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Information for UPR of Japan

Submitted by Japan Network on Education for the Advancement of Gender Equality

Human Rights Situation of Women and Children

1) Profile of Japan Network on Education for the Advancement of Gender Equality

The organization was established on March 14, 1997 to promote the issues discussed on Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. We are making actions through practice of education to promote gender equal society. The organization has members through out the nation.

2) Concluding Observations on Japanese Government 2009 and the follow-up clauses by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the third recommendations in 2010 of the Convention on the Rights of Children

Japanese Government has not put into effect yet the Concluding Observations and the follow-up clauses by the UN Council on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the third recommendations of the Convention on the Rights of Children. Japanese Government has not reformed the civil laws yet, so they should submit the report a year after. The Temporary Special Measures in order to realize the women's participation in every scene of decision have to be put into force. A numeral target of 30% is only shown in the Third Basic Plans for the Participation of cooperation by men and women. The Optional Protocol to the Convention has not been ratified yet.

The Japanese Government has not start to take a step forth about the enforcement of recommendations on the Rights of Children

3) Under the 3·11 East Japan Great Earthquake and the severe accident of Tokyo Electric Company's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant

In the Stricken Area

1. In the rescue and support operation for the victims, women, children, the aged and disabled people were not given enough consideration. So several aged people lost their lives in the refuge although they had been saved from Tsunami.
2. Almost all the schools turned into places of refuge. The teachers and the clerks of the schools co-operate

each other and made a desperate effort to save the lives of the victims without regard to their own sufferings. Not a few of them were suffering from PTSD or something wrong with them afterward. (30% of the answerers of the research were trending to be in a depressed state.)

3. Men were engaged in the work of debris disposal, and they got pay. In the refuge, women undertook the cooking meals three times a day, care for the young and the aged, cleaning, washing, and sanitary but they got no pay. Division of roles by gender has been strengthened.
4. After the Great Earthquake, the women, who had had unstable work, were laid off or discharged. Lots of enterprises were bankrupted and women who could not find any job were rapidly increased.
5. Few women took part in the council on the restoration and reconstruction of the stricken area. More women have to participate in every scene of decision.
6. Radioactive materials from the accident of Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant spread over a wide area, but the information from "SPEEDI" was not announced till March 23, more than ten days after the accident. The area of diffusion was over the range of 30km, indoor-evacuation zone, and the radioactive materials were wide spread to 55km in the northwest and to 45km in the south. Tens of thousands of people were exposed to radiation. Distrust of the government and Tokyo Electric Company is increasing.
7. Iodine was not distributed to the children and the expecting mothers in the neighboring area and the evacuation area from the accident. It is a sorrowful fact that the measures to protect children and women from the exposure to radiation were delayed or lacked.
8. The evacuated people and families from beyond the evacuation area or the warning area have not been guaranteed the compensation
9. The fact exposed that measures to protect people in the event of a disaster had not been made enough in spite of being a nation which has many natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis.
10. Even though the whole story of what had happened in the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant has not been investigated thoroughly and the accident is not yet ended, the government politically decided to re-operate Ohi Nuclear Power Plant. Safety and easiness of people's life has been thrown away. Most people demand the change of energy policy to a durable and recyclable one.

4) In the Educational Institution after the Great Earthquake

The State of Schools in the Stricken Area

1. The restoration and reconstruction of schools in the stricken area is delayed and some of them give classes in the school building of other schools far away from the area. Furthermore the streamlining plan of schools is going on and schools as points of the protection against disasters are being decreased.
2. Because of the widespread radioactive materials, school children cannot study at school in safety. Measures to protect school children from radioactive materials, such as evacuation in a body, have not been taken.

5) Under the Revised Act on Education

1. After the experience of the disaster, we are reexamining the education system so far and discussing education on protection against disasters, nuclear power plants, radioactivity and gender equality.
2. After the severe accident of Tokyo Electric Company's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, the Ministry of Education and Science revised the side reader about radiation. Because it was filled with mythologies that

atomic energy was safe and useful. But the revised edition is also written in the viewpoint that radiations exist in nature and some of them are safe and useful. The side reader has been distributed to each school all over Japan. We visited the Ministry of Education and Science on December 27, 2011; and told them to recall it and rewrite it to tell children the dangerous aspect of radioactive materials.

