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Women Today

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 Years Later

Twenty years ago, 189 governments came together to sign the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a blueprint for gender equality and women's empowerment. Generations have been inspired by this bold commitment to change, and the past two decades have brought progress on many fronts – but we still have a long path ahead of us, which needs us to take transformative action.

We are seeing better laws to promote gender equality and address violence against women and girls. Girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education has increased, more women are participating in the labour force, especially in Latin America, and most regions have made progress in increasing women's access to contraception, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Yet many of the same barriers that were recognized by the Beijing signatories are still in force globally and no country has achieved gender equality. At the current pace it will take us 81 years to achieve gender parity in economic participation, and another 50 years before we see the equal representation of women in politics.

The overall picture is of slow and uneven implementation, with serious stagnation and even regression in several areas. Around the world, women currently make up just 22 per cent of parliamentarians, are consistently paid less than men, and shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. Gender stereotypes continue to be deeply entrenched in the minds of individuals, institutions and societies.

Persistent conflicts, the global financial and economic crises, volatile food and energy prices, food insecurity and climate change have also intensified inequalities, with specific impacts on women and girls. Fragile gains towards gender equality are threatened by rising extremism and its backlash against women's rights.

Progress has been particularly slow for the most marginalized women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Governments and other stakeholders have in many cases taken strong and positive action. But policy prioritization has not been consistent across all critical areas of concern.

Urgent action is required in five priority areas:

1. Transforming discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes.
2. Transforming the economy to achieve gender equality and sustainable development.
3. Ensuring the full and equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels.
4. Significantly increasing investments in gender equality.
5. Strengthening accountability for gender equality and the realization of the human rights of women and girls.



United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director of UN Women

Ms. Phumzile MLAMBO-NGCUKA

Creating a world with greater equality for generations to come is the defining challenge of this century. Gender equality and the realization of women's human rights are fundamental for achieving human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development and must be central to the post-2015 development agenda.

We will know that we have succeeded in our efforts when:

- all women have equal rights, and equal access to justice, power, resources and opportunities
- all women and girls live their lives free from violence and discrimination
- women can make decisions about their bodies, health and sexuality, free from discrimination, violence and coercion
- women enjoy equal pay for equal work, and equal access to decent work
- unpaid care work is fairly shared between men and women and no longer presents a barrier for women's and girls' participation in social, political and economic life
- women have an equal voice in decision-making at all levels, including in peace and security discussions
- persistent gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes no longer limit opportunities and outcomes.

We have set 2030 as the expiry date for gender inequality. Achieving this will require unprecedented political leadership, dedicated and vastly increased resources, and new partnerships across the whole of society.

I urge all women, men, boys and girls to stand with us as we develop and implement the new post-2015 development agenda, at whose heart lies the renewed vision of a just, sustainable and prosperous world in balance – a 50:50 Planet.

Biography of Ms. Phumzile MLAMBO-NGCUKA

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, sworn into office on 19 August 2013. She has worked in government, private sector and civil society and was actively involved in the struggle to end apartheid in her home country of South Africa.

She was a member of South Africa's first democratic government and served as Deputy President from 2005 to 2008, overseeing programmes to combat poverty and bring the advantages of a growing economy to the poor.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka began her career as a teacher and gained international experience as a coordinator at the World YWCA in Geneva, where she established a global programme for young women. She is the founder of the Umlambo Foundation, which supports leadership and education.

The United Nations and Gender Equality: Beyond Beijing + 20



KFAW President

Mitsuko HORIUCHI

Professor, Bunkyo Gakuin University Graduate School of Foreign Studies (2006 to present). Currently holds the posts of the President of Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women, and Chairperson of Stop Child Labour Network. Formerly, Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Office in Japan as well as the ILO Special Regional Advisor on Gender Issues (2001-2005), ILO Assistant Director-General for Asia and the Pacific (1996-2000), Minister of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations (1993-1996) and Cabinet Counselor and Director, Office for Women's Affairs, Prime Minister's Office (1990-1993).

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the World War II and the establishment of the United Nations. Such milestone anniversaries offer an opportunity for the UN to renew its commitment to world peace. The preamble of the UN Charter determines “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the equal rights of men and women.”

