

Section 2

Promotion of Work-Life Balance and More Active Participation of Female Personnel

The security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe, and both the number and the duration of situations requiring the MOD/SDF's commitment are increasing. On the other hand, it is anticipated that a rising number of MOD staff, both male and female, who deal with such situations will face time constraints due to childcare, nursing care and other reasons.

Amid such challenging circumstances, ensuring preparedness to consistently respond to various situations requires creating an environment that enables staff to be sound both mentally and physically, maintain high morale, and fully demonstrate their abilities. On the basis of this view, the MOD/SDF promotes initiatives to

achieve work-life balance of its staff members.

Also, the MOD/SDF has been proactively encouraging the active participation of female personnel, and the number of female personnel is on the rise.

The MOD/SDF has been conducting a variety of initiatives in order to promote work-life balance and the further expansion of the recruitment and promotion of female personnel in a unified manner, such as formulating various plans¹ that include three reforms: (1) working style reform; (2) reform to combine a successful career with childrearing and nursing care; and (3) reform for promoting active engagement of female personnel.

1 Working Style Reform

(1) Value and Mentality Reform

In order to implement working style reform, a focus needs to be placed especially on reforming the values and mentality of staff in managerial positions regarding working style. In FY2016, the MOD/SDF carried out educational initiatives such as seminars and lecture meetings for raising awareness concerning working style reform and the concept of work-life balance. The MOD/SDF also implements the "Take more annual leave" promotional campaign to encourage staff to take a longer leave during holiday seasons, and a business review campaign, with an intention to reform values related to working style.

(2) Work Reform in the Workplace

It is important that initiatives for the promotion of work-life balance are appropriate for the actual circumstances of individual workplaces, and that staff members themselves consider specific measures for improving their workplace environment. This approach will lead to developing effective initiatives and workplace climate. Based on this perspective, during the campaign period

for enhancing work-life balance in July and August 2016, the "Competition for initiatives to promote Working Style Reform at the Ministry of Defense" was held. The competition received 97 applications from various organizations, and the Minister of Defense and the State Minister of Defense respectively honored particularly excellent proposals, and used them to help achieve work reform of each workplace.

(3) Flexible Working Hours and Location

Realizing more flexible working hours and work locations is necessary in light of factors such as operational fluctuations and time constraints faced by individuals. For this reason, the MOD/SDF introduced the flextime system in 2016 and enabled its staff to choose flexible working hours by dividing early/late shifts into multiple periods. In addition, telework, a work style that allows working at home has become available in the Internal Bureau in FY2017 after two years of test introduction from FY2015. Organizations other than the Internal Bureaus aim to begin adopting this work system from FY2019 and are scheduled to pilot telework after FY2017.

¹ (1) "Action Plan for Promoting the Active Participation of Female Employees and Work-Life Balance at the MOD" (January 2015), (2) "Action Plan of the MOD Based on the Law to Promote the Role of Women in the Workforce (FY2016-FY2020)" (April 2016), and (3) "Action Plan to Support a Good Work-Life Balance of the Personnel of the MOD based on the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children (FY2015-FY2020)" (March 2015).



Messages from the Winners of the “MOD Work Style Reform Promotion Initiatives Competition”

In December 2016, at the MOD, the Minister of Defense and the State Minister of Defense honored departments that implemented particularly outstanding initiatives for the enhancement of operational efficiency and improvement of workplace environment in order to promote work-life balance through work style reform (the conferment was conducted for the first time). In March 2017, the second conferment, similar to the first one, hosted by the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs at the Cabinet Secretariat was carried out, and the following departments were awarded (Minister in Charge of Civil Service Reform Award, Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs Award, etc.).



Kenta Fujimatsu, Administrative Officer (Grade 2), Office for Information Systems, Department of Information and Communications, Bureau of Defense Buildup Planning, MOD (Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo)

The Department of Information and Communications, Bureau of Defense Buildup Planning received the Minister of Defense Award/ Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs Award

In my department, we worked on the production and distribution of educational materials, which summarize the know-how on personal computer operation, while also trying to make them visually attractive, such as by employing “Walabi-chan,” the MOD mascot character for work-life balance promotion. We sought to establish knowledge by providing training, preparing tests, and setting up a consultation desk, etc. We will continue to make an effort to enhance operational efficiency through the enrichment of educational materials and implementation of educational activities to improve the literacy of SDF personnel.



