

February 7, 2021

**JSSGS Statement on the Sexist Remarks by Yoshiro Mori, Chairman of the Tokyo Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games**

The Board of Directors, Japan Society for Sport and Gender Studies

At a special council meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Japanese Olympic Committee held on February 3, 2021, Yoshiro Mori, President of the Tokyo Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (hereinafter referred to as the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee), made comments to the effect that "meetings with many women in them take a long time" and "(women) have a strong sense of competition". He also shared an alleged concern that "if we increase the number of female board members, it will be difficult to finish the meetings unless we regulate the speaking time to some extent" without renouncing such an opinion (Yomiuri, Asahi, Nihon Keizai, Mainichi newspapers, NHK, February 3-4, 2021).

At a press conference held on the afternoon of February 4, Mr. Mori apologized, retracted his comments, and acknowledged that his comments were "inappropriate and against the spirit of the Olympic and Paralympic Games."

For the 20 years since its founding, Japan Society for Sport and Gender Studies (JSSGS) has critically examined sexist perceptions and organizational practices in the sporting world and works for change by providing information to sporting organizations and the public. Mr. Mori's remarks and the reaction of sport officials who were present at the time of his remarks can only be understood as evidence that discrimination based on gender is widespread in the organization that is in a position of leadership in Japanese physical education and the sports world.

JSSGS Board of Directors view Mr. Mori's statement as arbitrarily created, not based on objective evidence, and contemptuous towards women. His statement denies women's participation, not only in the field of sport, but also in Japanese society at large. It shows that he does not recognize the gravity of the problem that women's advancement has been extremely delayed in Japan.

In addition to his position as Chairman of the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee, Mr. Mori is also the current Chief Advisor of the Japan Sport Association and former Prime Minister of Japan. Thus, he is in a position to have long-term and significant influence on the world of Japanese sports and, by extension, Japanese society as a whole.

The Olympics and Paralympics are highly public sporting events in which enormous amounts of taxpayer money is invested. As the chairman of the organizing committee and the chief advisor of the Japan Sport Association, simply apologizing and retracting his remarks should not excuse the incident. It is essential that the retraction of Mr. Mori's remarks is accompanied by a clear policy and concrete measures to ameliorate sexist perceptions and gender inequality created by the organizing committee and that society is informed of the status of their implementations.

In Japan, in April 2017, Japan Sports Agency, Japan Sport Council (JSC), the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), Japanese Para-Sports Association (JPSA), the Japanese Paralympic Committee (JPC), and Japan Sport Association (JSPO) have jointly signed the Brighton plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport, an international recommendation on women's sports. Therefore, it is necessary for all of these major sports-related organizations in Japan to demonstrate that they are committed to gender equity in the sporting world with clear policies and concrete measures. Only then it can be demonstrated that Mr. Mori's statement does not represent the entire world of Japanese sports and show the value of sport in influencing social change.

The leaders of Japanese sport organizations are being asked to reflect on what they will do to help the Japanese sports world face up to this issue and move in a better direction.

As a reference, we point out that Mr. Mori's statement is contrary to all of the following principles, policies, and provisions related to Tokyo 2020 (Excerpted only where relevant to this case).

## **1. The Olympic Charter**

### **The 6<sup>th</sup> "Fundamental Principle of Olympism"**

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Olympic Charter shall be secured without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

### **The 8<sup>th</sup> "Mission and role of the IOC"**

to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women.

## **2. Olympic Agenda 2020 20+20 Recommendations**

### **"Recommendation 11: Foster gender equality"**

1. The IOC to work with the International Federations to achieve 50 per cent female participation in the Olympic Games and to stimulate women's participation and involvement in sport by creating more participation opportunities at the Olympic Games.
2. The IOC to encourage the inclusion of mixed-gender team events.

### **"Recommendation 38: Implement a targeted recruitment process"**

Move from an application to a targeted recruitment process for IOC membership:

2. The profile of candidates to comply with a set of criteria - to be submitted by the Nominations Commission to the IOC Executive Board for approval -, inter alia:
  - Gender balance

## **3. International Olympic Committee (IOC) Gender Equality Review Project (2018) "IOC Gender Equality Report"**

### **The 13<sup>th</sup> Recommendation: "Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs)"**

As part of its commitment to respect the Olympic Charter and to protect the Olympic brand, OCOGs will provide fair and equal portrayal of women and men in all aspects of the Olympic Games.

### **"Six Factors Required for Gender Equality"**

- 3) Sustain (or in some cases introduce) an inclusive organisational culture.

\*As the title suggests, this report analyzes and discusses the current state of gender equality in the Olympic Movement as a whole.

#### **4. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

##### **"Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"**

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

#### **5. Japan Sports Agency (2019), " Governance Code for Sports Organizations (for National Sports Federations)**

Principle 2: A system to appoint officers and other personnel should be established to ensure appropriate organizational management.

(1) Diversity within the organization, such as officers and councilors, must be ensured.

1. Set a target ratio of external directors (25% or more) and a target ratio of female directors (40% or more) and take concrete measures to achieve them.

#### **6. The Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality (Decided by the Cabinet on December 25, 2020) Priority Field 7: "Support for Lifelong Health"**

<Basic Policy Directions and Specific Measures>

##### **3 Promotion of Gender Equality in Sports**

###### **(2) Specific Measures**

② The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will provide support to encourage each National Sports Federation to set targets and implement concrete measures to achieve the target ratio of female board members (40%) set in the "Governance Code for Sports Organizations" decided by Japan Sports Agency in June 2019 and to eliminate National Sports Federations without female board members. (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

#### **7. Tokyo Guidelines for the Promotion of Human Rights Policies (August 2015)**

##### **"II Basic Principles and Approaches to Policy Development 1 Basic Principles of Human Rights Policies"**

1. Tokyo where human existence and dignity are respected and filled with compassion
2. Tokyo where the awareness of human rights that does not tolerate any kind of discrimination is widely permeated throughout society.
3. Tokyo that respects diversity and tolerates the various differences that arise from it.

#### **8. International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration**

\* Jointly signed by Japan Sports Agency, Japan Sport Council (JSC), the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), Japanese Para-Sports Association (JPSA), the Japanese Paralympic Committee (JPC), and Japan Sport Association (JSPO) in April 2017.

<10 Principles and Principles>

- Principle 1: Equity and Equality in Society and Sport
- Principle 2: Facilities

- Principle 3: School and Youth Sport
- Principle 4: Developing Participation
- Principle 5: High Performance Sport
- Principle 6: Leadership in Sport
- Principle 7: Education, Training and Development
- Principle 8: Sport Information and Research
- Principle 9: Resources
- Principle 10: Domestic and International Cooperation

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