The UN has been making every effort to advance the status of women and gender equality since its inception. The four world conferences on women which have been held since 1975, International Women's Year, have been tremendous driving forces to promote gender equality at the national level. At the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action were adopted. Since that time these instruments have afforded powerful policy /action guidelines towards achieving gender equality worldwide. (The front-page essay of this newsletter on Beijing + 20 by Dr. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women will give readers a better understanding of the progress and challenges we have faced and continue to face.)

For my part, I have been involved in two world conferences, in Beijing and Nairobi, from inside or outside the United Nations. In the Nairobi conference (Third World Conference on Women) in 1985, I was staff of the UN; in the Beijing I was a representative of the government delegation; also involved in the conference preparation and follow-up. With this experience, permit me to stress that national policies and actions must be strengthened if future progress is to be made.

Nor should we forget the great role that civil society or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been playing in the quest for gender equality. The UN recognizes NGOs' important roles by granting consultative status in the Economic and Social Council. There is no question that NGOs have traditionally had great impact on the progress of gender equality. They have been holding NGO world forums parallel to the different governmental world conferences. During the Beijing conference a parallel NGO Forum held in Huairou drew more than 30,000 participants. At the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 59: Beijing + 20) as many as 400 parallel events were organized by NGOs. Furthermore it is noteworthy to mention that domestic NGOs became eligible for obtaining

consultative status in 1996; this makes many NGOs in developing countries even more active in the UN.

The Beijing Platform for Action identifies 12 critical areas of concerns that are as relevant today as they were 20 years ago: poverty; education and training; health; violence; armed conflict; the economy; power and decision-making; institutional mechanism; human rights; the media; the environment; and the girl-child. I should mention that six issues/areas are noteworthy which have policy implications as well. They include: empowerment; equal participation of women and men in the decision making process; resurgence of human rights; reproductive health; the girl child; and violence against women including under armed conflict. At the 23rd special session of the General Assembly in 2000 (Beijing +5) six other issues present challenges; trafficking in persons; HIV/AIDS; indigenous women; ICT (Information and Communication Technology); Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the role of men and boys. The task of CSW, an important UN organ of gender policy, is to follow up on the said conference and session.

In conclusions, I will highlight just a few critical challenges. The Beijing conference transformed the policy objective from the advancement of women's status to a broader issue of gender equality which involves entire society. Therefore, gender mainstreaming must be strengthened in all spheres of society through assuring gender-equal perspectives in every issue. One good practices in the UN has been the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325. We also must do our best this year to integrate fully gender perspective into the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The second challenge is the empowerment of women. We must create an environment conducive to the full exercise of women's potential. The third challenge is violence against women. In a time of terrorism and extremist activities, in particular, we must take action to prevent and protect women from gender-based violence. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women does not include violence explicitly. Although there exist detailed CEDAW general recommendations on violence, I think it is imperative to craft an optional protocol on violence against women. We still have too many things to do if we are to attain gender equality. The Global Gender Gap Report 2014 suggests that we will have to wait until 2095 for gender parity in the workplace. I urge a new generation of advocates to join us towards further progress.

World Report: *Asian Women Today*

– Learn More about the World from Foreign Correspondents!

■ Date & Time:

Saturday, January 24, 2015, 10:00 – 12:00

■ Venue:

Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, “MOVE,” 5th floor, Main Seminar Room

■ No. of Participants: 74

■ Panelists:

Saboor AHMED (23rd KFAW foreign correspondent [Pakistan])
Marisna YULIANTI (24th KFAW foreign correspondent [Indonesia])
Swapna MAJUMDAR (22nd KFAW foreign correspondent [India])
Amelia LO (24th KFAW foreign correspondent [Hong Kong])

■ Coordinator:

Daisuke FUJII (Associate professor at the Faculty of International Studies, Kyushu International University)

We held the seminar “World Report: Asian Women Today,” inviting four speakers from four Asian countries who presently serve or used to serve as KFAW foreign correspondents. At the event, they spoke about the situation of Asian women and children.

Current Situation of Education in Pakistan

Report from Mr. Saboor AHMED
(Pakistan)



In Pakistan, approximately 25 million children aged between 5 and 16 do not go to school. The reasons include the fact that many parents in farming areas believe it unnecessary for girls to receive an education, that schools are located too far away, and that the quality of education is so low that children cannot maintain their motivation to continue studying. At the same time, thanks to awareness campaigns promoted by Ms. Malala Yousafzai, who received the Nobel Peace Prize, and NGOs, an increasing number of people are beginning to notice the necessity of education. To improve the domestic situation surrounding education, the government has implemented various measures, such as providing free compulsory education for children aged between 5 and 16, and increasing the educational budget from the current 2% of GDP to 4%.

