

CEDAW 44th Session,  
Statement of IMADR-JC, Buraku, Ainu, Okinawan, Zainichi Korean and Migrant women  
at JNNC Lunchtime Briefing  
July 22, 2009, UN Headquarters New York

**Articles 2 and Others: Implementation of the Survey on the Actual Conditions of  
Minority Women and Promotion of their Participation in Decision-Making**

**Yuriko Hara  
Secretary-General, IMADR-JC**

The Japanese government does not recognize its treaty obligations toward minority women in any official capacity. We strongly urge the government to create policies addressing minority women's concerns for inclusion in existing gender policy, because there is NO political will to address their needs.

To that end, we request the Japanese government to carry out a survey on Buraku, Ainu, Okinawan, Zainichi Korean and migrant women on education, employment, welfare health, and violence. We also urge that minority women's representatives be preferentially appointed to policy-making bodies.

Thank you.

**Voices of Buraku Women**

**Reiko YAMAZAKI  
Buraku Liberation League Central Women's Division**

I am a Buraku woman from Nagoya. In 2005, we Buraku women conducted a survey and found that low education led to illiteracy. In job searching, many women are rejected due to background investigations. Because of the connection between low employment and education, Buraku women have low salaries and unstable employment. Buraku discrimination, leading to domestic violence and marital discrimination, may drive some Buraku women to attempt suicide.

There is no allotment on the Government Committee for Gender Equality. We ask that Buraku women be included in the standing committee to ensure that their voices are reflected in gender policy.

## **Voices of Indigenous Ainu Women**

**Ryoko TAHARA**

**Hokkaido Ainu Association, Sapporo Branch**

The indigenous Ainu people lost their land and language when Japan colonized them 140 years ago. Today there is a gap in income, employment and education between ethnic Japanese and Ainu. The situation for older Ainu women with much illiteracy is most severe.

The Japanese government finally recognized the Ainu people as Japan's indigenous peoples in 2008. Ainu women request that the government conduct the survey of women and provide them aid, education and employment.

Racial and sexual discrimination are regular social ills faced by Ainu women and constitute serious violation of human rights. We urge the Japanese government to incorporate Ainu history in national education. We also strongly request the gender be addressed in national Ainu policy.

Thank you.

## **Voices of Okinawan Women**

**Yûko OYAKAWA**

**Okinawan Citizen's Information Center**

I am an Okinawan woman living in Okinawa. I live amidst the complexity of the human rights violations that confront us as Okinawan women. Today, 64 years after the end of World War II, we suffer sexual violence from military and civilian personnel, and are regularly exposed to auditory violence affecting pregnant women affecting from the US military bases.

Our Ryukyuan languages were forbidden by the assimilation policies of Japan, and we were forced to speak Japanese. In the chaos following the war, many young children could not attend school and women especially lost an opportunity for literacy. Inadequate education has led to barriers in social life, limited employment and insufficient access to services. Article 10, "Protection of the Right to an Education" and the guarantee of employment opportunities must be included in human rights policy. As a nation responsible for launching a war, Japan must guarantee assistance for basic educational programs. We also urge the government to conduct a survey on women's completion of basic education, including women in outlying islands.

## **Voices of Zainichi Korean Women**

**Woo-Ja YANG**  
**Apuero Survey Project**

Zainichi Koreans are the descendants of Korean nationals who were forcibly migrated to Japan. The Japanese government has been ambivalent about responsibility for colonial rule, and has avoided legislation to guarantee rights for Zainichi Koreans. As a result, many Zainichi Koreans have forgotten their ethnicity and their roots, and now desire to become assimilated as Japanese.

The social position of Zainichi Korean women who have no municipal voting rights is equivalent to ignorance. We are deprived of employment opportunities due to ethnic discrimination, are unable to escape from poverty despite working, have our Korean names repudiated, are left without adequate pensions or no pension, and are unable to use political power to protect our human rights and improve our social situation. We are therefore schooled in this sense of powerlessness. These conditions have continued for more than half a century during the postwar period. To liberate ourselves from these conditions as soon as possible, access to municipal voting rights is essential to carry each Zainichi Korean woman's voice to political leaders.

Thank you very much.

## **Discrimination and Abuses Against Migrant Women**

**Leny P. Tolentino**  
**Solidarity Network with Migrants, Japan (SMJ)**

From our experience in SMJ a national network of about 90 organizations in Japan I would like to share the situation of migrant women.

Migrant women coming to Japan are increasing. They face multiple discrimination, abuse and exploitation. In spite of this the government overlooked them in the national policies and plans on gender equality resulting in the absence of a comprehensive policy to address the multiple discrimination and exploitation face by migrant women.

Migrant women are almost six times abused than Japanese women but the Japanese government failed to recognize their vulnerable situation. For instance, until now migrant women depends mainly on their Japanese spouse for visa, its extension and change. This system deters the women to escape abuse and to seek for support. The new immigration law pushes the migrant further to this dependency.

Migrant single mothers struggled almost alone to face their difficult and unstable situation. There is no available comprehensive support system for them.

Discrimination against undocumented migrant women is heightened with the new immigration law. It pushes them further to invisibility by denying them registration in the local ward office where they reside.

All these because the government lacks concern and the political will to truly protect and guarantee migrant women's rights. It is against CEDAW General Recommendation No. 26. We ask the Japanese

government through CEDAW Committee Members the following:

1. Consider including migrant women in the national policy on gender equality.
2. Gender Equality Bureau to conduct an in-depth study on migrant women situation and the difficulties they face towards creating a comprehensive policy for their rights protection, integration and empowerment.
3. Revise laws discriminatory to migrant women including undocumented, like the Immigration Control and Refugee Act.