A meeting on information literacy education

Admiral Seiichi Doman, District Commandant, MSDF Yokosuka District Headquarters (Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture)

MSDF Yokosuka District Headquarters received the State Minister of Defense Award/ Minister in Charge of Civil Service Reform Award

The MSDF Yokosuka Regional District established the Work Style Reform Promotion Committee in view of reforming the awareness of all personnel. The Committee takes steps to improve working style based on hearings conducted through direct visits to units. It also publishes an internal PR newsletter “Work Style Reform News” to inform the personnel of the improvement plans. Building upon this award, the Yokosuka Regional District will further promote the creation of a good environment, which enables all of the personnel to engage in their duties with confidence and to have a fulfilling life with their families.



Photo taken at the conferment of the Minister in Charge of Civil Service Reform Award (Admiral Doman: third from right in the front row)

Master Sergeant Koji Hino, Engine Platoon, Repair Unit, Support and Logistics Group, ASDF Fifth Air Wing (Shintomi-cho, Koyu-gun, Miyazaki Prefecture)

Engine Platoon, Repair Unit, Support and Logistics Group, ASDF Fifth Air Wing received the State Minister of Defense Award

We are responsible for the maintenance of aircraft engines. With the slogan of “An enriching personal life leads to better quality work; transforming overtime hours into personal time,” we have worked on the preparation of a maintenance procedure manual and other documents to reduce overtime hours, while improving the reliability of work. We will continue to promote improvement activities and strive to create a better workplace environment.



(Master Sergeant Hino: second from left)

2

Reform to Combine a Successful Career with Childrearing and Nursing Care

In order for MOD/SDF staff, both male and female, to be successful in their careers while realizing work-life balance, it is necessary to establish a system that enables balancing work with childrearing/nursing care, and to ensure childcare services tailored to the irregular working patterns unique to the SDF.

(1) Development of an Environment that Enables Staff to Realize a Successful Career While Engaging in Childrearing and Nursing Care

The MOD/SDF has developed various schemes, which enable staff to balance work with childrearing/nursing care, such as ensuring substitute personnel for staff who take childcare leave and other leaves. In particular, the ministry is encouraging its male staff to take childcare leave to promote their participation in family life.

The MOD also implements measures such as distributing e-mail newsletters to help its staff to return to work smoothly after childcare leave and ensuring regular communication with their workplaces.

(2) Ensuring Childcare Services

To allow SDF personnel who are rearing children to concentrate on their duties, it is important to ensure childcare services that are tailored to the irregular working patterns unique to the SDF. Since April 2007, the MOD/SDF has set up workplace nurseries at GSDF Camp Mishuku, GSDF Camp Kumamoto, GSDF Camp Makomanai, GSDF Asaka dormitory district, MSDF Yokosuka Naval Base district, and ASDF Iruma Air Base. Additionally, in April 2017, a workplace nursery was opened at Ichigaya district where the MOD is located, while another nursery is planned to open within National Defense Medical College



SDF personnel using the internal crèche facility at ASDF Iruma Air Base



SDF personnel conducting temporary childcare training at GSDF Camp Koriyama in the event of emergency operations

by the end of FY2017. The MOD/SDF is examining a plan to establish more workplace nurseries.

In addition, in the event of emergency operations such as disaster relief dispatch, the MOD promotes measures to provide temporary care within SDF camps and bases for children of SDF personnel who have no alternative but to attend to duties with their children.

3

Reform for Promoting the Careers of Female Personnel

For the further expansion of the recruitment and promotion of female personnel in a unified manner, the MOD/SDF has been making various efforts to advance the careers of motivated and qualified female personnel by setting up specific goals with regard to the recruitment and promotion of female personnel based on the “Action Plan for Promoting the Active Participation of Female Employees and Work-Life Balance.” Moreover, the MOD formulated the “Initiative to Promote Active Engagement of Female SDF Personnel – Aiming for Attractive SDF that Adapts to the Times and Environment” (the “Initiative”) in April

2017 to specify its conceptual policy for promoting the active participation of female SDF personnel.

