

new legal framework with the goal of achieving 30% of leadership positions to be held by women by 2020. For the Cabinet reshuffle on September 2014, Prime Minister Abe appointed the largest number, five, of female cabinet ministers ever and appointed Haruko Arimura known for her conservative stance in a newly created post, Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment. In October 2014, the prime minister established a "headquarters that allows a society for all women to shine" by approval of the Cabinet and decided on a "policy package for all women to shine" including government aid to employment, pregnancy and childcare. On October 17, 2014, the Cabinet decided a draft of the Bill for the Promotion of the Activity of Women in the Workplace (the Bill of Promotion of Women's Activity)", which has been discussed in the House of Representatives from October 31. Eventually, however, it was withdrawn with the dissolution of the House of Representatives. Such a series of "promotion of the activity of women" focussed on improving the national economy and taking measures to reverse the low birthrate. It does not concern itself with issues of gender equality.

The content of the bill for the Promotion of Women's Activity" is almost the same as the Act on the Advancement of Measures to Support Raising the Next Generation of Children." The Cabinet Secretariat explained an aim of the bill was a "positive

action plan" for the administration, local authorities, and employers to formulate target figures and an action plan after analysis of the present gender gap in employment rate and the length of service or the class ratio of women in management. But the bill has no specific clause for regulating working hours or improving the gender-based wage gap. And starting target figure among the items depends on discretion of the employers. Only companies with less than 300 employees are obligated to implement the policy.

It is doubtful that the law would change the situation of the majority of working women rather than members of a small group of elites. It is unclear how this law could improve the situation of women in irregular employment and the dispatched worker. There is an expression, "a way of working depending on the life stage of the woman" emphasized by an argument over the definition of "the activity of the women." It is clear that the government expects women work for economic growth along with the responsibilities under pregnancy, childcare, and housework. Therefore, it is necessary to question whether the law would really improve the situation for Japanese women or simply worsen it.

Tomomi Yamaguchi; Professor of Montana State University  
Translated by Mei Takahashi(AJWRC)

## In Opposition to the Construction of a New U.S. Air Station in Henoko

On July 1, 2014, the Japanese Government started construction work on the U.S. Marine Base Camp Schwab in Henoko (Nago City), the relocation site for the U.S. Marine Corp's Futenma Air Station. The construction began in complete disregard of the strong objections

from the people of Okinawa, especially those from Nago City. However, the work was suspended because of notable flaws which were pointed out by local residents such as an asbestos problem occurred that flared during demolition projects. The Okinawa Defense Bureau admitted their preliminary surveys were inadequate in addressing the issue.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reportedly cross-examined top defense officials about the lack of decent preliminary construction surveys for the new Henoko Base, such as few seabed surveys, and why the installation of buoys around the construction site were delayed. He strongly urged them to accelerate the work with the words "Isoide-Yare" or "Move it swiftly!"

On July 22, pier construction work began at Oura Bay area, where a trained survey group spotted a group of grazing trails by dugongs which threatened marine mammal life. People gathered at a protest rally with flotillas of vessels and canoes. They made a strong protest against Japan's Coast Guards to stop the pier installation, which inhibited the dugong's ability to feed. Later on, the floating pier was demolished because of a typhoon.

On August 14, the installation of buoys and other floating devices and seabed surveys began off Henoko in Nago. The next day the ~~JS~~ Coast Guard deployed 5 patrol vessels, and over 20 boats (100 horsepower, 7 seats), a command ship and 17 guard ships under the Okinawa Coast Guard. The guard ships were prepared by chartering vessels from local fishing people. They attacked protesters who were canoeing on the sea trying to block the work of connecting floating devices and buoys. A woman who joined the rally said, "I was so scared when I saw a number of Coast Guard's heading directly toward us, as I have never

experienced it before. They approached us on gum boats while raising a spray of water. There were 7 guards in each boat. The color of these boats was pitch black and they wore darkest black wetsuits. At that time we only had 3 vessels, as 9 vessels had already been detained by the Coast Guards."

At the end of August, another woman gave a speech at Henoko Bay Rally gathering. She said that "I was pushed into the sea, pressed my head to the sea while I came to the surface to breath. I was nearly suffocated. My glasses were twisted and the chain of my camera was damaged as guard men tried to seize my camera."

House Council member Mizuho Fukushima set an emergency negotiation session twice with Japan Coast Guard and Ministry of Defense members on the issue of excess security acts by coast guards. She demanded that they should explain the legal grounds to which they were following but officers from these offices could not bring clear legal evidence. Their response was that they carried out duties under the article 2 of Japan Coast Guard Act, which lists the duties of maritime search and rescue, prevention and suppression of crimes at sea, making regulations of vessels' traffic at sea and other services for ensuring maritime safety and the services concerning matters incident.

Toshio Ikemiyagi, the chief lawyer for the lawsuit of cancellation of a new air station construction in Henoko, said that "Citizen's actions at sea are exercise of constitutionally-guaranteed right of free expression, so that these actions do not meet the definitions of article 2 of Japan Coast Guard Act." In September protesters brought a criminal charge against coast guards who turned violent to protesters. Naha District Court accepted the



case.

On another front, people gathered at protest rally working against the construction of a new offshore U.S. air base in Henoko, in front of Camp Schwab. Protesters are resentful about not only the construction itself but also the asbestos problems emerged last July when Okinawa Defense Bureau demolished old buildings to make space for construction works. It is widely known that asbestos cause lung emphysema and mesothelioma.

Okinawan citizen groups started sit-in protest in front of the gate of the Camp Schwab as their voices were declined and

ignored. People protestors demanded a clear explanation about the construction to a person in charge in front of Camp Schwab, but they did not get any meaningful results. And their request to await a decision by the future governor was ignored. Okinawa Defense Bureau asked the police to dispatch the riot police and later on riot police quickly detained protesters.

In the gubernatorial election, Takeshi Onaga who opposed the construction won a landslide election. A new war begins!

Sachiko Taba, Violence Against Women in War Research  
Action Center (VAWW RAC)  
Translated by Akemi Marumo

## Revised ODA Increases the Risk of Diversion of Aid to Military Use

On March 31 (2014), the first Advisory Committee meeting on the review of the basic principles of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the meeting, the Government presented their intention to revise the principles to allow the program to provide aid in security-related fields.

On May 13, in response to this ongoing revision, Japanese aid and development NGOs held a press conference in Tokyo to release a statement raising their voices against the change. NGOs, including ODA Reform Network, requested the Government to keep four main principles, and called for necessary action to be taken in the revision process, for instance, listening to the voices of citizens and aid-related organizations, and ensuring a transparent and democratic process.

On February 10, 2015, the Cabinet renamed the ODA charter the "development cooperation charter," recasting the program as part of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's "proactive pacifism" and expanding its scope. At the end of 2013, the Abe Administration set a goal, which Abe calls "proactive pacifism", in its "National Security Strategy (NSS)" and it stipulated the strategic use of ODA programs.

The basic principles of the ODA Charter, approved in 1992, are as follows:

- 1) Environmental conservation and development should be pursued in tandem.
- 2) Any use of ODA for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts should be avoided
- 3) Full attention should be paid to trends in recipient countries' military expenditures and their development and production of mass destruction weapons, etc.
- 4) Full attention should be paid to efforts for promoting democratization and the introduction of a market-oriented economy, and the situation regarding the securing of basic