes that under Article 98 (2) of the Japanese Constitution, treaties that are concluded and promulgated have legal effect as part of domestic laws. To ensure that such treaties have legal effects, it is important to ensure that the treaties are used at domestic courts. To realize this, it is most effective to ensure that the optional protocol, which establishes an individual complaints mechanism, becomes effective in Japan. Actually, in Paragraph 9 (c), CEDAW requests that the Japanese government consider ratifying this optional protocol.

Biography of Ms. Yasuko YAMASHITA

Born in Tokyo. Doctor of Law. Professor Emeritus of Bunkyo Gakuin University. President of the Japanese Association of International Women's Rights. General Director of the Japan-Nepal Female Education Association. Director and Commissioned Researcher of the Kyoto Human Rights Research Institute. Former General Director of the Japan Association of Gender and Law. Major publications: *Research on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (Kougakusha, 1996); *Development of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (Keiso Shobo, 2006); and *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Japan* (Kougakusha, 2010). Works co-written and co-edited: *Gender Six Codes* (second edition) (Shinzansha Publisher, 2015), etc.

Current Issues Series

What Encourages You to Step Forward in a Critical State



Co-President, JEN, NPO
Ms. Keiko KIYAMA

Participated in the establishment of JEN in 1994. As the regional representative for the former Yugoslavia during the conflict, provided humanitarian assistance for refugees and IDPs. Keenly noted the fact that emergency assistance sometimes lead refugees dependent, emphasized self-reliance from the emergency phase. Served in 24 countries and regions. Currently assisting in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Jordan and East Japan. JEN was awarded in 2011 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in 2015 by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* in recognition of its international cooperation.

Meeting refugees in actual scenes of international cooperation was shocking to me. In the first year after the establishment of JEN, I met tens of thousands of refugees in Nepal, the former Yugoslavia and Chechnya. One of the main findings from these meetings is that there is no difference between such refugees and myself; they are human beings just like me. Growing up in Japan, I felt that I had acquired a basic sense of equality even before meeting the refugees. Nevertheless, they made me realize to my core that each individual — who was not different from me — was being deprived of his or her home and family, and just wished to live his or her own life. I had never felt this reality so keenly before.

Honestly speaking, it was not until that time that I clearly set a goal for my activities, which was to provide support so that each individual, whose life was equally precious, could return to his or her normal life. Although I set my goal, I was not sure how to achieve it. While learning from refugees, I considered what I would wish or hate to happen if I were in their shoes. For 22 years, I have been repeating the cycle of taking actions, making mistakes, and correcting them. Different individuals have different beliefs and values, and there is no right answer to the question. Even now, I seldom feel confident in what I do.

Although there are a wide variety of what refugees wish, I have also found a similarity among them — their desire to "help others." Even if people have lost everything and are on the verge of desperation in utter bewilderment, many of them feel encouraged to collect themselves and take steps forward once again if they have the desire to help others. Regardless of the differences in people's characters, the climates they live in and their cultures, I met many people those who were in extreme difficulties, could not push themselves for their own sake, but for others. I have come to believe that the people's pleasure deriving from helping others is etched in human DNA.

This is directly related to another important lesson of mine — "importance of self-reliance." It is often said that "Don't give fish but fishing rods." At JEN, however, we support refugees to learn how to make fishing rods. Our goal is to help them become able to acquire the tools with which they can catch as many fish as they wish whenever they need them, even if they are not given any fishing rods. No matter how many times they lose fish and fishing rods, they are free from fear or dependence on others as long as

they know that they can make the tools on their own. I am convinced that this will enable refugees to feel proud of themselves and to live their own lives. Each individual's life is equally precious, and everybody just wishes to live with dignity.

These lessons have even caused a change in myself. Although I am not confident of myself yet, I have repeatedly learned that even if I lack confidence, I should not deny myself. Now, I have been released from a sense of self-denial.

I feel short of self-confidence, but I have one strong belief: people can create a world in which each individual on the earth feels happy. I believe that conflicts and terrorist attacks can be stopped by people since they are caused by people.

It is said that humans are beings that wish to get along with others. Humans feel bad and unhappy in dispute. Supposing some firmly believe in ideas totally opposed to your own, the opposition between you and them will not end if you continue to insist that they are wrong and assert your own opinions. Furthermore, if you reject them and stop talking to them, you will not be able to even find clues to solve the confrontation. It takes courage to make a concession when you are right, however, it will lead you to a solution. If you continue to talk to them even when opposed to them, the time may come one day when you can find a way of ensuring that both you and they can contribute to each other.

