

Leading Asian Economies Pledge Action to Fight Gender Inequality

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- Japan sets target of 30% senior women leaders by 2020
- Republic of Korea signs agreement to launch Gender Parity Taskforce in the country
- The theme of the 44th World Economic Forum [Annual Meeting](#) is 'The Reshaping of the World: Consequences for Society, Politics and Business'
- For more information on the Forum's Gender Parity Taskforces, visit [here](#)

Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, 22 January 2014 – Two leading Asian economies, Japan and the Republic of Korea, pledged today at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting to take action to achieve equality of opportunity for women.

Speaking during a special address to participants at the 44th Annual Meeting, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe described his country's female workforce as its most under-used resource. He stated his intention to make Japan a place where women shine by ensuring that 30% of all senior leadership posts would be occupied by women by 2020.

"Japan is becoming a super-ageing society, even as the number of children is falling. You might find yourself

asking, 'in such a country, where will you find those innovative and creative human resources?'" he said,

suggesting that Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) could grow by 16% if women were as active in the economy

as men.

He also stated that Japan intended to encourage diversity in the labour force by making it easier for foreign workers

to enter the country.

Prime Minister Abe ' s statement came as the World Economic Forum signed a Memorandum of Understanding with its neighbour, the Republic of Korea, to launch a Gender Parity Task Force in the country. The Agreement, signed by the Forum and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of Korea, will convene stakeholders from the public and private sector, including representatives from a number of large employers that were present at the signing ceremony to put in place policies and initiatives to address the country ' s gender gap.

“ This taskforce represents our and the World Economic Forum ' s collective commitment to building a family friendly labour force. With the World Economic Forum as a facilitator, I am confident that this Taskforce will help us achieve our goal and produce a notable outcome, ” Cho Yoon-Sun, Minister of Gender Equality and Family of Korea, said.

“ Gender parity is imperative to the competitiveness of nations. In Japan, women ' s labour force participation is 63%,

while that of men is 85%, and women occupy only 9% of leadership roles. In Korea, women ' s participation is 54%, men ' s is 75% and women hold 10% of leadership roles. This situation is not sustainable for either economy.

Collaboration between the public and the private sector is imperative for bringing more talent into the workforce and into leadership roles – and that is what the Task Forces seek to do, ” Saadia Zahidi, Senior Director, Head of Gender Parity and Human Capital, World Economic Forum, said.

The Annual Meeting 2014 is taking place from 22 to 25 January under the theme, The Reshaping of the World: Consequences for

Society, Politics and Business. Participating this year are over 2,500 leaders from nearly 100 countries, including 300 public figures, 1,500 business leaders and representatives from civil society, academia, the media and arts.

The Co-Chairs of the Annual Meeting 2014 are: Aliko Dangote, President and Chief Executive Officer, Dangote Group,

Nigeria; Kris Gopalakrishnan, President, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII); Vice-Chairman, Infosys, India; Jiang Jianqing,

Chairman of the Board, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, People ' s Republic of China; Josep Jimenez, Chief

Executive Officer, Novartis, Switzerland; Christophe de Margerie, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Total, France; Mariassa Mayer,

Chief Executive Officer, Yahoo, USA and Judith Rodin, President, Rockefeller Foundation, USA.

Notes to Editors

More information about the Annual Meeting 2014 is available at <http://wef.ch/davos2014>

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