3. Coeducation was deleted in the Revised Act on Education, enforced to vote for and established in December 2006, and the principle of the education system to realize concretely an idea of gender equality was lost.
4. More than 98% of the public senior high schools have become coeducational, and coeducation system seems to be legally completed. However, Date DV's and group rapes, prejudice against sexual minorities are spread among high school students, and the idea of gender equality and equal relation between human being have not yet built up.
5. Bashing of sex education which started against that in Nanao Nursing School for handicapped children has brought confusion to the practice of sex education in all public schools. In junior high schools, only three periods a year are taken for sex education. It is said, from the state of sex of children and youth, that learning in order to ensure 'sexual safety and sexual health' is lacked.
6. At junior and senior high school, periods of home economics as a compulsory subject for pupils of both sexes have been cut down and the tendency to learn it separately by sex has been promoted by the change home economics into elective subject.
7. Bashing against gender equality education and sex education is still continuing. The word of "gender" and the description of "comfort women during the war" remain deleted from school textbooks.

6) The Revision of Educational Guidelines Making Academic Competition Harder

1. School curriculum is changed to make more lessons, less special activities, such as school events and the students' council activities. Children's stress is building up, and children who are likely to be mad at trifling things are increasing. Lots of children have lost their self affirmation and willingness to learn. Bullying, suicides, and acts of violence have also become severe problems.
2. In the system of learning skill competition, children are bereaved of time to play, suitable places to play and the right to play. That's exactly the loss of time of being children, and we can hear children's silent screams.
3. Simultaneous Achievement Test throughout the country had been held every year, which was once stopped because of some dishonest acts by teachers, but it is going to be resumed. The result of Achievement Test leads to school evaluation, teachers' evaluation and school distrust. The result of Achievement Test also makes the difference in school budget by "voucher plan" making school gaps bigger and causing exhaust of children and teachers.
4. Teachers are also in the system of competition, suffering from administrative control, long working hours, discriminatory wages, forced transfer, forced training and discouraging self learning. Many teachers are bereaved of creativity and autonomy and suffer from illness and depression. Teachers are often driven to suicides, and many of them make earlier retirement.
5. As the law of teacher's certification was changed and teachers must take training at university to renew their certificate every ten years, they feel unstable and unsettled at school. Moreover they keep having discriminatory treatment and being infringed on their human rights by their principal's efficiency rating.
6. The research by the ministry of education and science said, in 2011, that 101 teachers among 25,000 new

teachers working in public schools retired early from illness (99 of them were from mental disorder), which was 20 times the number of ten years ago. The reasons were told they were too busy with work, distress from dealing with pupils' parents or the human relationship in their place of work.

7. Toru Hashimoto, mayor of Osaka City, and his followers, they call themselves "Ishin-no-Kai," that is, Association of Restoration, decided an ordinance to force the teachers of Osaka public schools to sing "Kimigayo," national anthem of Japan, in the school ceremonies. That deprives the teachers of freedom of thought and conscience. Furthermore they intend to establish "Basic Ordinance of Education," in which administration decides the aims of education and discharges the teachers who would not obey. It is violation of "Act on Education" and "Constitution of Japan" and also an infringement itself on teachers' human rights

7) Women and Children Also Suffer from Poverty and Disparity

1. The Government's policy of structural reform has made poverty spread widely. Wages are dropping down for ten years, 35% of workers are driven to be irregular, and 54.7% of them are women. Besides, temporary or irregular workers or the unemployed are increasing among young people. One of four people has become a working poor whose annual income is less than two million yen.
2. 60~70% of irregular workers work under the contract for a definite period. They are targets of using and discarding by restructuring of their employers. Such unstable work makes young people lose their self-respect and confidence. A lot of enterprises were destroyed by the Great Earthquake, and great number of people ran out of work.
3. Poor families under the standard of living on welfare, with annual income of less than two million yen, are increasing. Especially mother-and-child families are more likely to suffer from poverty, mothers working in several jobs at the same time barely supporting livelihood.
4. Since mothers in those families are forced to work so long hours that they have little time to take care of their children, the children are likely to lose stability in life and fall into unstable mental condition. So they cannot concentrate at learning.
5. Children's poverty is more and more severe. They cannot see the doctor if they become ill, as they have no money enough. Their health, growth and lives are damaged and they cannot freely choose their course in life.

Conclusion

We say thanks as Japanese people from the bottom of our heart that many countries over the world held out a helping hand to us when we suffered from the Great Earthquake and the severe accident of Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant.

Through the experience of the disaster, we are going to reexamine the education system and social system so far. We seek for such education, the curriculum and the contents as each person's human rights are respected and as realization of gender equal society is aimed.

We sincerely wish that UN Human Rights Council should make careful and deliberate discussion on the human rights situation in Japan so that those efforts and practices may greatly develop.