

Video Message by Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
for the Symposium on “Engaging Men as Allies in
Women, Peace and Security”
(October 30, 2023)

Distinguished colleagues and friends,

I would like to congratulate the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for organizing the symposium on “Engaging Men as Allies in Women, Peace and Security” co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Japan and the United States Mission to the UN.

I also pay tribute to Ambassador Melanne Vermeer, the host and moderator of today's symposium. Ambassador Vermeer was the one who taught me the

importance of WPS, which has rapidly become mainstream in the international community. She inspired me to focus my efforts on promoting the implementation of the WPS agenda. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and respect to the Ambassador for her tireless efforts in promoting the global mainstreaming of the WPS agenda.

I have been working hard on the promotion of the WPS agenda even before I became Foreign Minister. I established a parliamentary league on WPS in Japan last year. The league positioned the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security as the “International Collaboration Partners”, and have been actively working together.

Last month, I was appointed as the first female Foreign Minister in about 20 years. Since then, I have attended the United Nations High-Level Week and

visited Southeast Asian countries, and I appealed to the importance of WPS in response to both natural and man-made disasters and have received positive feedback from all those I have met.

The theme of today's symposium is "How to Engage Men to Advance the WPS Agenda". Since the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, we have witnessed various achievements, such as,

- Greater participation of women in peace processes and peacebuilding
- The creation of various international frameworks for promoting this agenda, and
- A global trend of gender mainstreaming in security policies.

It is clear that support for such efforts is expanding.

At the same time, new ideas are needed to elevate this important initiative to the next level and adding men's perspectives on this issue is very critical. For

example, our third National Action Plan specifically includes references to the need for men's engagement and identified strengthening of advocacy to men as a key action to take.

It is also important to incorporate youth perspectives for further diversity.

Another unique feature of Japan's Action Plan is that it includes a commitment to increase women's leadership role in decision-making in the area of disaster risk reduction stemming from natural disaster.

Japan has extensive experience in fighting natural disasters. We have struggled to promote women's leadership and gender equality, including the issue of low numbers of female political leaders, while traditional notions of gender divisions of labor still remain. And because of that, I believe Japan can play a more proactive role in addressing specific challenges other countries face, and work together on

these areas.

With these ideas in mind, I would like to further promote the WPS agenda as Foreign Minister, with the determination to create a more peaceful world together by sharing and learning from each other among all countries, including the Indo-Pacific Region and the Global South, and especially with ASEAN as this year marks the 50th anniversary year of Friendship with Japan.

I believe that today's symposium will serve as a model for governments and civil society organizations in various countries to work hand in hand to promote the WPS agenda around the world. I wish you a successful symposium.

Thank you very much.