



Civil 7



JAPAN 2023

Statement on Ensuring LGBTIQ+ Rights including Marriage Equality and Legislating prohibition of SOGIESC-based discrimination

14 February 2023

We, **C7 (Civil-7)** and **W7 (Women-7)**, official engagement groups for the G7 process, call upon G7 Leaders to swiftly act to ensure the rights of LGBTIQ+ including marriage equality and take their leadership to end SOGIESC-based discrimination in the world at the G7 Hiroshima Summit.

At a meeting of the Budget Committee of the House of Representatives held on February 1, 2023, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stated that "this is an issue that will change our view of family, values, and society" with regard to marriage equality and the legalization of same-sex marriage. On February 3, Masayoshi Arai, then Secretary to the Prime Minister, spoke about human rights related to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC), marriage equality, and the introduction of same-sex marriage, referring to same-sex couples, "I don't even really like living next door to them." Regarding the legislation of same-sex marriage and marriage equality, he said, "[T]he impact on society is huge. It's a negative. All the secretaries of the Prime Minister are against it." In addition, he was reported to have said that "if same-sex marriage is approved, some people will abandon the country". These statements are unacceptable. They deny human rights of LGBTIQ+ because of their sentiments affected by SOGIESC-based discrimination, and neglect consideration of policies related to same-sex marriage and other legal protection of same-sex partnerships.

Subsequently, Prime Minister Kishida removed Secretary Arai from office and apologized, saying, "[I]t is regrettable that we have caused misunderstandings, and we apologize to those who have been offended." However, the problem with Prime Minister Kishida's answer to the Diet and then-Secretary Arai's statement is not that they "caused misunderstanding," but that they added fuel to homophobic sentiment that still remains in Japanese society and denied the possibility of pursuing a sincere policy change to ensure human rights for LGBTIQ+ community. Japan will host the G7 Summit in Hiroshima in May this year. If Prime Minister Kishida, who will chair the G7 Summit, and his secretaries give answers and make statements that appeal to homophobic sentiments, there may be international doubts as to whether Japan is worthy of hosting the G7 Summit. In fact, the Japanese government has long been recommended by the UN Human Rights Council and other bodies to "eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity" and "legalize same-sex marriage," and was recently recommended to do the same at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) held at UN Headquarters on January 31, 2023.

We, **C7** and **W7**, both the official engagement groups of the G7, protest these remarks by the Prime Minister and the Secretary to the Prime Minister. We call for the enactment of anti-discrimination laws regarding SOGIESC, the legalization of equal marriage, and the enhancement of legal protection for same-sex partnerships and their families. In fact, the Leaders' Declaration adopted at last year's G7 Germany Summit called for, among other things, ensuring the full, equal, effective, and meaningful participation of LGBTIQ+ people in society, and Japan, as the chairing country this year, is expected to further develop this declaration and link it to concrete actions. We strongly hope that the G7 Hiroshima Summit should be an opportunity to end SOGIESC-based discrimination and ensure the human rights of LGBTIQ+ including marriage equality.

Contact: C7 - Aoi Horiuchi, Kyoka Oimatsu, info@civil7.org

W7 - Atsuko Miwa, Kazuko Fukuda, Fumie Saito, w7japan2023@gmail.com