

Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

A Study on Selected 2017 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

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1. Introduction

This study aims to identify ways for gender perspectives to be integrated into the national implementation process of Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) adopted at the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015. The 2030 Agenda is a global plan of actions for the year of 2030 to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies and transform the world to be sustainable and resilient with the meaningful participation of stakeholders, while leaving no one behind as a principle. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are composed of 17 goals and 169 targets as well as 232 indicators for follow-up and review, are the core of the 2030 Agenda, although sometimes the SDGs is interchangeably used with the 2030 Agenda.

In terms of gender equality, the 2030 Agenda recognizes that gender inequality remains, and the gender disparities of opportunity, wealth and power are a global challenge. The 2030 Agenda articulates the importance of this issue in three ways. First, in paragraph twenty of the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda, it is stated that “Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets” and “The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.” Secondly, the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda has Goal 5, which is a stand-alone goal on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (GE&EWG). Under Goal 5, nine targets are identified to achieve it. Thirdly, according to the recognition of the crucial role of mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout the 2030 Agenda, gender related language is referred to in several targets other than Goal 5; such as Goal 1 (poverty), Goal 2 (food and nutrition), Goal 4 (education), Goal 6 (water and sanitation), Goal 8 (economy and employment), Goal 11 (cities) and Goal 13 (climate change). In addition, more goals and targets contain indicators with gender related terms.

As indicated in the *Global Gender Gap Report 2018*, Japan lags far behind the world in terms of gender parity. According to the Global Gender Gap Index of the *Report*, Japan ranks as low as 110 out of 149 nations. Thus, achieving gender equality is an urgently required task for Japan. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs is an opportunity for Japan to accelerate the narrowing of gender gaps. In other words, without realizing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, the 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved in Japan.

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2. Methodology

This study references 13 out of 43 voluntary national reviews (VNRs) submitted to and presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) held in July of 2017. The HLPF, an official follow-up and review mechanism for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is held every year under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The 13 VNRs include reviews from seven European Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) member countries, including Japan, and six other Asian countries. The seven OECD/DAC member countries are selected because they are similar in position to Japan as donor countries of development assistance. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a predecessor of SDGs, universality is a norm of SDGs, thus, international cooperation is important for the global achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, as the EU OECD/DAC countries are positioned at a higher rank on the Global Gender Gap Index than Japan, it is expected that the experiences of the EU OECD/DAC countries will provide Japan with a clue to promote gender equality. The six Asian countries were selected because of geographical and relational proximity to Japan.

The 13 countries analyzed in this study are shown as below with their 2017 Global Gender Gap Index rank enclosed in parentheses: Japan (114), Belgium (31), Denmark (14), Italy (82), the Netherlands (32), Portugal (33) and Sweden (5) from OECD/DAC member countries and Bangladesh (47), India (108), Indonesia (84), Malaysia (104), Nepal (111) and Thailand (75) from Asian countries.

This study uses six analytical criteria with a special focus on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls referring to the *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017 (Synthesis 2017)* by the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of UN ECOSOC. Although the *Synthesis 2017* covers all 43 VNRs submitted in 2017 and provides a useful overview and trends, its analytical criteria do not include criteria on gender, except Goal 5. Thus, it is difficult to find how a VNR addressed gender equality and mainstreaming of gender perspectives. The analytical criteria of *Synthesis 2017* are as follows: goals and targets, leaving no one behind, monitoring and data, bringing the SDGs into the national context, institutions, coherence with regional and global frameworks, stakeholder engagement, awareness-raising and means of implementation.