(1) Significance of Promoting Active Engagement of Female SDF Personnel and Personnel Management Policy

The “Initiative” outlines the significance of promoting the active engagement of female personnel and the MOD/SDF personnel management policy. Specifically, with SDF duties becoming increasingly diverse and complex, SDF personnel are required to have multifaceted capabilities including higher levels of knowledge, decision-making

ability, and skills than before. In addition, due to the declining birthrate and greater advancement into higher education, it is anticipated that the number of SDF personnel involved in childcare, nursing care, and other responsibilities will significantly increase. In light of these changes, the SDF is required to evolve from a conventional organization with an emphasis on homogeneity among the members, into an organization that is capable of incorporating diverse human resources in a flexible manner.

At the present moment, the largest human resource that the SDF has not been able to fully utilize is women, who account for half of the population targeted for recruitment. Promoting the active engagement of female SDF personnel has the following significance: (1) securing useful human resources; (2) utilizing diverse perspectives; and (3) reflecting values of the nation. For this reason, the MOD/SDF has decided to open up a path for female personnel with motivation, ability, and aptitude to have opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in various fields, and aim for doubling the ratio of female SDF personnel.

In terms of employing and promoting female SDF personnel, the MOD/SDF sets out a personnel management

policy to ensure equal opportunity between men and women and assign the right person to the right place based on the person’s motivation and ability/aptitude.

(2) Removal of the Assignment Restriction of Female SDF Personnel

While the SDF has been accepting female SDF personnel since its establishment in 1954, assignment of female personnel had been restricted in some units, such as the GSDF infantry companies and tank companies. However, the Initiative, formulated in April 2017, virtually removed the restriction on the assignment of female personnel across the SDF.²

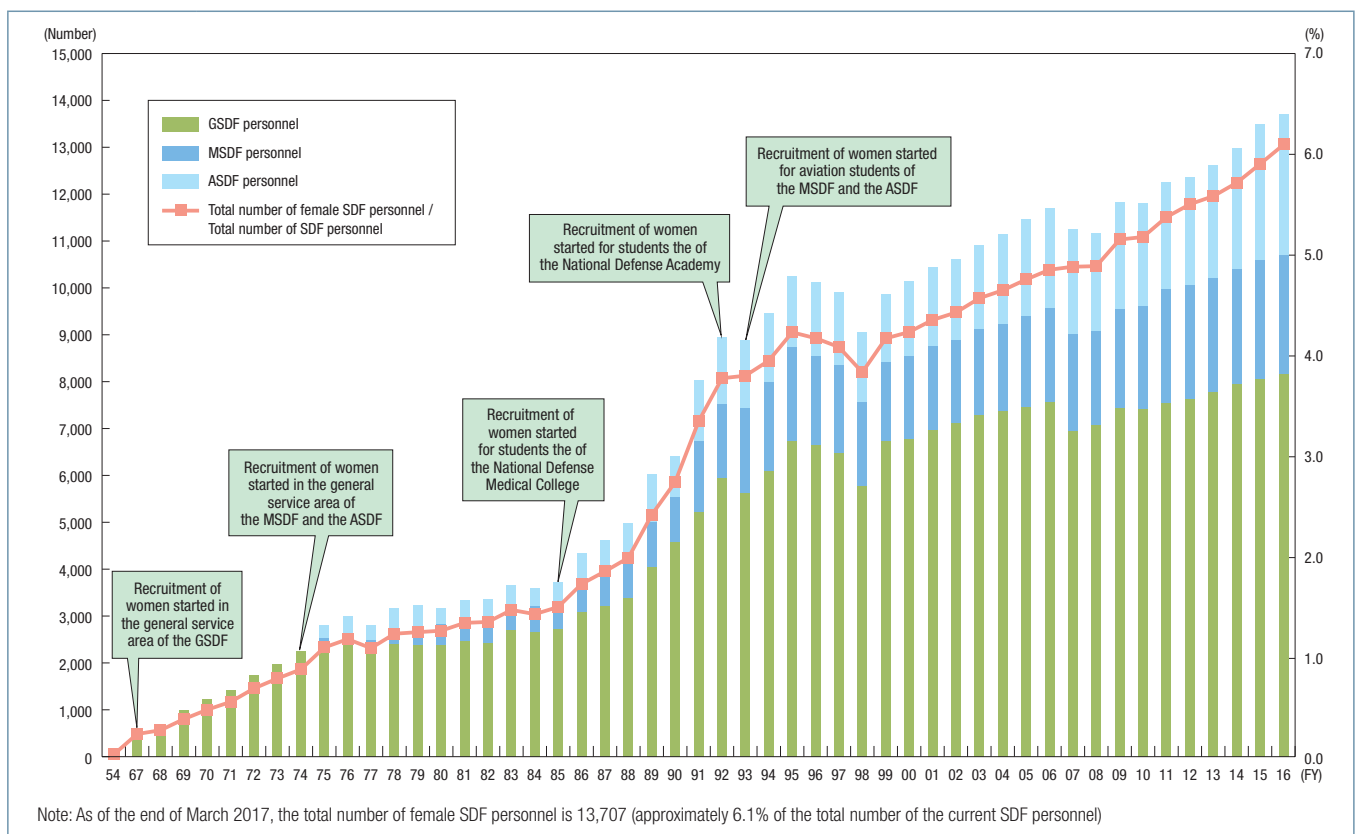
(3) Expansion of the Recruitment of Female Personnel

