

October 2012

On the occasion of celebrating the role of women in creating a better life for all and in belatedly commemorating South Africa's Women's Day

The Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa cordially invites

Ms Noriko Yamaguchi

to an Interactive Dialogue and Buffet Dinner on 26 October 2012,
from 18h30 to 20h30 at Meiji Kinenkan, Tokyo.

South Africa's National Women's Day is an annual public holiday on 9 August and commemorates the national march of women on this day in 1956 to petition against legislation that required African persons to carry the "pass", special identification documents which curtailed an African's freedom of movement during the apartheid era. 20,000 women staged a march on the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the proposed amendments to the Urban Areas Act (commonly known as the pass laws) of 1950.

It is generally recognised that gender equality is crucial for development in any society. In traditional economies women often have the main responsibility for the material well-being of the family and especially the children. The entrepreneurship of women more often than not, secures the survival of families and healthy development of children. Societies where women are deprived of economic and legal rights and opportunities to develop their skills are severely handicapped in their endeavours towards poverty eradication and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, which are so critical for the future wellbeing of Africa.

These challenges of gender equality are, however, not only unique to Africa and the developing world but continue to prevail even in industrial and post-industrial societies. No matter where in the world, unequal and insufficient opportunities for women, apart from constituting a denial of a fundamental and basic right also mean a devastating waste of resources.

In working together for equal opportunities and progress for all women, it is important to understand the issues that face us all in the quest to address women empowerment. It is through dialogue that we can create a platform from where we can become aware of our achievements and challenges.

Dr Mohau Pheko
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary