

International Women's Day
Ambassador Hiramatsu's Message

I would like to offer my congratulations to everyone on the International Women's Day. Empowering women has always been a dear subject to me. I was fortunate enough to lead the discussions on the 2030 Agenda at a very early stage, where gender issues were prominent from the beginning. Everyone now understands that no country can achieve the SDGs without empowering women. This fact itself is something to be celebrated.

As a career diplomat, I always attach importance to concrete actions and outcomes. That is why I was driven to launch the World Assembly for Women (WAW!), just before assuming the post of Ambassador of Japan to India. WAW! will mark its fifth anniversary this year and has established itself as a premier international forum on women's empowerment. I am particularly pleased that this year, WAW! will be held back-to-back with Women 20 (W20).

Indeed, as G20 Chair, Japan will focus on women. Our approach is diverse from the pursuit of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to the provision of quality education. We will cherish diversity so that everyone can fully use her ability. That's the new future we are aiming for.

In India, Japan is promoting women's empowerment through its direct involvement in various fields projects. Clean metro rail with dedicated coaches for women is the safest mode of transportation for women. By improving irrigation facilities, we save precious time of women from physically-demanding water drawing work. Better water supply and sewerage systems are providing hygiene and comfort to women and their families. Mothers can rely on functioning hospital if their kids get sick. At well-equipped schools and in vocational training classes, many girls, including those currently underprivileged, are dreaming of their bright future.

I would like to add that Japanese companies in India are indispensable partners in the social advancement of women. To take a couple of examples, Reliance Nippon

Life Insurance is hiring more than 3,500 women as Life Planning Officers in their 150 branch offices, offering customers face-to-face consultations and services. Yakult Danone India is famous for their "Yakult Ladies" who visit customers by riding a scooter every day and deliver their healthy products.

Japan is ready to continue contributing for the realization of a "society where women shine" in India. With our efforts, Japan is hoping to help increase choices for girls and women so that social advancement of women will be attained. I wish you all to renew our commitment to working together on this special issue on this special day.

8th March, 2019



Kenji Hiramatsu

Ambassador of Japan to India



With "Yakult Ladies"