

NEWS Letter

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Inaugural Ceremony Held for New JAFE

The opening ceremony of the Japan Association for Female Executives (JAFE) was held on December 6, 2013 at Keidanren Hall in Tokyo, marking a new start for JAFE, an organization with a history dating back to 1985. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Keidanren Chairman Hiromasa Yonekura, and other political and business leaders found time in their busy schedules to attend the ceremony and gave strong encouragement to more than 200 female executives.



Summary of Prime Minister Abe's Address at the Opening Ceremony



- I would like to express my sincere respect to those who understood the importance of fostering female managers and executives and founded JAFE nearly 30 years ago.
- The Abe Cabinet has two female ministers. Minister Mori's precise responses to questions during Diet deliberations and Minister Inada's ability to smooth out differences are examples of skills that are rarely found in men. An old proverb says, "Men should have courage and women should have charm." Today, however, I rather think that it is women who have more courage and yet they have not lost their charm. In a sense, they have become a formidable power.
- I am intending to appoint more women to important posts. I have just appointed a woman to the position of executive secretary to the prime minister for the first time in the history of Japan's constitutional government. I am counting on her to breathe new life into the male-dominated Prime Minister's Office.
- Having women account for no less than 30% of leadership positions in all areas of society by 2020 is an ambitious goal. However, the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, to be held seven years from now, will put Japan in the global spotlight and I would like to showcase to the world the new Japan, a country where brilliant women can give full play to their talent.

- Ms. Arianna Huffington of the Huffington Post said, "If Lehman Brothers was Lehman Brothers and Sisters, they might still be around." According to the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, a survey of 17,000 companies has found that companies having at least one female executive are 20% less likely to fail than those with no female executive. I have requested the three key economic organizations to take appropriate measures in this regard.
- This is not meant to be a social policy. This is a policy indispensable for the future economic growth of Japan. The active participation of women is a core component of our growth strategy. I understand that many listed companies have appointed their first female director. This emerging trend must not be a passing fashion. I would like to urge each and every one of you at JAFE to play even bigger roles.



Full text of Prime Minister's address

Available at the Prime Minister's Office website at:

http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/96_abe/actions/201312/06executive_e.html

Full video of Prime Minister's address (in Japanese)

Available on O1ch (Prime Minister) of the Japanese Government Internet TV at:

<http://nettv.gov-online.go.jp/prg/prg8975.html>

Summary of Chairperson Noriko Nakamura's Address at the Opening Ceremony



- I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of our guests of honor for attending our opening ceremony and giving us hearty words of encouragement.
- In 1985, 28 years ago from now, JAFE was founded as the first ever women's professional association in Japan.
- I had a chance to serve as moderator for seminars hosted by Atarashii Keieishazo no Kai, a seminar organizing company headed by Mr. Shiro Ishiyama of Diamond, Inc.; the equal employment opportunity law was enacted; and I met and talked with Wendy Rue, president of the National Association for Female Executives (NAFE) in the United States. All those events prompted me to establish JAFE.
- We invited political and business leaders as lecturers for JAFE seminars in order to have them understand the actual situation in which female managers and executives work and the challenges they face, thereby creating an environment that would enable more women to work in managerial positions.
- After 14 years of activities, we took a break as our members became extremely busy with their scope of activities expanded. In resuming our activities at JAFE, Prime Minister Abe's strong message about his intention to promote women's participation was instrumental.
- I participated in the 20/30 Project. Even while we were having our break, women were fighting hard in diverse areas and various sorts of women's networks and groups were continuing their activities. All those efforts culminated into the social movement of today. However, the number of female executives in Japan remains at the lowest level among advanced countries. We believe that the attendance of Prime Minister Abe, the busiest person in Japan, at this opening ceremony is meant to be strong encouragement to all of working women in Japan. Through the promotion of active participation of women, we would like to contribute to the future economic development of Japan.

List of Speakers



Special guest **Mr. Hiromasa Yonekura**
Chairman, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation)



Honorary member **Ms. Yuriko Koike**
Member of the House of Representatives



Guest **Ms. Tamayo Marukawa**
Member of the House of Councillors



Guest **Ms. Atsuko Muraki**
Vice Minister, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare



Honorary member **Ms. Tomoko Samura**
Director-General, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office



Honorary member **Ms. Ryoko Akamatsu**
Chairperson, Japan Committee for UNICEF



Honorary member **Ms. Ichiko Ishihara**
Member of the Doyo Club and former managing director of Takashimaya Co., Ltd.



Honorary member **Ms. Nobuko Matsubara**
Honorary Chairperson, Japan Institute of Workers' Evolution



Honorary member **Ms. Mariko Bando**
President, Showa Women's University



Honorary member **Ms. Aiko Okawara**
Chairman, JC Comsa Corp.

First JAFE Seminar

GUEST **Mr. Hakubun Shimomura**
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
Minister in charge of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games

Time & Date:
18:00, Wednesday, March 5, 2014
Place: Tokyo American Club



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