The six gender-focused analytical criteria for this study are:

- (1) Priorities of GE&EWG in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- (2) Present situation of gender equality, achievements and challenges
- (3) Mainstreaming of a gender perspective
- (4) Gender in "Leaving no one behind"
- (5) Stakeholder engagement and GE&EWG
- (6) GE&EWG in international development cooperation

There are limitations to using the 2017 VNRs as a source of analysis due to three reasons. First, the VNR is an official review submitted by the State to the UN. Although the 2030 Agenda encourages governments to consult with stakeholders during the reviewing processes, the final decision lies with a government. Secondly, the review covers only one year after the launching of 2030 Agenda that started in January 2016. Thus, it is too early to identify the achievements and challenges of the 2030 Agenda. Thirdly, the contents, volume and forms of VNR are diverse due to the report's voluntary nature. This makes comparison among the VNRs difficult. Despite these limitations, the study's analysis of VNRs with special focus on gender is unique. Each VNR provides rich information on efforts towards the implementing of the 2030 Agenda, including challenges, gaps and lessons learned.

3. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Japan

In May of 2016, Japanese Government established the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, headed by the Prime Minister and comprised of all ministers to promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Then, in September 2016, the government set up a roundtable meeting composed of 14 members from a wide range of stakeholders, including NGO/NPO/CSOs, private sectors, academia and international organizations. Out of fourteen members, there are three representatives from civil society and four female members (29%) across all stakeholders. The roundtable meetings have been held occasionally since then.

In December of 2016, the government adopted the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (Guiding Principles), which represent Japan's national vision and strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Based on the Guiding Principles, the SDGs Action Plan for 2018 was adopted by the Cabinet and that for 2019 followed.

In the Guiding Principles, Japan's vision is to "become a leader toward a future where economic, social and environmental improvements are attained in an integrated, sustainable and resilient manner while leaving no one behind." The Guiding Principles are annexed with concrete policy measures, which are only current but not new policies.

The Guiding Principles identified eight priority areas and restructured the goals and targets of the SDGs in light of Japan's national context.

Chart 1. Priority areas and related SDGs

Priority areas	Related SDGs
(1) Empowerment of All People	1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12
(2) Achievement of Good Health and Longevity	3
(3) Creating Growth Markets, Revitalization of Rural Areas, and Promoting Science Technology and Innovation Technology and Innovation	2, 8, 9, 11
(4) Sustainable and Resilient Land Use, Promoting Quality Infrastructure	2, 6, 9, 11

(5) Energy Conservation, Renewable Energy, Climate Change Countermeasures, and Sound Material-Cycle Society	7, 12, 13
(6) Conservation of Environment, including Biodiversity, Forests and the Oceans	2, 3, 14, 15
(7) Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies	16
(8) Strengthening the Means and Frameworks for the Implementation of the SDGs	17

4. Gender in the Guiding Principles and Japan's VNR

The Guiding Principles as well as Japan's VNR recognize gender inequality as a challenge by quoting data from the Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany and the Sustainable Development Solution Network, but not by quoting its own data. Although the tone of statement is a little diplomatic, the Guiding Principles state that gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective are a universally accepted, have cross-sectorial value and are indispensable in attaining all goals. In addition, they not only recognize that well-developed gender statistics for the advancement of gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective is important but also pledge to make efforts to collect gender disaggregated data as much as possible. In this way, the Guiding Principles regards gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective as essential for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Despite the aforementioned recognition, questions remain about its real implementation because Goal 5 is included as one of six goals under the Priority area 1, namely, Empowerment of All People. Considering there are eight priority areas and that Priority area 1 embraces six goals, it can be calculated that Goal 5 is merely 1/48 of the efforts for the achievement of SDGs in Japan. In fact, this Goal 5's position is still far away from the statement that says gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective are "indispensable in attaining all goals". Furthermore, neither gender nor women are referred to in the other seven priority areas. One cannot help questioning whether Japan's stance on gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective are merely just statements. While Japan's VNR focuses on women in the workforce in Japan's aging society, whose labor shortage hinders severely economic prosperity, it reluctantly acknowledges gender inequality as a challenge by introducing the data from foreign organizations.

As Japan's VNR's structure follows that of the Guiding Principles, Goal 5's statement volume in the VNR is 1/48 and the enthusiasm to promote gender equality is likely as weak as one 1/48. Even the word "gender" appears much less frequently than "women" especially in terms of domestic measures, suggesting more emphasis is given to women rather than to gender equality in Japan's VNR. Even the subtitle of "Promote gender equality and women's empowerment" seems to be nominal.

