

### **Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of Japan by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) reviewed Japan on 17 October 2024. This review is conducted based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, whose guiding principles are the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Following the review, including the constructive dialogue, the concluding observations on Japan's ninth periodic report were issued on 29 October 2024.<sup>i</sup>

#### 1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The CEDAW Convention is an international treaty aimed at promoting gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. The treaty obliges states that ratify it to take legislative and other appropriate measures in all areas, including political, social, economic, and cultural fields, to ensure the full development and advancement of women.<sup>ii</sup> The treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and entered into force on 3 September 1981, after the 20th country ratified it. Japan ratified the Convention in 1985, and as of 21 February 2023, a total of 189 states have ratified the treaty.<sup>iii</sup>

#### 2. Review by CEDAW

CEDAW monitors the implementation of the CEDAW Convention. The committee is composed of 23 independent experts in women's rights<sup>iv</sup>. Its members are selected from citizens of states that have ratified the Convention. Members serve a term of four years.

CEDAW regularly reviews State parties to assess whether they are effectively implementing the Convention. The review process begins with State parties submitting reports to the UN detailing legislative, judicial, and administrative measures taken to implement the Convention. At this stage, both governmental reports ("State Party Reports") and submissions from civil society organizations and individuals ("Shadow Reports") can be provided. While State Party Reports highlight government efforts, Shadow Reports offer insights into gender inequality and discrimination against women from the citizens' perspective. These Shadow Reports serve as valuable references during the review process. CEDAW reviews State Party Reports at public meetings and issues concluding observations, including a recommendation, to State parties.<sup>v</sup>

#### 3. Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of Japan by CEDAW

The Japanese government submitted its ninth periodic report for review in September 2021<sup>vi</sup>, and a constructive dialogue was held in Geneva on 17 October 2024.

A Japanese government delegation of approximately 30 members participated in the dialogue, engaging with committee members for over five hours. During this review, 65 shadow reports—44 publicly accessible and 21 confidential—were submitted. Additionally, around 100 representatives from civil society organizations from Japan, who authored these reports, traveled to Geneva to conduct lobbying and advocacy activities.<sup>vii</sup>

On October 29, 2024, CEDAW issued its concluding observations, including four recommendations requiring follow-up within two years:<sup>viii</sup>

- **Choice of surnames for married couples:**

CEDAW recommends amending Article 750 of the Civil Code so that women can retain their maiden surnames after marriage.

- **Female participation in politics:**

CEDAW recommends reducing the 3-million-yen deposit for candidacy when women run for parliament as a temporary special measure to encourage more female participation in politics.

- **Improvement of access to contraception:**

CEDAW recommends that Japan enhance access to affordable modern methods of contraception for all women and girls and eliminate the requirement for parental consent when 16- and 17-year-old girls obtain contraceptives.

- **Amendment of legislation regarding induced abortion:**

CEDAW recommends amending the Maternal Health Act to remove the stipulation that women need to obtain spousal consent for induced abortions.

CEDAW stresses crucial roles of legislative power in full implementation of the Convention and invites the National Diet to take necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observation and submission of the next periodic report. With regard to SDGs, CEDAW recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 goals. CEDAW recognizes more than 20 principal areas of concern including visibility of the Convention and ratification of the Optional Protocol.

Please see the concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of Japan from the following URL on the website of the United Nations:

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FCO%2FJPN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FCO%2FJPN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en)

The Japanese translation is also available from the following URL on the website of the Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Japan:

[https://www.gender.go.jp/internal/international/int\\_kaigi/int\\_teppai/pdf/report\\_241030\\_j.pdf](https://www.gender.go.jp/internal/international/int_kaigi/int_teppai/pdf/report_241030_j.pdf)

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/un-womens-rights-committee-publishes-findings-benin-canada-chile-cuba-japan>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

<https://indicators.ohchr.org/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw/introduction-committee>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw/rules-procedure-and-working-methods>

<https://www.civilsocietyacademy.org/post/shadow-report-an-important-tool-for-advocacy>

<https://www.asahi.com/sdgs/article/15565638>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3958903?v=pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.asahi.com/sdgs/article/15565638>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/un-womens-rights-committee-publishes-findings-benin-canada-chile-cuba-japan>

[https://www.gender.go.jp/international/int\\_kaigi/int\\_teppai/pdf/report\\_241030\\_e.pdf](https://www.gender.go.jp/international/int_kaigi/int_teppai/pdf/report_241030_e.pdf)

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