5th WAW！: For a diverse society where no one is left behind

〜A summary based on the proposals from the WAW！participants〜

On March 23rd and 24th, 2019, WAW! participants from Japan and around the world gathered in Tokyo to share their wisdom and engage in discussions about women's active roles in society following this year's theme, "For a diverse society where no one is left behind (WAW! For Diversity)". We held discussions with various stakeholders, as well as men and youths, about the steps necessary to build a society where everyone can achieve their full potential and play an active role, with the idea that a society with diversity and inclusiveness in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will bring further economic and social developments.

The following is a compilation of suggestions and ideas that emerged from each panel. WAW! participants will implement these suggestions as far as they can , and the Japanese government will use them as a reference for policy making. Various stakeholders should work together to facilitate these efforts to promote the empowerment of women in a diverse society where no one is left behind. As this year's G20 president, Japan will relay these discussions at the G20 Osaka Summit.

１．Human Resource Development in a Changing Society with Technology Transformation

Previous WAW!s confirmed that technology is essential for women's empowerment, and established that women's learning and empowerment in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) benefit society as a whole.

Japan promotes "Society 5.0" based on the 5th Science and Technology Basic Plan, public awareness activities and environmental improvements in order to facilitate women's advances into STEM fields. Japan is also working to strengthen information technology (IT) skills among junior and senior high school students. The lack of female students majoring in STEM fields persists as an international issue, and Japan is statistically far below average in this regard.

In this year's WAW!, participants engaged in discussions about developing human resources in a society changing through technology transformations and made the following suggestions:

- We should foster human resources capable of "fusing one knowledge with another," "integrating knowledge with society," and taking into consideration ethical, legal and human rights aspects of technology.
- Environmental improvement is necessary for everyone to easily access new technology and IT developments. To this end, educational reform in this field is important.
- Taking into account that approximately 1 billion girls are at threat of being left behind in technology development, it is essential to provide all girls with the chance for education in order to realize a society where no one is left behind and where everyone can achieve their full potential.
- Persistent gender stereotypes hinder true gender equality and should be abolished. Equal opportunity between men and women should be sought after without limiting women's potential.

２．Leadership for Regional Development and Job Creation

Through the previous WAW!s, we affirmed that in order to change the situation in local areas, it is important for women to feel empowered, become actors to change the society through innovation, and that it is important for regional communities to be accepting of diversity.

"Employment and job creation" is key for regional development. To that end, teleworking and starting

businesses in local areas, and a continuous increase of women in agriculture are of great importance. In order to boost regional economies, Japan has been supporting projects that create jobs in local areas, helping women who play active roles in the agriculture and fishery industries, and implementing various programs to cultivate women's leadership to encourage women's empowerment. However, rigid gender roles and the low percentage of women's political participation in local bodies remain a concern.

In this 5th WAW!, participants discussed the necessary efforts to create employment and jobs in local areas, making those regions comfortable living environments for women, and the necessary mindsets of regional leaders, resulting in the following proposals:

- It is necessary to mainstream the concepts and approaches of the SDGs that ensure "no one is left behind," "bold and transformational steps" are taken, and that problems in regional development are approached through "multi-stakeholders partnerships" in order to promote women's engagement in decision-making, and to dissolve the gender gap in families, regions and workplaces.
- Central and local governments' policies regarding regional development need to consider viewpoints of gender equality and women's empowerment.
- With regards to implementation of policies for the empowerment of women and energization of local areas, economy and society, leaders will show clear vision in recognizing that these two issues are interlinked and will tackle these issues utilizing new technologies and the power of stakeholders (administrations, corporations, and regions).

３. Media and Contents to Nurture Diversity

In previous WAW!s, we discussed the importance of seeking diversity in the media industry, promoting women's active participation at all levels including decision-making, and the necessity of changing the mindset on working styles of media content producers. The Government of Japan has made efforts to dispel gender stereotypes and improve media literacy. In order to further support these efforts, we discussed best practices for media to foster diversity and prevent the perpetuation of stereotypes and, and the following were suggested:

- Gender/diversity literacy (knowledge and utilization skills) among companies and workers involved in media and content should be improved as soon as possible.
- Reaffirming the reality that there is a large gap in gender equality awareness among generations, and that the media's impact on children of the next generation should be examined.
- Re-acknowledging that media and contents have great power to change people's perception, therefore public and private sectors should work together in creating contents and media opportunities that nurture diversity.

４. Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Post Conflict Recovery

Previous WAW!s placed emphasis on increasing women's meaningful participation in the peace negotiation process, post-conflict nation-building and involvement in local civil society organizations (CSOs), in order to enable women's participation in peacebuilding. At the same time, emphasis was also placed on increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations, the local military, police and justice sectors to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict as well as gender based violence.

Japan revised its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) this year. Securing women's participation in peace process is important for sustained peace, and report show that conflicts tend to recur when women are involved less than 10% of peace-negotiations. In addition to conflict-related contexts, participants learned about Japan's gender-focused disaster response in the previous Kumamoto earthquake. Having shared the same perception of challenges in promoting women's participation, the following suggestions were made:
- Governments, the international community and other relevant stakeholders should press for

meaningful women's participation in all levels by creating an enabling environment for women. Further, their needs should be reflected in peace agreements as well as nation building processes.

- Regarding conflict related sexual violence, justice should be brought by rule of law to achieve peace. True peace will never be achieved if victims cannot live their lives without fear and without security. Appropriate reparations should be provided to the victims, as well as support for their return to their communities without being subject to any discrimination.
- We must recognize that no nation or entity can sustain peace without women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. All stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and those involved in policy making, should coordinate and work together to further this agenda.
- Males, particularly those in leadership positions, should recognize and appreciate the importance and effectiveness of women's participation in the peace process, and take actual action to promote it.

５． Diversity for Growth: Corporate Management and Work Environment

Through previous WAW!s, we have reaffirmed that, under the strong commitments made by leaders, awareness should be increased about women's empowerment in the workplace being not only for the sake of women's rights and improvement of welfare, but also for the improvement of the productivity and resilience of the organization culture. Japan has been working on initiatives to redress long working hours and recognize more diverse and flexible workstyles through the Act on the Arrangement of Related Acts to Promote Work Style Reform. Japan is also implementing policies such as visualization of companies' initiatives for women's empowerment based on the Act on Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace. However, Japan's situation on women's empowerment in the workplace falls far behind other countries when compared to a global standard, which is exemplified by the low percentage of women in leadership positions in Japan. Companies that have actively incorporated policies to increase productivity through diverse human resources have been gaining attention in Japan.

This year's WAW! participants discussed how to create a fair working environment, expansion of ESG investments, and how to deal with harassment in the workplace, resulting in the following proposals:

- It is important for corporate executives to recognize that businesses must prioritize making use of diverse values, working on workstyle reform, and sending strong messages towards board members, senior executives and workers.
- Diversity is an important element for both investors and companies in terms of long-term development. Appropriate management is necessary to make use of diversity.
- Organizations should make it clear that sexual harassment and abuses of power in the workplace must not be tolerated, especially when perpetrators hold positions of high status and/or high abilities.
- We must cultivate an open business culture which respects each individual as equal colleagues in order to attract and retain young people.
- Consumers should actively purchase goods and services of companies which engage in effective diversity management.

６． Future of Family: Getting Support, Utilizing and Sharing

Previous WAW!s emphasized the importance of re-acknowledging the economic value of unpaid work, correction of long working hours, and changing of rigid gender division of roles between men and women. Japan is consolidating various social systems from a women's empowerment perspective through the reform of working practices and the Child Welfare Act. In Japan, we have developed a program for teachers to help eliminate unconscious biases that perpetuate rigid gender roles and promoted the development of educational programs for students to be able to explore various careers

without gender bias. The following proposals were suggested after discussions on approaches to building a better work-life balance and the paradigm shift in sharing unpaid domestic work, childcare, and nursing responsibilities at home and in society.

- The public and private sector should work together to visualize diverse forms of families including same-sex and de-facto marriages. The government should consider protections for non-traditional marriages.
- The public and the private sectors should work to change the social norms dictating that women are to carry out domestic work through active measures such as enacting mandatory paternity leave, closing the wage gap, and educating to raise awareness about gender equality.
- The public and private sector should work together to reduce poverty rates in single-parent households (especially single-mother households) through means such as strengthening of public assistance, improving working conditions for single parents, or the establishment of single-parents' homes where single-parent households can live together.