

World Assembly for Women: WAW! 2022
Opening Remarks by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio
3 December 2022
(Mita Conference Hall, Tokyo)

1 Introduction

Your Excellency Mr. Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, President of the Republic of Iceland,

Your Excellency Ms. Maia Sandu, President of Moldova,

Ms. Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I highly appreciate your attendance at the World Assembly for Women: WAW!

I am very pleased that the WAW!, which was first held in 2014 when I was Minister for Foreign Affairs, is convening once again this year, for the first time in almost three years.

Over several decades, women's advancement in society has made great strides around the world, including in developing countries.

At the same time, however, there are still areas where social disparities against women and girls as well as gender inequality continue to stand out as major challenges.

For example, under the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in gender-based violence was reported in many countries, leading to what has been described as a "shadow pandemic." Women, who make up the majority of essential workers in healthcare and nursing, had to work for excessive hours with a high risk of infection. Furthermore, it is estimated that 90% of displaced persons from Ukraine are women and children. Countless acts of brutality by Russian soldiers, including sexual violence against women, have also been reported.

Under these circumstances, gender mainstreaming is needed more than ever, incorporating a gender perspective into all social dimensions and linking the vitality of each individual to the growth of society.

2 Japan's Efforts towards Gender Mainstreaming: The Society We Should Aim for

Distinguished guests,

Women's economic independence is at the core of the "New Form of Capitalism." In order to realize a society in which everyone can live their lives to the fullest, it is imperative that we reflect the perspectives of women in our policies and systems. To this end, I have been promoting a "virtuous circle of growth and distribution" that incorporates gender mainstreaming.

For example, we are working to close the gender wage gap by making it mandatory for large companies in Japan to disclose the ratio of women's wages to men's wages. In addition, Japan has actively promoted an initiative called "Post-delivery Paternity Leave."

Also, in the field of international development cooperation, for example, we provide temporary shelters for women fleeing from Afghanistan and war-torn Ukraine.

Furthermore, Japan supports Asian and African women in developing leadership skills and economic independence. Ms. Anisa Taha Arab from Mindanao, for instance, learned about the role of women in peacebuilding through a UN Women program supported by Japan. Now, through a radio program she hosts, she speaks to women about what their rights and roles are and explains the significance of women's participation in peacebuilding.

Japan will continue to focus on each and every woman in the world to protect their human rights and empower them, while also promoting women's participation in peace and security. We will do so through JICA, UN Women, the Global Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, and other organizations.

3 Expectations for the Discussion at WAW! 2022

WAW! connects different policy areas and discusses what we, the international community as a whole, should do to realize gender equality.

At this year's WAW!, we will discuss a wide range of issues with leading figures from around the world under the broad theme of "a New Form of Capitalism" and link these issues from a gender perspective in order to accelerate the gender mainstreaming process.

There are many issues we need to tackle. These include closing the gender wage gap, women's participation in a decarbonized society, and gender in disaster management policy.

In addition to this, our conference aims to look at various issues of concern to rural areas, including the perspectives of the younger generation, who will lead our future, and aims to have discussions that transcend generations and regions. In this respect, we will have an online discussion that links the regional satellite venues with the main venue in Tokyo, enabling people in remote areas to participate directly.

4 Concluding Remarks

Along with the late former Prime Minister Abe, President Johannesson of Iceland, who is here today, was among the first generation of HeForShe Champions, led by UN Women. I am honored to be here today as part of the second generation of HeForShe Champions. We will lead the way to get more men involved with gender initiatives.

I hope we make the most of the opportunity presented by this WAW! to enhance all our efforts to realize a society where everyone can feel fulfilled in life.

I sincerely appreciate your participation and thank you very much for your kind attention. Thank you.

(End)