

Statement of the 16th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

Celebrating the publication of Women's History in Kitakyushu, we, the participants of the 16th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women (KCAW), have deepened our understanding of women's achievements in Asian history, including Japan. Women in Asia have woven and are continuing to weave a colorful textile with the threads of uniqueness and commonality.

As we look back, we acknowledge the contribution made by women in Asia to nation building as well as to human development despite the prevailing oppression, destruction and conflicts experienced in the region. While women have created a history of liberation from each of these, their contributions have never been underscored in the scholarly pursuit of 'his-tory' or in the views of the wider society. Thus, we need to shed light on women's lives and achievements, and give visibility to them.

Throughout modern history, women have always supported families and contributed to the national economies, often doing unpaid, low paid or irregular work. Women have been "fired first and hired last." In spite of the difficulties women have faced historically, they have steadily expanded working opportunities and improved conditions through collective efforts. Learning from the experiences and efforts of women in the past, we, the participants of KCAW, affirm that women's solidarity enhancing diversity is essential for the further advancement of women's status and gender equality in an era of globalization.

While educating themselves, women have broadened opportunities for women and girls generally to receive education in many countries through individual and combined efforts. Thanks to these efforts, women's access to education has improved in many parts of Asia. But we should not forget that this does not automatically guarantee women's empowerment and gender equality. We, the participants of KCAW, pledge our further commitment to promote gender equality in and through education, training and life-long learning in all fields and at all levels.

Women throughout history have been caring for the well-being of families, people and society. Women are advocating policies that encourage the sharing of care responsibilities, focusing on vulnerable and discriminated people in society. We, the participants of KCAW, pledge to continue these efforts to build a just society regardless of gender and age differences, so that every member can enjoy her/his human rights, live in health and peace with respect, free of violence including sexual violence and human trafficking.

Inheriting our predecessors' accomplishments, we, the participants of KCAW, join together to make collective efforts and call on others to create a better world in which gender equality and social justice are achieved. We will advance our cause hand in hand with women throughout Asia.

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