Although Japan's VNR briefly touches upon the problems about the low proportion of

women in leadership positions and insufficient efforts to prevent harassment related to pregnancy and childbearing, but not sexual harassment at work, the VNR mainly describes the measures to support companies for women's empowerment. Such measures as "Supporting Tools for Establishment of General Business Owner Action Plans" which allows companies to formulate their own action plans toward their female workers' empowerment, and "Database of Companies Promoting Women's Participation and Advancement" which officially publishes companies' information and action plans on women's empowerment on the Japanese government's webpage, are highlighted as good examples. And Japan's VNR proudly declares that 99.9% of large companies (with 301 or more employees) formulated action plans as a result of these measures. But the action plans do not necessarily promise achievements.

In addition, the issues related to women's labor participation are also mentioned under the subsection of Working-style Reform in the Priority area 1 in Japan's VNR. While women as a part of society are expected to play active roles in all places including the workplace, at home and the local community, the VNR perceives that women consciously choose non-regular work to reconcile the responsibilities of childcare and nursing. The VNR admits the wage differences between non-regular and regular work is larger in Japan than other developed countries. At the same time, the VNR makes no reference to a persistent gender norm that tacitly calls for women to shoulder the care responsibility. Without changing the gender norm, women continue to bear the dual burdens of domestic chores and work for earning with less pay.

Likewise, mainstreaming a gender perspective has not materialized. Although the Guiding Principles and Japan's VNR acknowledge mainstreaming as crucial, the statement on the violence against children in Priority area 7 - Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies, girls, who are the most vulnerable on gender-based violence, for example, are not mentioned. In addition, the Japanese VNR regarding gender-based violence only states that it is CSOs who have been working to eliminate it. This gives the impression that the government is indifferent, and no policies and measures are being taken to reduce gender-based violence, even though the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims exists. These examples show that a gender perspective is not truly mainstreamed in the Japanese Guiding Principles and VNR.

Regarding international cooperation, Japan's VNR shows more positive commitments than domestic efforts towards the promotion of women's empowerment and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective. Based on the "Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" adopted in 2016, the VNR outlines not only a concrete budget for a designated period but also uses language concerning gender and/or women appear in various goals, such as Goal 3 Health and Goal 6 Water and sanitation in addition to Goal 5. However, Japan's VNR again focuses more on women's empowerment but not on gender equality. This is different from the focus of EU OECD/DAC countries.

5. Analysis

The major findings of the 13 VNRs according to the six frameworks are as below. They are full of interesting cases but not promising in terms of gender mainstreaming.

(1) Priorities of GE&EWG in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

The majority of VNRs emphasize gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as a core principle in promoting the 2030 Agenda. Almost all VNRs state that in their strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, they prioritize the GE&EWG. However, the way of expression varies. For example, Portugal's VNR emphasizes "[T]he gender equality dimension should therefore be taken into account whenever any public policy is devised and carried out...." Another example is in the Foreword of Malaysia's VNR. There, the Prime Minister stated, "Malaysia has consistently shown its commitment to achieving gender equality and promoting the rights of women and girls." The other expression of commitment to gender equality is the use of symbolic words, such as, 'gender diplomacy' of The Netherlands and 'feminist policies' of Sweden. By using this kind of language, these countries demonstrate their priorities.

In addition, many countries introduced laws, policies and programs as a legal and political basis of promoting gender equality together with the advancement of 2030 Agenda. Some examples are the Gender Equality Act 2015 of Thailand, the National Women Development Policy of Bangladesh, the National Plan for Gender Equality of Portugal and the Federal Plan for the Execution of Gender Mainstreaming of Belgium. Japan's VNR regrettably does not touch upon the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society and Basic Plan for Gender Equality, but it introduces the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace by reflecting on the government's emphasis on women's labor participation in the workforce.