Despite that, I feel that all this is easier said than done, because I myself recently experienced that. It was tough to have a confrontation with people whom I did not understand, but it was even tougher to make concessions to them. Nevertheless, since I was determined to overcome the confrontation and made sincere efforts to do so, progress to the solution moved faster than I had expected.

War exists in the mind of each individual. I feel that when each individual generates the wisdom to talk to people they are opposed to, and when each individual has the courage to build up tolerance to live together with them, the world will be the one without refugees attribute to conflict. I would like to continue to actively accept ideas that are different from mine, and make efforts to ensure that a rich diversity of people can live together on the same globe. I sincerely hope that many people will have the courage to push this dream forward. If you do so, you will feel peace of mind, which is the very origin of world peace.

World Report: Women around the World Today

- Talking with Government Officers from around the World

■ Date
 Saturday, January 23, 2016, 13:00–16:00
■ Venue:
 5th Floor Large Seminar Room, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE
■ Participants: 91
■ Panelists:
 Ms. Francisca ATULUK (Ghana: Assistant Director, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection)
 Ms. Ana Cristina CASTANEDA NERIO (El Salvador: Salvadorian Institute for Women's Development, ISDEMU)
 Mr. Chhun Hak THE (Cambodia: Deputy Director General, Gender Equality and Economic Development, the Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia)
 Ms. Kanthi Hemamalee WIJETUNGE (Sri Lanka: the Public Service Commission of Sri Lanka)
■ Coordinator:
 Ms. Reiko OGAWA (Associate Professor, Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies Research, Kyushu University)

Inviting the four government officers from the four countries (Ghana, El Salvador, Cambodia and Sri Lanka), we held a seminar in which they reported on gender mainstreaming policies conducted in their respective countries.

Situation of Gender Mainstreaming in Ghana, the Gateway to Africa

Report by Ms. Francisca ATULUK (Ghana)



I joined the Seminar on Gender Mainstreaming Policies (commissioned by JICA to KFAW) in 2014 in Kitakyushu City. After completing the seminar, I organized a seminar on gender mainstreaming policies for staff members of the Ghanaian Ministry of Women's Affairs, as well as another seminar for government officers working on gender issues in various ministries. To realize a harmonious society in which the survival and prosperity of men, women and children, and the weak and the disabled are ensured, it is essential to involve a wide variety of related ministries, rather than just the Ministry of Women's Affairs taking action alone.

In Ghana, the main gender issues include the widespread perception that women should obey men, and the social custom that women are not allowed to assert themselves. Also, support for girls' education is insufficient.

To solve these problems, the government established a national gender policy in August 2015, and is presently considering an affirmative action bill and a women's property rights bill. Along with this background, female "queen mothers" serving as leaders have begun to participate in decision-making processes even in some traditional communities where male "chiefs" used to be privileged to make decisions.

Situation of Gender Mainstreaming in El Salvador

Report by Ms. Ana Cristina CASTANEDA NERIO (El Salvador)



I participated in the Seminar on Gender Mainstreaming

Policies in 2015 in Kitakyushu City. The seminar made me recognize once again that gender issues are international challenges, and that a continuous interest in improving society and a strong determination to achieve that aim are the keys to overcoming the challenges.

I belong to the Salvadorian Institute for Women's Development. Established in 1996, the institute has four sections for gender mainstreaming. Introducing a national gender index system to eradicate discrimination against women, the Section for Equal Opportunities monitors and assesses the progress of the system. The Section of Citizens for Equality strives to generate opportunities for women to demonstrate their capabilities in the political arena of local governments, and establishes an environment in which access to information is ensured equally to both men and women. The Educational Section proceeds with women's rights education in public sector agencies, and aims to incorporate gender perspectives into the local governance. The Section for Women's Right to a Life without Violence provides legal support for female victims. In addition, the section works together with the Ministry of Education to prevent violence against women in schools.

Cambodia's Gender Mainstreaming Situation and Key Strategies

Report by Mr. Chhun Hak THE (Cambodia)



I attended the Seminar on Gender Mainstreaming Policies in 2008 in Kitakyushu City. Afterwards, I prepared an action plan in my home country to implement a project to encourage women's participation in the political decision-making process. This project was eventually conducted in 25 provinces. Gaining considerable attention throughout the country, the project was highly regarded even by the Prime Minister.