Women in Indonesia: Hope and Trial

Report from Ms. Marisna YULIANTI
(Indonesia)



In Indonesia, a wide variety of laws and treaties have been adopted to date, in order to achieve a gender equal society. However, the operation of these laws and treaties is influenced by biased cultural values and sexual discrimination, biased interpretations of religious doctrines, and the lack of appropriate awareness by government officials.

The stereotype is still pervasive that women should stay home, while men should work outside to earn money. Under the matrimonial law of Indonesia, women are not regarded as the head of a household. In addition, even if more appropriate laws are established, there is a still long way to go in order to realize a gender equal society unless there is improvement in the awareness of government officials, legal enforcement organizations and the general public.

Lost Girls in India

Report from Ms. Swapna MAJUMDAR
(India)



According to the FY 2011 national census of India, the ratio of boys to girls aged between zero and six is 1,000 (boys) to only 919 (girls). Behind this is the excessive preference for boys over girls in India. In particular, in poor areas of India, brides need to pay a large dowry to bridegrooms, causing girls to be regarded as an economic burden for their families. Accordingly, on finding out that they will be having a girl, some pregnant women choose an abortion, leading to the drastic decrease in the birth rate for girls over the past 30 years. Moreover, to control the population, the Indian government had adopted a family planning policy, which recommends that women undergo sterilization in exchange for money and goods, and some women are forced by their families to have such an operation. To fight against this violation of women's rights, many women are now standing up one after another.

Sadness of Female University Graduates in Hong Kong

Report from Ms. Amelia LO
(Hong Kong)



In Hong Kong, even excellent female university graduates are expected by the people around them to get married once they begin to work as a full-fledged member of society. This forces them to face various forms of pressure. Also, the cultural values of the past demand that they should quit their jobs after having a baby, and devote themselves to household chores. Amidst this situation, there are signs of a change in the legal system of Hong Kong. In the past, when getting divorced and living separately, there were few cases where women were recognized for their contribution in the form of household chores that they had continued making since quitting their jobs on the request of their husbands. Presently, however, in case of a long-term marriage, the principle is the equal distribution of the couple's assets between the husband and wife. It is necessary to change people's stereotypical perception of gender roles, not only through the establishment of appropriate laws and systems, but also through education

and awareness programs.

The reports from these foreign correspondents were followed by a Q&A session in English between the foreign correspondents and eight university students in Kitakyushu City who participated in the event as supporters. The students asked questions such as what action local people were taking in order to achieve a gender-equal society, and why the status of women was low in each country.

After the seminar, we held an interaction event, where participants actively exchanged opinions with the foreign correspondents in a fun atmosphere.



Q&A session at World Report

► KFAW Foreign Correspondents Visit an Elementary School in Kitakyushu City

- **Date & Time:** Friday, January 23, 2015, 10:00 - 12:30
- **Venue:** Kokura-Chuo Elementary School

KFAW foreign correspondents visited an elementary school in Kitakyushu City (Kokura-Chuo Elementary School) and interacted with the school's fourth-grade students as part of the school's international understanding program.

The students asked the foreign correspondents questions on the lifestyles and school life in their respective countries. The questions ranged from how students studied and played at school, to what types of sports were popular. They enjoyed exchanging opinions on various topics in a fun atmosphere.

After this session, the students introduced Japanese culture to the visitors. They demonstrated Japanese calligraphy, *origami* (paper-folding), *kendama* and some other traditional Japanese play activities, as well as Kitakyushu-gion-daiko drumming. The foreign correspondents tried some of them.

Afterwards, as a token of their appreciation, the students sang two songs for the foreign correspondents. At the end of the class, they ate school lunch together and enjoyed chatting. We feel that this program served as an invaluable opportunity for both students and foreign correspondents to deepen their interest in, and understanding of different cultures and overseas customs.