Institutionally diverse ministries play a key role in promoting the 2030 Agenda in each country, but none of them is the one that in charge of promoting gender equality. Furthermore, no relationship between the ministries in charge of promoting the 2030 Agenda and the way of promoting gender equality was observed among the 13 VNR countries. That is, the commitment to gender equality is not affected by whether Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other Ministries coordinate the implementation of 2030 Agenda nationally. Rather, it is strong political will at the top versus action at the ministerial level that promotes gender equality.

(2) Present situation of gender equality, achievements and challenges

To explain the present situation, achievements and challenges for gender equality, diverse issues, such as, economic power, leadership and decision-making, unpaid care work, gender-based violence, education, health and gender norm, are referred in the VNRs. The following are some excerpts.

i) Economic power

Although the level of inequality varies by countries, almost of all VNRs refer to gender inequality in the economic domain, namely, the gender gap related to labour participation, income, employment opportunity and promotion or leadership positions. Among these inequalities, women's concentration on part time work and low employment position are often attributed to women's lower income and identified as a challenge especially among EU OECD/DAC countries, such as Sweden and The Netherlands. On the other hand, the increase in labour participation rate was highlighted as an indicator of progress in some Asian countries. A notable example is Bangladesh, which while acknowledging women's financial inclusion as the driving force of its rural economic and social development, connects women's economic empowerment to national development.

The view on part time work is dichotomized. On one hand, such countries like Malaysia and Japan see it as an opportunity for women by making domestic responsibility compatible with paid work. On the other hand, Sweden and The Netherlands see it as the cause of income disparity. Regardless of whether part time work is viewed positively or negatively, many VNRs foresee that part time work and irregular jobs will increase due to the progress of the fourth industrial revolution and/or digital economy, implying that integration of a gender perspective in digitalization is urgently required.

ii) Women in leadership and decision-making position

Many VNRs refer to the percentage of women in leadership positions in the economic domain. Although the percentage is similar-about 20 to 30%, some countries, such as Malaysia and Nepal, see this as an achievement. Alternatively, others like The Netherlands, sees this percentage as insufficient and promote a campaign to increase the number of women in leadership positions in cooperation with the business sector. Another interesting example is found in Bangladesh. There the Union Digital Centres (UDCs), one-stop information and service delivery outlets, were set up in all Union Councils, the lowest tier of the local government. And a pair of citizen entrepreneurs-one male and one female, run the UDCs to serve the underserved population, such as rural women and people with disabilities.

Most VNRs use the percentage of women in parliament to show gender parity and disparity in decision-making and leadership positions in political arena. Bangladesh, again, is a champion in this regard. As the Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the House, the Leader of the opposition, the Deputy Leader of the House are all women, Bangladesh is highly ranked in terms of the Global Gender Gap's political empowerment score. Another interesting case is reported by Nepal in which the cooperative sector contributes to the advancement of gender equality. Namely, more than a half of cooperative members are women and 50% of decision-making positions of the cooperative sector is shared by women. These examples show that fantastic measures are being taken towards gender parity in the world.

iii) Unpaid care work

Many VNRs state that Target 5.4 of SDG Goal 5 - "to recognize and value unpaid care

and domestic work and to share responsibility within the household and the family," is a challenge. Several countries, such as Belgium, Portugal, Thailand connect this challenge with persistent gendered norms and practice. Other countries, for example India, expressed their willingness to start conducting a use of time survey. Japan, which attributes this issue to long working hours widely practiced in the society, proposes working-style reform as a solution to enable more men take care work at home. Given the firm and persistent gender division of labor in Japan, it is uncertain if working-style reform alone is enough to change the prevailing practice toward the sharing of care work.

iv) Violence against women (VAW)/ Gender based violence (GBV)

VAW and or GBV are commonly acknowledged as challenges in both EU and Asian VNRs. Indonesia uniquely conducted an interview survey on VAW of 9,000 households at the national level and the survey results were reported in the VNR. About the form of violence, some VNRs point to online violence against women and girls as emerging issues in the new era of digital economies in addition to the persistent forms of VAW/GBV of domestic violence and human trafficking. Several VNRs specified those who need special consideration in designing and implementing measures against VAW/GBV, such as young women, LGBTI people and victims of sexual violence. As the SDGs' global indicators on VAW are included in the Goal 11 and Goal 16 of SDGs, in addition to Goal 5, the issue of VAW/GBV is possibly addressed in these goals and other SDGs throughout their implementation processes.