In Cambodia, gender mainstreaming has achieved great progress in some fields, but not in others. In the educational sector, for example, gender equality has been realized to a reasonable extent especially in primary education, but a gender gap still remains in tertiary education. In the political sector, the number of female members of the national assembly has more than trebled over the past 20 years, with the percentage of women among all staff members working at government agencies increasing as well. Regarding violence against women, while there has been improvement in the development of legal systems and support for female victims, various problems, such as human trafficking, still remain unsolved. Meanwhile, in the economic sector, although there has been a growth in female employment, there are still various problems, such as low wages and poor working conditions. Moreover, there is great potential in terms of women's entrepreneurship, while fund-raising support and other assistance are still insufficient.

The country's future challenges include realizing cooperation among related ministries, rather than having the Ministry of Women's Affairs take action alone, and reinforcing the country's capabilities to analyze gender issues.

Gender Mainstreaming Strategies in Sri Lanka

Report by Ms. Kanthi Hemamalee WIJETUNGE (Sri Lanka)



As a Gender Focal Point (i.e., a person in charge of gender policies), I have so far striven to act as the driving force for gender mainstreaming, no matter which department I was working for. I made suggestions in various organizations regarding analyses of situations revealed by collecting data according to gender, and encouraged the board of directors and other organizations to promote many capable women to managerial positions.

In Sri Lanka, gender equality is ensured by the Constitution, but in reality women face discrimination. The government has adopted various measures to eradicate discrimination. In 1995, the government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and established the Ministry of Women's Affairs as an independent ministry. In addition, the government incorporated the Millennium Development Goals into the country's agenda for national development. As a result, the percentage of girls to boys in primary education has increased to 99%, with the literacy rate reaching 95% among both men and women. The country's gender equality has thus been improved in some fields.

International Interaction Program between Government Officers and University Students

■ Date: Friday, January 22, 2016, 9:00–14:00
■ Venue: Cultural facilities in Kitakyushu (Kitakyushu Museum of Natural History & Human History, Kitakyushu Environment Museum and Kokura Castle)

As part of our efforts to develop next-generation human resources who will contribute to international cooperation in the future, we held an international interaction program, inviting government officers from foreign countries. We organized the program jointly with students of universities located in Kitakyushu City. In the program, seven students from universities in Kitakyushu (Seinan Jo Gakuin University and Kyushu International University) interacted with the government officers while guiding them around cultural facilities in the city. In the morning they visited the Kitakyushu Museum of Natural History & Human History and the Kitakyushu Environment Museum, and Kokura

Castle in the afternoon. At each of these facilities, the students explained the meanings of unique Japanese expressions in English, such as "a-un no kokyu" (anticipation of each other's move) and "mottainai!" (what a waste!). The students, who study international affairs, learned a lot through the interaction with the government officers. In addition, the government officers said that they were truly impressed by the culture and history of Kitakyushu City.

Commemorative photograph at the Kitakyushu Environment Museum



Special Lecture Session by Government Officers at a University

■ Date: Friday, January 22, 2016, 14:40–16:10
■ Venue: Seinan Jo Gakuin University

KFAW held a special lecture session as a joint program with the Faculty of Humanities of Seinan Jo Gakuin University. Designed for university students, the session consisted of special lectures by the government officers from the four countries. In the session, the students were divided into four groups, and exchanged opinions with the government officers on a wide range of topics, such as their countries' traditional dishes, marriage customs, and healthcare systems.

Of particular note were the discussions on the gender issues in respective countries. The students listened to the

government officers very attentively, sometimes letting out gasps of astonishment. These discussions revealed that the main gender issues differed from country to country, and included forced marriage, abortion, the education level gap, the increase in the number of single mothers due to civil wars, and discrimination against married women when job hunting. The interaction with the government officers from different countries served as a valuable experience for the students to share their awareness of international gender issues.

At a Special Lecture Session Held at Seinan Jo Gakuin University



Panel Discussion

Interaction Meeting



Growing Problem of Domestic Violence

Ms. Turmunkh ODONTUYA (Mongolia)

In Mongolia, there has been a large increase in the number of domestic violence cases since the mid-1990s, especially the ones where violence is directed toward women, attracting broad media coverage. The Reproductive Health Survey conducted in 2009 by National Statistical Office of Mongolia with a loan provided by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) found that 19% of the 6,894 women surveyed had been physically abused by their husbands or common-law husbands. This means nearly one in five women in Mongolia has been victimized by domestic violence. According to data on the number of criminal cases registered by the National Police Agency, 80 people were killed and 1,180 people sustained minor or serious injuries in domestic violence incidences between 2010 and 2015. These statistics reveal that domestic violence has become a grave and significant social phenomenon in recent years in this country.

