



World Assembly for Women: WAW!2022 Concept Note

(Reference) Current Situations and Challenges Concerning Realizing a Society Protecting Women's Dignity and Pride

The realization of a society in which gender-based violence and discrimination are eradicated and all people can live with dignity and pride is a basic premise of a gender-equal society. In reality, however, various problems that trample upon basic human rights continue to exist.

For example, gender-based violence has been consistently reported to this day, despite the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993. Although both men and women are reported as victims, women are by far the most affected, and according to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women worldwide experience violence at least once in her lifetime ^(Note1). Amidst the behavioral restrictions of the COVID-19, domestic violence (DV) continues to worsen, with one woman killed by her partner or family member every 11 minutes ^(Note2). Online gender-based violence is also escalating, with no end in sight to persistent attacks on victims of sexual violence and women activists. In conflict zones, including Ukraine, sexual violence is reportedly used as a means to terrorize and conquer entire regions.

In recent years, the issue of "period poverty," where women in many countries, including Japan, are unable to obtain sanitary products due to economic reasons, also attracts attention. Women and girls suffering from economic hardship to the extent that they cannot even obtain sanitary products are unable to go to school or work during their menstrual period. This is a serious problem that could lead to loss of learning and work opportunities. Economic poverty leads to "period poverty," which in turn leads to further poverty and economic disparity, creating a negative spiral. How should these challenges be addressed?

In order to address such violence, it is necessary to expand remedies for victims and take measures to prevent recidivism as well as severe punishment for perpetrators. At the same time, it is important to create an environment where victims themselves can speak up and report the violence they have suffered from. In particular, it is not easy for victims of sexual violence to consult with a third party or to accuse the violence. Even if the victims report, there are also many cases of secondary harms that they themselves are criticized. Long-term efforts are needed to eliminate discrimination against women and gender stereotypes.

In order to create a society where women have dignity and pride, it is necessary to pay attention to physical issues specific to women and girls. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), the right to freely and responsibly make decisions about whether, when, and how many children to have, while ensuring access to safe and effective contraception methods, was first proposed at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo Conference) and has become a widely recognized concept over the past 30 years or so.

In response to "period poverty," an increasing number of countries are introducing the tax exemption of sanitary products and providing them for free at schools and other facilities. In Lebanon, where the majority of sanitary products are imported, Japan is supporting efforts to produce sanitary products domestically through UN Women.

(Note1) [WHO, "Violence against women"](#)

(Note2) [United Nations, "Violence against Women, Girls May Be World's Longest, Deadliest Pandemic, Secretary-General Warns in Message to Group of Friends Commission Event"](#)