(a) Female SDF Personnel

As of the end of March 2017, the number of female SDF personnel is about 14,000 (about 6.1% of total SDF personnel). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2007, about 4.9% of total SDF personnel), this is a rise of 1.3 percentage point, indicating that the ratio of female SDF personnel has been on the rise in recent years.

In order to increase the proportion of female SDF personnel among total SDF personnel to over 9%

Fig. III-3-2-1 Trends in Incumbent Female SDF Personnel



² With regard to part of the GSDF NBC Weapon Defense Unit, the GSDF Tunnel Company, and MSDF submarines, the assignment restriction has not been removed due to reasons in relation to protecting motherhood and the characteristics of the equipment.

by 2030, the MOD/SDF plans to ensure that women account for more than 10% of total newly employed SDF personnel in and after FY2017. Specifically, the increase in the number of female recruits will be realized by measures such as the elimination of the gender quota and the increase in the scheduled number of female recruits. In addition, with regard to promotion, the proportion of women among SDF personnel with a rank of field officer or higher will be increased from 3.1%. As for the careers of the personnel anticipated to reach a rank of field officer or higher in the future, an emphasis is given on assigning them to a commander or assistant commander post at the rank of company officer, with the hope of allowing them to gain experience.

Furthermore, in addition to these specific numerical targets, the “Initiative” formulated in April 2017 indicates that the MOD aims to double the percentage of female personnel in the overall SDF personnel and halve the mid-career retirement rate.

 See Fig. III-3-2-1 (Trends in Incumbent Female SDF Personnel)

(b) Female Administrative Officials, Technical and Engineering Officials, Instructors, and Others

As of the end of March 2017, the number of female civilian personnel - administrative officials, technical and engineering officials, and instructors, and others - is approximately 3,200 (about 23.4% of total civilian personnel). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2007 when females made up 22.6% of the total civilian personnel), this is a rise of 0.8 percentage point, indicating that the ratio of female civilian personnel is on a rising trend in recent years.

With regard to recruitment, in line with the overall government target, the MOD has set up its goal of ensuring that women account for over 30% of recruits in and after FY2016. Regarding promotion, as a goal to be achieved by the end of FY2020, the proportion of women of the Division-Director level at local organizations and Assistant-Division-Director level at the ministry proper or equivalent should be approximately 5%, and the proportion of women of the Division-Director level at the ministry proper or equivalent should be approximately 2%, and the proportion of women of the Unit-Chief level at the ministry proper or equivalent should be approximately 20%.