To tackle this situation, a number of governmental and non-governmental institutions/organizations have been implementing activities to prevent and eliminate domestic violence. Along with government agencies such as Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs, and National Police Agency, non-governmental organizations and private entities including Center for Human Rights and Development, and the Mongolian Gender Equality Center are playing active roles and engaged in various undertakings in cooperation with the United Nations, international aid agencies, and other international organizations.

The National Center Against Violence (NCAV) is the first private-sector institution in Mongolia that facilitates domestic violence preventive efforts. Since its establishment in the capital city of Ulan Bator in 1995, NCAV has been conducting a multitude of projects such as the creation of a legal environment to deal with domestic violence against women and children as well as to forestall violence. Currently, NCAV

Profile

After graduating from the Department of Mongolian Language and Literature of the National University of Mongolia, I worked as a director in the Japanese Language Section of the International Broadcasting Department, Mongolian National Public Radio and Television. After that, I came to Japan and finished my master's course at Graduate School of Social and Cultural Systems, Yamanashi University, and doctoral course at Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Tohoku University. Specialized in cultural anthropology, I have conducted studies under the themes of gender role attitudes and their changes in transforming social systems in Mongolia, as well as analysis of various aspects of Mongolian women from a gender perspective. Then, I belonged to a research specialist at Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University. In 2014, my book titled Experience of socialist society: narratives of Mongolian women was awarded a publication grant for young researchers and published by Tohoku University Press. Also, I contributed a chapter "On Encouraging Mothers of Multiple Children through the Order of the Mother Glorious in Mongolia" to the book titled "Rethinking Representations of Asian Women: Changes, Continuity, and Everyday Life" edited by Aisulumi Kato, et al., which is to be published by Palgrave Macmillan in November 2015. The major awards I have won include a special award in the project section of Tohoku University Gender Equality Promotion ("Sawayanagi") Award in 2008.



has its branch offices in 14 of Mongolia's 21 provinces, with 24-hour hotlines that offer victimized women and children mental health counseling and legal advice by experts. It also operates five shelters set up around the country to provide temporary protection for abused or battered women and children who are in a critical condition both physically and mentally.

Behind the rise in the number of domestic violence cases in Mongolia, there are social problems, in particular the ones with alcohol such as heavy drinking, that arose when the country underwent transition from socialism to a market economy. Amid the ongoing state of insecurity caused by unemployment, poverty and distress due to the change in social systems, people tend to suffer from higher levels of social stress, resulting in excessive alcohol consumption to relieve their stress. This leads to the most common cause of domestic violence in this country. Besides the social background described above, it is considered that the insufficient development of the legal environment is partly to blame. In 1996, the government formulated the National Program for the Advancement of Women, specifying the need for special attention to the issues of violence against women as well as of women's rights. Following that, the Law on Fighting Against Domestic Violence was adopted in 2004, as a result of a nine-year campaign effort by a group of private organizations headed by NCAV. In this way, the legal environment concerning domestic violence is gradually being put in place. Nevertheless, there still remains the deep-rooted notion that domestic violence is a private family issue, creating an unfavorable situation for the proper functioning of the much-awaited domestic violence legislation. The good news, though, is that a legal decision was made in December 2015 to treat domestic violence incidents as criminal cases. The passage of the relevant law in the Diet is expected to put the brakes on the prevalence of domestic violence in Mongolia.

Women's, the Leading Voice in Pakistan

Mr. Saboor Ahmed KAKAR (Pakistan)

Like other developing countries, women in Pakistan make significant contributions in agriculture, household, sports, journalism, academia and other rural activities directly or indirectly. Despite the recent increase in the proportion of working women, the number is still quite small. The main reason for the low involvement of women in economic activities is various socioeconomic constraints, which hinder women's participation in the labour market. Married women remain at home because of several commitments. They have to look after their children and family, and perform numerous household chores. The social commitment in their families bind them as housewives and they accept this commitment without any hesitation.