Exchange Program at Kokura-Chuo Elementary School

► International Interaction Program for KFAW Foreign Correspondents and University Students in Kitakyushu City

- **Date & Time:** Friday, January 23, 2015, 14:00 - 17:30
- **Venue:** Cultural facilities and other spots in Kitakyushu (Yahata, Moji, and Kokura)

The other day, we held an international interaction program for KFAW foreign correspondents and university students in Kitakyushu City. As part of our efforts to develop next generation human resources to promote international cooperation, this program was jointly organized with university students in the city. As part of the program, eight university students in Kitakyushu City (from Seinan Jo Gakuin University and Kyushu International University) guided foreign correspondents in English around cultural facilities and other spots in the city.

The university students first took the foreign correspondents to the Kitakyushu Museum of Natural History & Human History, and explained the history of Kitakyushu. Afterwards, they visited the Mojiko Retro

Area and Kokura Castle.

It seems that introducing Kitakyushu in English to foreign correspondents from four countries was an invaluable experience for the university students. Meanwhile, the foreign correspondents said that they were impressed with the history of Kitakyushu and the beautiful scenery of the Kanmon Strait.



In front of Kokura Castle (KFAW Foreign Correspondents and university students)

Gender Equality in the Philippines: The LGBTQ Community and Their Fight for Freedom

Ms. Arisa JUNIO (Philippines)

On October 11, 2014, a transgender woman was found lifeless while her body was slumped on the floor, her neck covered with injuries, and her head leaning against a toilet bowl in the bathroom of a hotel in Olongapo City, the Philippines. The prime suspect of her murder was a 19-year-old US Marine Pfc. who was in the Philippines for a joint military exercise under the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the United States of America (USA) and the Philippines. According to the investigations, the suspect checked in with her for sexual services. Then he found out that his sex partner was a trans woman, which triggered the murder. This is a hate crime against the transgender woman.

This horrendous case was a wake-up call sent not only to the Philippines, but also to the whole world about the threats and dangers the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities are facing.

Fight for LGBTQ Rights in the Philippines

Through the Global Gender Gap Report 2014, the World Economic Forum assesses and evaluates the gender disparities and tracks the gender progress of 142 countries over time. As a means of achieving this, "The Global Gender Gap Index seeks to measure one important aspect of gender equality through relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: health, education, economy, and politics." Among the top 10 countries with high gender equality, the Philippines is ranked 9th, followed by Belgium in 10th place. This was a great achievement made by the country towards gender equality. But the question is: what does this case imply and what is happening to the people of LGBTQ community?

In 1994, the first organized gay pride parade in the Philippines was held. The Metro Manila Pride March gathered LGBTQ rights advocates and supporters in Manila to express solidarity with one another, despite a lot of pressure from the Roman Catholic Church. It must be taken into consideration that the Philippines is predominantly a Catholic nation and it prohibits same-sex relationships and sexual activities. In 2013, another pride march was organized wherein "the parade emphasizes the ability of the LGBTQ community to rise up from oppression" (Tamboon, cited in Rappler 2014). Despite their fight for acceptance, the LGBTQ community believes that a lot of work should be done to fight discrimination. One avenue to be considered is the legal system and its gender fairness not only for women and men, but also for the LGBTQ community.

Profile

I am a graduate of International Studies, major in development studies minor in gender studies of Miriam College, Philippines. I am a co-author of a published research paper in KANITA Inaugural Postgraduate Conference on Gender Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang, Malaysia. I am also affiliated with the Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), a non-government organization that caters to the needs of Japanese-Filipino children (JFC) in the Philippines. As a JFC member of DAWN, I was able to contribute in voicing out our sentiments through our annual "Teatro Akebono" by sharing our life stories with Filipino and Japanese audiences.



Gender Fair Policies towards the LGBTQ Community in the Philippines

The Anti-Discrimination Act was filed in the House of Representatives of the Philippines in 2013. This bill aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination which offends the equal protection clause in the Bill of Rights. According to the proposed bill, discrimination "shall be understood to imply any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference, which is based on any ground such as sex, sexual orientation, gender identity..., and which has the purpose or effect of... impairing the recognition...by all persons of an equal footing of all rights and freedoms." Unfortunately, the bill remains in a pending stage due to countering efforts by the Catholic Church.

Quezon City, the largest city by area in the Philippines, made a historic move for the LGBTQ community through the passage of a pro-LGBT ordinance of the city in 2014. The "Gender-Fair City" ordinance aims to protect LGBTQ rights in the workplace, schools and accommodations, as well as their rights to access basic services. Moreover, this ordinance prohibits discrimination against homosexuals.



