



**Speech
by President of Iceland
Guðni Th. Jóhannesson**

**Akasaka Palace
Tokyo
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Prime Minister of Japan,
President of Moldova,
excellencies, dear guests

I am honoured to address you all on the eve of our distinguished conference, the World Assembly for Women. The venue is grand, it fits the occasion because our common cause is worthy. Together, we need to work for gender equality and women's empowerment – here in Japan, in our home countries, in the whole wide world.

I am also honoured to represent Iceland. Of course there is still work to be done there but we have made great strides towards gender equality in all walks of life. In all modesty, we can therefore offer some lessons and examples for others who might wish to follow that path. And I would strongly encourage all to do so!

Closing the gender gap benefits all of us. The aspiration to gender equality is not only an ethical and human rights issue, but a practical one. Gender equality benefits everyone. If one half of a population is undervalued and not given the opportunity to show their full potential, the whole community suffers. The more gender equal a society is, the more happy and healthy its people are, and peaceful and prosperous as well.

Dear Prime Minister Kishida! You were present in 2014, at the first World Assembly for Women here in Japan. I thank you and your government for your declared wishes to enhance gender equality in your country. I thank you again for inviting me to share with you the experience of us Icelanders.

Dear friends! I wish you all a fruitful gathering here in Tokyo. Let us work together for a fairer world, to the benefit of us all.