Concept Note

Half day seminar: “Diversity in the labour force. Female participation in the Business Sector”

Venue: Hotel New Otani

Date: Friday 2 November, 14:30 – 18:30

Organizers: Japan Women’s Innovative Network and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in cooperation with Innovation Norway

Background

As numerous studies have shown an important determinant of a business’ or a country’s competitiveness is the skills, education and productivity of its workforce. The competitiveness depends significantly on whether and how it utilizes its human resource pool. Studies carried out in Japanese companies show that the greater ratio of female employees to total employees, the greater is the operating profit. These studies have also shown that companies where women in permanent employment positions have a better chance to be promoted to managerial/supervisory positions then to also have higher productivity (Yamaguchi Kazuo, Nihon Keizai Shimbun July 16, 2012). Further, studies show that the best ideas thrive in a diverse environment comprising both men and women.

Yet Japan’s gender gap in the work force is still the second highest among OECD countries. Taking into consideration that the education level among female and male is similar, the Japanese pool of skills and education is not utilized. Women tend to fall behind in the career tracks for management positions. By that follows also lost potential for innovation, utilization of skills and ideas. Japan is facing a rapid decline of labour force in the coming years. Japan could avoid this decline, and the associated fall in a potential growth, if female labour force participation was utilized.

Purpose of the Seminar

- To invite CEOs and leaders from Japanese and Norwegian businesses to present views on the value of diversity from a business point of view. Further to give recommendation and advice on how companies can ensure a business policy that can increase and maintain female presentation in their businesses, by presenting experiences from their own companies.

- To highlight female presentation in senior management, by inviting female leaders from Japan and Norway to share their views on how businesses can stimulate increased percentage of women in management. Moreover, to give recommendations on change of corporate behavior in order to expand career opportunities for all employees regardless of gender and employment status.
Participants:

- Company management/executives
- Economic organisations
- Labour unions
- Ministry officials dealing with diversity issues
- Academics
- Think tanks
- Press

(Approx. 100-150 participants (tbc))