2013 Pride March held at the University of the Philippines. Photo from Buena Bernal/Rappler.com

LGBTQ rights as gender rights

Let us all remember that it is not only women and men who should be considered when gender equality is discussed. True gender equality deals with the empowerment of the marginalized sectors of society; women who are deprived of their basic rights, men who are abused and laughed at due to social anomalies, and the LGBTQ community that continues to face discrimination and hatred, which hinder their full potential as persons and human beings.

2014 Learn International Cooperation in the Philippines

From Monday, February 23, 2015 to Wednesday, March 4 we held the Study Tour "2014 Learn International Cooperation in the Philippines." On this tour, participants visited support facilities for women and children, experienced home-stay in a village of indigenous people, and visited a fair-trade organization and a slum area, in order to learn about of poverty issues in the Philippines and international cooperation. Extending invitations to the general public, the 2014 tour attracted a total of seven participants.

Schedule

February 23 (Mon.): Departure from Fukuoka to Manila
February 24 (Tue.): Visit to the PREDA Foundation
February 25 (Wed.): Visit to the Home for Boys and the indigenous Aeta MAO Community
February 26 (Thu.): Eco tourism in the MAO Community
February 27 (Fri.): Visit to the Home for Girls
February 28 (Sat.): Visit to DAWN and ChildHope
March 1 (Sun.): Visit to a slum area
March 2 (Mon.): Visit to a fair trade organization and an elementary school
March 3 (Tue.): Visit to Miriam College
March 4 (Wed.): Departure from Manila to Fukuoka

The following are the activities during the Study Tour.

Visit to the Indigenous Aeta MAO Community

Currently, there are 305 households in the Philippine indigenous Aeta MAO Community. After arriving at the community in about a two-hour drive, the tour participants visited Mayor Salvador Dimain's house and listened to his talk about the MAO's history and current situation.

Afterwards, divided into five groups, the tour participants experienced home-stay in the community. On the following day, guided by the mayor and other members of the community, the tour participants went on an eco tour, about a five-hour round trip. Starting from the mayor's house, they walked through the forest to and from the pond located in the upstream area of the river. The mayor gave a full explanation of each of the herbs good for burns and cuts, as well as the edible fruits. This enabled the tour participants to feel the respect that people in the MAO had toward nature, as well as their expertise in herbs and edible plants and their environment preservation activities.

Returning to the community, the tour participants joined a volunteer activity: While the mothers in the community cooked rice porridge using a large amount of chicken, rice and vegetables that had been bought at a market for about 200 children on the kitchen stove at the mayor's house, the Japanese tour participants served it into bowls and distributed it to the children. At a night-time interaction event, the tour participants expressed their appreciation to the community members, and they sang songs together. It seemed that under the wonderful starry sky, the tour participants enjoyed a marvelous interaction with people in the MAO.



Meal service volunteer activity at MAO Community

Visit to ChildHope

The tour participants visited ChildHope, a support Organization for street children, in order to learn about so-called "street education," which is offered to homeless children. When they visited, about a dozen children were listening to

the instructor attentively on a street corner. It was impressive that when children talking about their past began to cry during the class, other children gave a hug of comfort. Being supported by the organization, some were able to enroll in a university.

Visit to the Slum Area of Navotas

The tour participants then visited the slum area of Navotas in the Metropolitan Manila and joined a volunteer clean-up activity. They had imagined that the slum area would be more deserted, but children were playing vigorously on a basketball court in an open space, and there were food stores and grocers in the street. Although the conditions were not so hygienic, for example, in terms of sewage treatment, the area was much more vibrant than expected to their surprise.



Street Education

Visit to the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) of Miriam College

On the final day, they visited the Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) of Miriam College, which is designated as a gender activity base for UNESCO. They listened to a lecture by WAGI Executive Director Professor Aurora Javate De Dios regarding the current gender situation in the Philippines.

In a Q&A session, asked what she thought of the Philippines' ranking of No.1 in Asia in the Gender Gap Index, Professor Aurora Javate De Dios commented along the lines of the following: "Personally speaking, I don't feel that the index is very accurate; it examines only four areas of inequality. Currently, the Philippines is placed 10th in the world, but I feel that it would be appropriate for the country to be placed anywhere between 40th and 50th in a practical sense." Impressively, the professor also said: "In terms of education, the Philippines is an advanced country. In the Philippines, there are still many poor families and many people cannot leave land or money to their children. Nevertheless, they want to ensure that their children at least receive an education. This is largely due to our culture rather than the country's institutional security."

