



THE MAUREEN AND MIKE MANSFIELD FOUNDATION
Advancing Understanding and Cooperation in U.S.-Asia Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**U.S. AND JAPANESE WOMEN PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERS TO EXPLORE SOCIAL
POLICY ISSUES DURING NEW EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON, D.C. A select group of seven U.S. women leaders—all prominent elected officials or public sector leaders—will travel 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 first-of-its-kind, weeklong exchange, which includes meetings, seminars and conferences in three Japanese cities, has been organized by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation and the National Association of Japan-America Societies with sponsorship by Citigroup. All Nippon Airways provided 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 are:

State Senator Karen Fraser, (D) District 22, Washington State Legislature.

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 Schwarzwald, YWCA Executive Director, Columbus Board of Education member and past president Columbus Board of Education.

Shirley Wilcher, President, Wilcher Global Diversity Consulting, former executive director of Americans for a Fair Chance.

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“Women in Politics and Public Service,” as the program is called, will take place December 4-12, 2004, in Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo. The delegation will meet with their Japanese counterparts in public service to explore common challenges and policy-making approaches to such pressing domestic social issues as healthcare, aging society, and education. They will also visit public and non-governmental organizations that focus on policy issues.

Four events are open to the media:

- Monday, December 6, 4:00 – 6:00 pm, Doshisha University, Kyoto. Seminar topic: “American Women Changing the Future”
- Wednesday, December 8, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association, Tokyo. Roundtable discussion.
- Thursday, December 9, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Tokyo American Center. Seminar.
- Saturday, December 11, 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm, Women’s Association for a Better Aging Society, Topic: “Women’s Aging, Seven Enemies Against Aging Women”

For more information and to register to attend, please contact Teruyo Kuramoto or Chie Igarashi, 81-3-3441-8296 (Tokyo, Japan) or Mary-Jane Atwater, 202-347-1994 (Washington, D.C.).

“As increasing numbers of women in Japan and the United States assume high level positions as elected officials and policymakers, there is much these leaders can learn from one another about domestic policy challenges,” said Paige Cottingham-Streater, executive director of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation. “This exchange is designed to open channels of communication between our two nations to benefit the policy-making process on such critical issues as education, healthcare and the impact of our mutual aging societies.”

The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that promotes understanding and cooperation among the nations and peoples of Asia and the United States. Maureen and Mike Mansfield's values, ideals and vision for U.S.-Asia relations continue through the Foundation’s policy exchanges, dialogues, research and education, which create networks among U.S. and Asian leaders, explore the underlying issues influencing public policies, and increase awareness about the nations and peoples of Asia. The Foundation has offices in Washington, D.C.; Tokyo, Japan; and Missoula, Montana.

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