The decision-making in Pakistan has been regarded as a predominant male prerogative. Women are largely neglected in social, economic, political and legal spheres. Some progress has been made in the enhancement of women in all areas of society, but it is not satisfactory. Women labour force participation in Pakistan at 28% is ranked the lowest in the South Asian region. The share of women's earnings in earned income is 26% of men's. Various studies have been carried out to analyse the labour force participation of women in Pakistan. One of the studies found that rural women were extensively involved in many agricultural and livestock rearing operations, processing of dairy products, poultry and handicrafts. They also perform household chores besides these productive activities. The effect of residence on women labour force participation in urban areas is negative in all provinces and in the overall analyses of Pakistan. The activity rates of rural women depend to a large extent on the social status of the household concerned. Landlessness or land ownership is generally indicative of the poverty or richness respectively of a household. Household incomes are inversely related to women activity rates. Women participation rates fell as a result of increase in rural incomes. In recent years, the increased mechanization of agriculture in Pakistan has also tended to contribute to a decline in rural women's participation rates. In rural areas, women have remained involved in a variety of agricultural activities for a long time, such as land preparation, seed preparation, collecting farmyard manure, weeding and harvesting. Women also undertake the responsibility of cleaning, drying and storage of grains. This increases their workload after the harvesting operations. Taking care of livestock is by and large the responsibility of women. They collect fodder, clean sheds and process animal products.

In 2012 the government revived the National Commission on Status of Women which had been established by General

Profile

I am from Balochistan, a deprived province in Pakistan. I got my MSc degree in gender studies with particular subjects: feminism, status of woman in Pakistan, gender and law, and gender and development. I am an education activist at Alif Ailaan. I am also a national youth leader at the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, and received the Presidential Award last year from the President of Pakistan in the category of the best volunteer. I have conducted numerous activities to advocate the rights of women and raise local people's awareness of women's rights. I am still struggling to protect human rights and help women earn equal status as men in Pakistan. I also put a lot of effort into delivering messages about the importance of education to those areas where there are no institutions for children, especially girls.



Pervez Musharraf for three years in 2000, and had been revived later for three years at a time. The bill moved by the government established the commission as a permanent body with the task to ensure the implementation of the legislation to protect women and combat abuses against women. In February 2012, the Mutehda Qoumi Movement held the world's largest women's political rally in Karachi, with an estimated 100,000 women in attendance. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf PTI has the credit to bring women into the mainstream politics of Pakistan and now the women in Pakistan are contesting in local bodies election as well as in general elections.

In Pakistan, women's access to property, education, employment etc. remains considerably lower compared to men's. The social and cultural context of Pakistani society is predominantly patriarchal. Around 90% of the Pakistani households are headed by men and most female-headed households belong to the poor strata of the society.

Women lack ownership of productive resources. Despite women's legal rights to own and inherit property from their families, very few women have access to and control over these resources. Women's rights in Pakistan are considered equal under Pakistan's dual system of civil and Sharia law. The rights are accorded to women by Pakistan's Islamic Republic Constitution of 1958 and consolidated in 1973, which outlawed gender discrimination on all levels. Nevertheless, women face significant challenges in society and the economy and confront a slow lower courts judicial system in order to get justice.

A census has not been carried out in Pakistan since 1998, but the recent statistics from UNICEF show that the female literacy rate has risen significantly from a paltry 39.6% to a much improved rate of 61.5% for 15- to 24-year-olds. This is a highly significant factor given that 70% of Pakistan's population is under 30.

Pakistan has the Nobel Peace Prize champion Malala Yousafzai, the Oscar award winner Sharmen Obaid Chinoi, and Samina Baig the first Pakistani woman to climb Mount Everest. Pakistan is rising towards development and peace. We hope that soon women in Pakistan will be equal to men in every sphere of life as promised by the Constitution of Pakistan, and will be the leading voice in Pakistan.



Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala



Samina Baig First Pakistani Woman to climb Mount Everest

Reports from the 25th KFAW Foreign Correspondents

The profiles of the correspondents and other reports are available at the KFAW website (<http://www.kfaw.or.jp/correspondents/index.html.en>).

India

Ms. Swapna MAJUMDAR
Independent Journalist



Mongolia

Ms. Turmunkh ODONTUYA
Independent Researcher



Nepal

Ms. Yojana POKHAREL
Yoga Trainer and Facilitator
ACE School



Pakistan

Mr. Saboor Ahmed KAKAR
Education Activist (Alif Ailaan),
National Youth Leader (Pakistan Red
Crescent Society)



The Philippines

Ms. Aiko SHIMIZU
Outreach and Innovations
Coordinator in Youth at Venture



Sri Lanka

Ms. Kanthi Hemamalee
WIJETUNGE
Public Service Commission



KFAW Asian Researchers Network Seminar Your Reproductive Health/Rights. —Why Not Start Life with Cloth Sanitary Pads?

