

Email Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama (113) March 22, 2019 Issue

【The Personnel Change of 2019 Fiscal Year: Disaster Risk Reduction and Active Participation of Women】

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

Today, the personnel change of Okayama City Government of 2019 fiscal year was announced.

For Okayama City, where people had believed that there were less natural disasters, the heavy rain disaster of last July was a big challenge. The lessons from the disaster reminded that we must prepare for the worst. In order to make Okayama City more resilient to natural disasters, we created the necessary operating system and assigned proper personnels based on it, especially focusing on the sections concerned with crucial issues of the municipal administration this fiscal year.

First, in the Risk and Crisis Management section, we relocated the current Director General of General Affairs Bureau, who has been in charge of extracting and investigating problems from the heavy rain disaster of July, into Director General of Risk and Crisis Management. Besides, three professional officials from each department of Road, Sewerage and River, and Health and Welfare will be assigned into managerial positions, as well as five more officials will join the section to strengthen the operational capacity.

Additionally, in order to improve the organizational structures dealing with other municipal issues; 45 officials were added to the project on class for students in need, a Director General was newly assigned for the project of Okayama Creative Art Theater (provisional name), and five more officials joined the organization related to health and welfare for preventing child abuse.

What is more, I would like to emphasize on the necessity of promotion of women's active participation in terms of human resources management. We will have a female Director General of Kita Ward Office for the first time in Okayama City, and another female official is to be appointed as the Director General of Citizens Cooperative Bureau and Okayama Kids Development Bureau for the coming fiscal year. The number of female Director Generals will be four in total, including the present Director General of Nursery Infants Education Division on the contrary to the conditions in the previous year, in which the number of female Director General was only two.

The number of women in managerial positions, higher than division director, increased by four. When I took office as the mayor in 2014, the proportion of women in management positions in Okayama City Government was 6.5%; however, it is 12.7% today, increasing about 1% per year.

I remembered an article, in which Barbara Judge, Chairman of UK Institute of Directors, said "One woman among many men would feel uncomfortable. Two women among them feel much better. However, once more than three women joined the party, they would be just a part of 'people'. Such situation leads things to right directions." We have been struggling with quick promotion of female active participation at the organization, and now we are approaching the ideal goal eventually. The mind-setting among the officials has definitely been changed since we got started working on this.

Regardless of gender, it is essential for us to create a better working environment in which everyone can play an active role and make use of their experience and ideas. I believe that such working place brings about further problems resolving and achievement of our goals.