It was found that the use VAW or GBV terms is not always mentioned in connection with LGBTQI people in the VNRs. Some countries use GBV instead of VAW but do refer to LGBT people in its VNR. The countries that include this kind of language, such as LGBT, LGBTI, LGBTQ and SOGI in their VNRs are six out of thirteen VNRs. This six includes one Asian country, Nepal, suggesting that recognition and acceptance of this issue is spreading globally.

Generally, health and education are regarded as an issue for international development in OECD/DAC countries. Alternatively, they are the indicators of achievement of gender parity in most Asian countries. When discussing gender in health, statements in the VNRs tend to concentrate on maternal and child health, but not on a gender perspective in the whole health sector. Some Asian VNRs use the language of sexual and reproductive health without mentioning rights, whereas OECD/DAC's VNRs emphasize sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), especially in international cooperation.

(3) Mainstreaming of a gender perspective

Although the 2030 Agenda highlights mainstreaming of a gender perspective as crucial to implementation, this language is not necessarily present in many VNRs. It is only six VNRs that include this expression. Four of the six, including Portugal, put it at the core of 2030 Agenda's implementation. Japan is one of the six countries, but it only quotes this language without substantial measures to carry it out.

Gender responsive budgeting is often used as a tool for gender mainstreaming. Among the thirteen VNRs, six refer to gender budgeting or gender responsive budgeting, including

three Asian VNRs. Half of the six VNRs refer to gender budgeting as a tool of gender mainstreaming but others do not. Either related to the 2030 Agenda or based on other legal frameworks, such as the constitution, the six countries introduce gender responsive budgeting in practice under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance or an equivalent institution. This suggests involvement of a financial institution is important.

The other aspect of mainstreaming of a gender perspective is to integrate a gender perspective in all SDG goals and targets. Despite the statement of the 2030 Agenda on the mainstreaming, not many VNRs refer to gender or women in SDG goals other than Goal 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. This indicates that gender equality is not actually positioned at the core of actions for the 2030 Agenda.

Sweden's VNR most widely refers to gender in eleven out of seventeen SDG goals. But even this most mainstreamed VNR barely integrates gender in its environmental goals. In fact, environmental areas are the least gender mainstreamed. A few exceptional examples of gender mainstreaming in the goals other than Goal 5 are the inclusion of a gender perspective in the flexible labor market along with the introduction of the digital economy and public transportation in Belgium's and Portugal's VNR respectively. Although many VNRs mention the fourth industrial revolution and digital economy as a direction forward, gender gaps in access to and obtaining skills on digital technology are rarely addressed. Likewise, the issues of youth unemployment, migrants, trafficking in persons and child pornography are often pointed out as problems in VNRs, but a gender perspective is absent. In this way, gender mainstreaming is sporadic and not yet systematically integrated in VNRs as was required by the 2030 Agenda.

(4) Gender in "Leaving no one behind"

"Leaving no one behind" is a principle of the 2030 Agenda. Those who are at risk of being left behind are identified in most VNRs. People with disabilities, ethnic minorities, the less educated, migrants, single women with small children, LGBTQI people, sex workers and those with multiple disadvantages are identified in the OECD/DAC's VNRs except Japan. The poor, people with disabilities and the elderly are often mentioned in the VNRs of Asian countries, but the gender dimension is not expressly stated in Asian VNRs.

It is worthy of note that Bangladesh's VNR identifies those who are far from digital technologies as the vulnerable, while the country pursues 'Digital Bangladesh' as a strategy of national development. As was introduced above, the assignment of a male and a female entrepreneur respectively to run the UDCs is one of the measures taken by Bangladesh towards the "Leaving no one behind" with clear inclusion of gender perspectives. Bangladesh's integration of a gender perspective in digitalization provides Japan with a hint as to how it can promote digitalization called Society 5.0 through SDGs implementation.