Date Sunday, December 20, 2015, 10:30–12:30

Lecturer Yumi SHIKATA (Professor of the Faculty of Humanities, Miyazaki Municipal University)

Participants 15



If you try to figure out how to make good use of a cloth sanitary pad (a sheet of square cloth) by demonstrating ingenuity in folding or piling such pads, and consider how to achieve comfort during your periods, you will realize that you do not have to endure your menstrual pain and that you have the right to make decisions about yourself. These attitudes are deeply related to your reproductive health/rights. At the seminar, the participants were divided into groups to discuss sexual and reproductive health, such as the positive effects of using cloth sanitary pads and troubles of menstruation.

Support for Accepting Indonesian Nurses and the Lives of Indonesian Women

Date Sunday, February 28, 2016, 13:30–16:00

Lecturer Yoshikazu HARADA (General Director, Foreign Nurse Support Project, Kokura Medical Association)
Kanako ISHIDA (Instructor, Foreign Nurse Support Project, Kokura Medical Association)
Satoko KANZAKI (KFAW Chief Researcher)

Participants 48



The Kokura Medical Association, Kitakyushu City, provides support for Indonesian people who took Japanese nurse examinations under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), failed, and returned to their home country, in order to take the examinations again. At the seminar, members from the organization explained their support activities. Afterwards, the KFAW researcher gave a presentation on the lives of Indonesian women.

27th Seminar on KFAW Research Activities

Date Sunday, February 14, 2016, 13:00–16:30

“Women’s Organizations’ Activities in Communities
—Examples in Indonesia and Japan”

Satoko KANZAKI (KFAW Chief Researcher)

“Can the potential of immigrants be maximized? The Characteristics of Nepali Immigrants from a Gender Perspective”

Mayuko SANO (Associate Professor, Faculty of Integrated Human Studies and Social Sciences, Fukuoka Prefectural University)

Masako TANAKA (Associate Professor, Faculty of Global Studies, Sophia University)

“Domestic Violence Victims Support in Taiwan, Province of China and Malaysia”

Chisato KITANAKA (Associate Professor, Harassment Consultation Office, Hiroshima University)

Utako MATSUMURA (Lecturer, Faculty of Health and Science, Kansai University of Welfare Sciences)

Three teams of researchers gave presentations on the results of their researches conducted from a gender perspective in Indonesia, Nepal, Taiwan, Province of China Malaysia and Japan. The venue was filled with researchers, students, members of women’s organizations and others. Listening to the presentations attentively, they engaged in an active discussion.

For details of the research, please check the KFAW website (only in Japanese).



International Understanding Seminar “KFAW Consulate Series Part 7”

Learn More about Korea and Deepen the Friendship between Japan and Korea

Date Friday, March 4, 2016, 16:00–17:30

Venue 5th Floor Small Seminar Room,
Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE

Lecturer Park Ki-Jun Deputy Consul General of the Consulate
General of the Republic of Korea in Fukuoka

Participants 37

Deputy Consul General Park Ki-Jun spoke about a wide variety of topics, including Japan and Korea’s respective women’s policies, histories, literature, and food cultures. He also stated that Korea was a neighbor of Japan, and that the two

countries could share common values, through literature and cultural interaction. In addition, he referred to an episode involving one female student from Kyushu at a Japan-Korea youth forum held a few years before. At the event, the female student proposed that Korean and Japanese people should become “People of the Sea of Genkai.” He said that her sense of community transcending national boundaries had given him a great sense of hope.

He concluded the seminar by expressing his hope that the friendship between Japan and Korea would be further deepened through Kyushu based on the vision of neighbors that are close not only geographically, but also emotionally.



At the seminar

KFAW’s Visit to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs of Cambodia and Other Gender-Related Organizations

For six days from Sunday, November 29 to Friday, December 4, 2015, we visited Phnom Penh City and Kampong Chhnang Province in Cambodia. In the first half of the tour, we visited the Ministry of Women’s Affairs of Cambodia, the JICA Cambodia Office and the Women Development Center (WDC), in order to exchange opinions regarding the program of the Seminar on Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers, which has been commissioned by JICA to KFAW. In the second half, we visited two NGOs, namely, the Cambodian Handicraft Association (CHA) and the Cambodian Women’s Development Agency (CWDA), as well as a studio which has revitalized Kampong Chhnang Pottery, a type of ceramics

produced during days of the Khmer Empire, in order to learn about the activities of women in the country.

This visit helped us learn not only about the country’s gender issues, but also about international society’s support for the development of the country, as well as about the impact of the past severe Civil War on the present Cambodian society.



In front of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs of Cambodia