Program Overview:

In collaboration with the National Association of Japan-America Societies, the Mansfield Foundation recently launched “Women in Politics and Public Service,” an exchange program that brings together small groups of women who are prominent public officials in the United States and Japan to examine the role women play in the social policymaking processes of each other’s countries. The program was sponsored by Citigroup, with in-kind support from All Nippon Airways. Additional funding was provided by Michael and Charlotte Delaney.

The need for this kind of exchange arises from the fact that with demographic and societal changes, both countries face an array of challenges in such areas as healthcare, pensions, education and employment. As a growing number of women in both countries pursue careers in politics and public service, women now have greater opportunities to influence a variety of policies, including social policies. A network of women from Japan and the United States who understand the policymaking processes in each other’s countries, and who can provide information and support to one another, will enhance the bilateral cooperation between the United States and Japan to the benefit of public policies in both countries.

Objectives:

The program’s objectives include:

- Build a network of women policy makers from the United States and Japan
- Promote understanding of the policymaking processes in the United States and Japan
- Identify policies that support the participation of women in the policymaking process and the workforce
- Establish a website to disseminate the information gathered from the interchange between women in public service from two different cultures.
Program Activities to Date:
During the first phase of the program, a select group of seven U.S. women leaders—all prominent elected officials or public sector leaders—traveled to Japan December 4-12, 2004, to explore with their Japanese counterparts common social policy issues and how they are addressed in their respective nations. This weeklong exchange included meetings, seminars and conferences in three Japanese cities. Citigroup provided sponsorship funding, and All Nippon Airways contributed in-kind support for airline tickets for the delegation. A second exchange, during which a delegation of Japanese women leaders will visit the United States, will take place in spring 2005.

Members of the U.S. delegation were:

**State Representative Linda Gray**, (R) District 10, Arizona State Legislature; Senator elect.
**State Senator Marilyn Jarrett**, (R) District 19, Arizona State Legislature.
**Sonja Nesbit**, Professional minority staff member for the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee.
**Sharon Sayles-Belton**, Senior Fellow, Humphrey Institute, former mayor of Minneapolis (1994-2001).
**Karen Schwarzwalders**, CEO of Columbus YWCA, Columbus Board of Education member and past president Columbus Board of Education.

The delegation participated in the following meetings, conferences and seminars:

1) **U.S. Consulate in Osaka**
   Met with Osaka City Assembly members Ms. Junko Tsuji, Ms. Junko Arimoto, and Ms. Yoshiko Kato

2) **Osaka City Government**
   Met with Deputy Mayor Mitsuyo Ohira

3) **Doshisha University, Osaka**
   Public Seminar “American Women Changing the Future”

4) **Dawn Center, Osaka**
   Roundtable Discussion with the Japanese panelists---Ms. Emiko Takenaka (Director of Dawn Center), Ms. Yoshie Kawakita (domestic violence consultant), Ms. Tsuyako Nakamura (professor of Doshisha University), Ms. Toshiko Honda (consultant for Osaka prefectural education center, and school counselor), Ms. Tomoko Goga (Institute of Social Movement, Osaka)

5) **Osaka Prefectural Government**
   Met with Mr. Kaseyama, Director for Life and Culture Bureau

6) **The Center for Advancement of Working Women (CAWW), Tokyo**
   Met with Ms. Iguchi, Secretary General; toured the Center

7) **Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association, Tokyo**
Roundtable Discussion with the Japanese panelists—Ms. Mitsuko Yamaguchi (Executive Director of Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association), Ms. Mitoko Okawa (Chofu City Assembly member), Ms. Manae Kubota (Network of Women loving Japanese Constitution), Ms. Hideyo Shinozaki (Matsuyama City Assembly member), Ms. Masako Hiramatsu (Executive for Cable Persons), Ms. Junko Takashima (Researcher for the Organization for Employment of Elderly and Persons with Disabilities)

8) Meeting with Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker

9) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
   Met with Ms. Kumiko Kitai (Director-General in charge of equal employment and family & child affairs) and Ms. Junko Ishii (Director for equal employment and family & child affairs)

10) Tokyo American Center

At a seminar at the Tokyo American Center, U.S. Embassy, Sonja Nesbit, professional minority staff member of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee, comments on U.S. policies that support childcare for working families.

11) American Chamber of Commerce in Japan Country Briefing

12) Meeting with Honorable Yoshimasa Hayashi (LDP), Member House of Councillors

13) Diet Tour by Mr. Kokudo Mori, House of Councillors office

14) Meeting with Honorable Hiroko Mizushima, M.D., Ph.D. (DPJ) Member of House of Representatives

WIPPS participants learn from the Honorable Hiroko Mizushima, member of House of Representatives, how she became involved in public service (she responded to an advertisement), and discuss social pressures that working women face.
15) Cabinet Office

Meeting with Ms. Haniwa Natori, Director General, Gender Equality Bureau

16) Women’s Association for A Better Aging Society (WABAS)

Half-day symposium, including panel discussion with Akiko Domoto, governor of Chiba Prefecture.

WIPPS participants speak to a standing-room-only crowd at the WABAS symposium. The symposium addressed the seven challenges that working women face.

WIPPS participants attend a briefing by the director of the Center for Advancement of Working Women, who focused on the history of working women in Japan and public policies that support them.

Program Outcomes and Evaluation:

The format of the WIPPS program provided a comfortable environment for the participants to engage in frank dialogue on the social challenges facing the United States and Japan. While several events were open to larger audiences of invited guests and the media, other discussions took place among participants and their counterparts away from the public eye. The program enabled women policymakers to meet, develop friendships and establish new networks for intra-regional collaboration. Several of the points raised during discussions include the following:

- U.S. participants discovered that their situation in the United States is similar to that of their Japanese counterparts. “It was stunning to understand the parallels between Japanese and American women, from the recent history (1850-2004) to current issues and interests.”
“Japanese women face many of the same issues (and barriers) that American women face, albeit the response from society as a whole is somewhat different.”

- Participants commented on the parallel histories of women’s suffrage in the United States and Japan.
- Participants recognized the usefulness of the exchange: “The experience will allow me to make more informed decisions in my work on legislation related to supporting women and families. Also the experience will allow me to begin an international dialogue and exchange with other Japanese women who share my professional interest.” “It is always useful to be educated about other governments while serving as a legislator.”
- U.S. participants agreed to host their Japanese counterparts during the program’s second phase.

Feedback from the participants has been positive. Please see the attached summary of participants’ evaluations.

WIPPS participants join with Osaka City Assembly members Ms. Junko Tsuji, Ms. Junko Arimoto, and Ms. Yoshiko Kato following a roundtable discussion focused on how the women came to their current positions in public service.