(5) Stakeholder engagement and GE&EWG

In terms of stakeholders' participation, almost all VNRs state that the government consulted with stakeholders, including civil society organizations and women's groups during in the drafting process of VNRs. Some governments institutionalized consultations with stakeholders. However, it is not clearly articulated whether the stakeholders' participation contributed to the promotion of gender equality and to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective.

(6) GE&EWG in international development cooperation

In the field of development cooperation, most EU and OECD/DAC countries, emphasize how actively they promote gender equality and the rights of women and girls through development cooperation. Some EU countries especially promote strongly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and the rights of LGBTIQI people, as well as the prevention of gender-based violence through their development assistance. One advanced example is the Belgian VNRs that introduces a new attempt to use a mobile application to gather evidence and safely store it in the 'cloud' to fight against impunity following sexual violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Japanese VNR narrowly focuses on women's economic empowerment rather than the promotion of gender equality in a whole society.

Compared to OECD/DAC countries that promote gender equality through development cooperation, Asian countries, as recipients of development assistance, rarely express how outside development assistance is important to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment at home. Furthermore, Asian countries as donors, do mention some areas like poverty reduction and environmental protection as an area of their contribution and also often refer to internationally agreed frameworks such as Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. However, they do not mention gender equality nor women's empowerment in their development assistance. It seems GE&EWG is not emphasized in Asia's development cooperation.

6. Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda and SDGs provide a new opportunity to address and advance GE&EWG by prioritizing it in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The regular review and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda's achievements through the VNRs and the HLPF also enhances the accountability and transparency toward achieving gender equality. As was introduced in this study, the most positive aspect of VNRs is the demonstration of rich and various efforts and measures taken by governments and other stakeholders.

This study, however, revealed that the mainstreaming of a gender perspective is not yet truly realized. It remains a challenge because most VNRs refer gender issues only in

relation to the SDG Goal 5. Especially, the lack of gender perspectives in environmental goals is a serious problem, considering that the 2030 Agenda emphasizes environmental sustainability as one of its core values for 2030. In this regard, EU OECD/DAC countries are no exception. More efforts need to be made to integrate gender perspectives into all SDG goals.

Among Asian nations, where some progressive measures for gender mainstreaming are observed, one common aspect in the observed countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal is the advancement of women's decision-making position both at the national level and at the grassroots level. The two countries have a mechanism to ensure gender parity in decision-making like the assignment of a male and a female entrepreneur at UDCs in Bangladesh and Nepal's half of 6 million members including those in leadership positions in the cooperative sector who are women. These good examples suggest that gender mainstreaming can be promoted along with measures to bring about gender parity in decision-making.

Another important point is data collection as was demonstrated in Indonesia and Malaysia on VAW and SRH respectively. In fact, many VNRs included their own statistical data to contrary to Japan's VNR that only quoted data from a study by foreign organizations to admit the existence of gender inequality. Data is highly related to global indicators. Therefore, collecting and utilizing gender disaggregated data is a basis for implementation and monitoring.

This study found the following six points are significant especially for Japan to promote the gender equality through the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

- (1) To re-organize the SDGs Guiding Principles by making gender equality a stand-alone area and connecting it to existing legal and political frameworks for gender equality.
- (2) To cover such problems as harassment at work, gender parity in decision-making, VAW/GBV, unpaid care work and the changes in gender norms in the Guiding Principles and the VNR other than narrowly focusing on women's participation in the labor market.
- (3) To integrate a gender perspective in all priority areas, especially as related to Society 5.0, which is one of Japanese government's major strategies for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation.
- (4) To identify and pay special attention to those who tend to be left behind, including poor single parents with children, the single elderly women, victims of all forms of sexual violence, women migrants and the digitally divided in order to accomplish a inclusive and sustainable society.
- (5) To collect and publish gender disaggregated data on all goals and targets of SDGs.

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