

Section
2

Further Promotion of Work-Life Balance and Women's Participation Capability

The security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe, and both the number and the duration of situations requiring the MOD/SDF's response are increasing. On the other hand, it is anticipated that a number of MOD staff, both male and female, will face time and commuting constraints for childcare, nursing care and other reasons due to big changes in social structure.

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. In addition, the Committee to Promote Working style Reform of the Internal Bureau staff was set up under the leadership of the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense in January 2019. Working style reform and promoting active participation of female personnel are also set in the NDPG and the MTDP.

1 Working Style Reform

(1) Value and Mentality Reform

In order to implement working style reform, focus needs to be placed especially on reforming the values and mentality of staff in managerial positions regarding working style. Since FY2017, the MOD/SDF has been implementing educational initiatives, such as message given by the MOD/SDF leaders, seminars, and lecture meetings aimed at raising awareness concerning working style reform and the concept of work-life balance. With the increase of personnel facing time/commuting constraints for child/family care, the MOD/SDF is also promoting correction of long working hours and encouraging taking leave to ensure proper work-life balance so that every member can exert his/her full potential.

(2) Work Reform in the Workplace

It is important that initiatives for the promotion of work-life balance are implemented in a way which fits the 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, since 2016, the annual "Competition for initiatives to promote Working Style Reform at the Ministry of Defense" has been held during the campaign period for enhancing work-life balance from June to September. The Minister of Defense

and the State Minister of Defense honored particularly excellent initiatives, out of the applications received from various organizations and others, and used them to help achieve work reform at each workplace.

(3) Flexible Working Hours and Location

Realizing more flexible working hours and work locations is necessary in light of factors such as workload 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 stages. In addition, telework, a work style that allows working at home, has been available in the Internal Bureau of the MOD since FY2017 and in the ATLA since 2018. Other organizations aim to begin adopting this work system from FY2019 and are steadily making preparation by piloting the system.

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).

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 leave. In particular, the ministry is encouraging its male staff to take childcare leave to promote their participation in family settings. The target rate of childcare leave acquisition by male staff is set at 13% by 2020.

The MOD/SDF is also developing an environment that enables staff to balance work life with their family life by distributing e-mail newsletters to help its staff to return to work smoothly after childcare leave and encouraging staff to use a “childcare form” to facilitate managers’ and the human resources department’s thorough and detailed understanding of the situation regarding childcare.

The MOD/SDF has a system to rehire SDF personnel who have previously resigned mid-career. It reassessed the system so that former SDF personnel who had resigned in their mid-career due to childrearing and nursing care could be reemployed from January 2017. The MOD/SDF started recruitment based on this system in January 2018.



ASDF personnel using the nursery at Iruma Air Base

(2) Ensuring Childcare Services

To allow SDF personnel who are rearing children to concentrate on their duties, it is important to ensure childcare services 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 Camp housing district, MSDF Yokosuka Naval Base district, ASDF Iruma Air Base, Ichigaya district, where the MOD is located, and National Defense Medical College.

In addition, in the event of emergency operations such as disaster relief, the MOD promotes measures to provide temporary childcare in 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, 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 under 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, more than ever, to have multifaceted capabilities including higher levels of knowledge, decision-making ability, and skills. In addition, under a severe recruitment environment due to the declining birthrate and greater advancement into higher education, it is anticipated that the number of SDF personnel with time and location restraints, including those 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 present, 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

The MOD/SDF has been reviewing the restriction of assignment of female personnel. With the removal of the restriction on female assignments in submarines in 2018, assignment restriction against females was completely removed with the exception of the units where female personnel cannot be assigned for reasons of maternity protection (a part of the GSDF Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) Weapon Defense Unit [chemical] and Tunnel Company Units).

VOICE

Success of Female Personnel – the First Female Fighter Pilot of ASDF

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Since the latter half of the 1980s, female fighter pilots have been appearing one after another and flourishing in advanced countries. ASDF also opened the door to female fighter pilots in 2015. Thanks to favorable trends around the world like this, I was able to become a fighter pilot in August 2018 after completing various types of training.

I obtained my long-desired chance to become a fighter pilot. I feel strongly that I owe this to pioneering female pilots who have been vigorously pursuing their flight tasks in the GSDF, MSDF and ASDF, and other female SDF personnel who are active in a broad working range overcoming various troubles and difficulties.

I am now assigned to the 305th Squadron line troop and engage in missions against violation of our territorial air in times of peace while working on exercises everyday so that I can carry out operations during armed contingencies. When scrambling in response to unidentified aircraft, I feel a sense of tension like none I have felt before and the weight of responsibility of the real mission. Daily training is grueling, where I sometimes push myself to my mental and physical limits so that I will be able to complete my mission under any circumstances. I will accomplish highly tense and responsible real missions and severe training with pride and a high-minded sense of mission to protect our country, and continue daily diligence to become a full-fledged fighter pilot quickly.