Opinions and Comments from Participants

- I was able to have some invaluable experiences, such as home-stay in the MAO, which no ordinary tour can offer.
- I had many opportunities to communicate with local people, which will become a lifetime asset for me.
- I felt that the effect of poverty on children is serious.
- The interactions with the indigenous people and children in the slum area was very significant.
- This tour has made me keenly aware of how blessed I am to have a house, food, and clothing, as well as to go to school.

25th Seminar on KFAW Research Activities

■ **Date & Time:** Saturday, February 7, 2015, 13:30 – 15:30

■ **Themes & Reporters:**

"Unchanged View of the Division of Gender Roles in Marriage: Interviews with Married Women in Japan"

2013/14 KFAW Visiting Researcher and Co-Researcher

Ayumi SASAGAWA
(Part-time Lecturer, Musashino University)

Lemmin QUITAHALA
(Part-time Lecturer, Otsuma Women's University)

"Globalization among Women in Japan and Korea: The Perspectives of Identity, English Ability, and Social Networks"

2013/14 KFAW Visiting Researcher

Junko Matsuzaki CARREIRA
(Associate Professor, Tokyo Keizai University)

2013/14 visiting researchers

presented the results of their research which was carried out respectively for two years.

SASAGAWA and QUITAHALA emphasized that in order to change the gender role division of married couples in Japan, husbands need to realize their responsibility toward their family life as well as more actively participate in housework and childrearing. Moreover, it is important that society accepts men's greater involvement in family life.

*Research details are available at the KFAW web site —"Journal of Asian Women's Studies Vol. 22" and the KFAW's publication *Asia Josei Kenkyu Vol. 24* (in Japanese), issued in March 2015.



International Understanding Seminar, KFAW Consulate Series 5: U.S. Global Efforts against DV and Human Trafficking

■ **Date & Time:** Wednesday, March 11, 2015, 15:00 – 16:30

■ **Venue:** Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center,
"MOVE," 5th floor, Small Seminar Room

■ **Lecturer:** Daniel Callahan (Consul for Political and
Economic Affairs, U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka)

■ **No. of participants:** 45

In the fifth round of the KFAW Consulate Series, lectures given by consuls in Fukuoka, Consul Daniel Callahan at the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka spoke about the latest situation in the U.S. regarding a wide range of human rights issues.

Regarding the elimination of all forms of violence against women and human trafficking as part of its priority issues, the U.S. government is implementing a wide variety of measures both domestically and internationally. In 2012, President Obama issued an Executive Order on Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls Globally. This national strategy aims to promote further efforts to enhance the status of women around the world and gender equality, which the U.S. has been working on as part of its diplomatic policies, and to establish a society in which people can pursue their dreams free from fear of violence.

In the seminar, Consul Callahan introduced the U.S. government's efforts to prevent gender discrimination in cooperation with NGOs, citizens' organizations and foreign countries. He explained that the U.S. government's foreign aid programs and international support programs ensured incorporation of measures against gender violence.

He also indicated that within the Japanese government, the elimination of violence was recently positioned as more important than it used to be, and that Japan-U.S. cooperation

would become more important in this field as well.

He also described the elimination of human trafficking as a critical problem on a global scale. He stated that although there were more than 20 million victims of human trafficking throughout the world, what mattered was not just the number but also the fact that there were more than 20 million stories of those victims around the world. He said that we needed to listen to these stories.

The U.S. government recognizes human trafficking as a priority issue both at home and abroad. To eradicate human trafficking, the government provides subsidies as a backup for organizations for supporting victims of human trafficking. (In FY 2014, the government provided 41 projects with financial support, equivalent to approximately 2.1 billion yen.) To eliminate human trafficking, the government cooperates with civil society and private organizations, and also uses diplomatic channels to work together with countries that have declared support for the elimination of human trafficking.

In addition, the U.S. government annually prepares the *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report*, announcing efforts made by the U.S. and other countries. In this report, the government selects individuals working to eliminate human trafficking as heroes, and spreads their activities to the world.

Consul Callahan concluded the lecture by commenting along the following lines: "There are many things that each of you can do in order to eliminate a wide variety of forms of violence and human trafficking. Everybody can a hero."