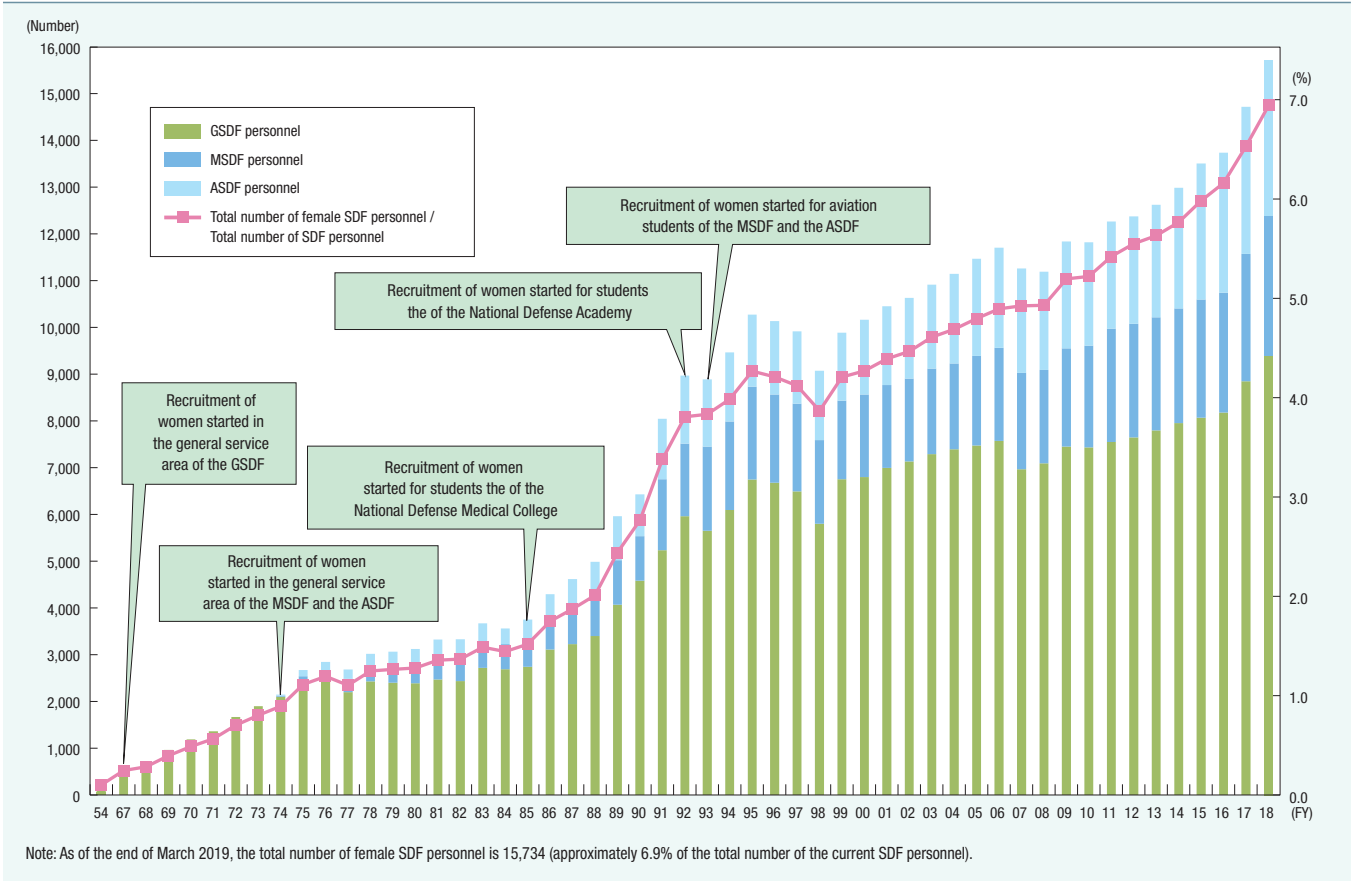


The author heading for flight training on an F-15



The author making operational coordination with female maintenance personnel

Fig. IV-1-2-1 Trends in Incumbent Female SDF Personnel



Q See Fig. IV-1-2-1 (Trends in Incumbent Female SDF Personnel)

(3) Expansion of the Recruitment of Female Personnel

a. Female SDF Personnel

As of the end of March 2019, the number of female SDF personnel is about 16,000 (about 6.9% of total SDF personnel). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2009, about 5.2% of total SDF personnel), this is a rise of 1.7 percentage points, 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% by FY2027, the MOD/SDF aims to ensure that women account for more than 10% of total newly employed SDF personnel in and after FY2017. Specifically, in order to increase the number of recruits through such measures as the elimination of the gender quota and the increase in the scheduled number of female recruits, the SDF will actively recruit women, promote their active participation, and improve education, living, and work environments for female SDF personnel.

In addition, with regard to promotion, MDO/SDF aims to increase the proportion of women among SDF personnel with a rank of field officer or higher to over 3.1%. As for the careers of the personnel anticipated to reach a rank of field officer or higher, 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.

b. Female Administrative Officials, Technical and Engineering Officials, Instructors, and Others

As of the end of March 2019, the number of female civilian personnel—administrative officials, technical and engineering officials, and instructors, and others—is approximately 3,300 (about 24.6% of total civilian personnel). Compared with ten years ago (end of March 2009 when females made up 23% of the total civilian personnel), this is a rise of 1.6 percentage points, 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 would be approximately 5%, and the proportion of women of the Division-Director level at the ministry proper or equivalent would be approximately 2%, and the proportion of women of the Unit-Chief level at the ministry proper or equivalent should be approximately 27%.