

THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP INVIGORATING THE JAPANESE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

As part of its action plan for a New Form of Capitalism, Japan aims to further energize its entertainment content industry. To do so, the whole government plans to support creators and improve their production environment while considering feedback from creators.

Japanese entertainment content, led by anime, enjoys global popularity. The level of the industry's overseas sales currently rivals the export value of the country's steel and semiconductor industries. On June 21, 2024, recognizing such content as an asset to be proud of, the Cabinet

Office of Japan decided to promote the industry's further stimulation and enhance its international competitiveness through the Grand Design and Action Plan for a New Form of Capitalism 2024 Revised Version. The Japanese government has established the Content

Industry Public-Private Council—consisting of related ministries, creators, related industries, and so forth—to spearhead measures related to the creative and content industry. The council will lead a comprehensive support program for creators, from discovering and nurturing them to supporting both their artistic production and overseas expansion, and will work on consolidating information on various support systems.

Additionally, it will address industry labor practices and business relationships to ensure that creators work in a healthy environment and receive appropriate compensation. The



Left: Representatives from the organization action4cinema, made up of volunteer film directors, visited the Republic of Korea in 2022 to exchange opinions with local film industry professionals about production working environments and the creation of a sustainable film industry system. Right: In 2023, action4cinema produced the Handbook for Harassment Prevention on Film Sets, making it available on their website. Japanese film director Koreeda Hirokazu is shown here holding the handbook.

formulation of the strategy included input and insights from Japanese film directors KOREEDA Hirokazu (director of “Nobody Knows” and “Shoplifters”) and YAMAZAKI Takashi (director of “Godzilla Minus One”), who were invited to the meeting of the Council of New Form of Capitalism Realization in April 2024.

NISHIKAWA Miwa, a Japanese director known for works such as “Sway” and “Under the Open Sky,” and an active member of the volunteer group action4cinema advocating for a unified support organization for the Japanese film industry along with Koreeda, commented, “Although the government has supported content creation, the sources of that support varied depending on the type of assistance, such as subsidies for production funding and support for overseas expansion. It was difficult for creators to understand where and what kind of support was available. I believe that the government's leadership in consolidating those efforts will be the first step toward breaking through the current stasis affecting film industry promotion in Japan.”

She continued, “While the Japanese film industry is made up of many organizations and support institutions, there has never

previously been any clear leader, or even anyone to establish industry-wide rules in areas like harassment prevention. Although everyone was aware of the issues, the lack of coordination made it impossible for us to effectively voice our concerns. Through action4cinema, though, we were able to clarify and communicate industry issues, which resonated with reform-minded government officials, who then sought Koreeda's input. That has given us hope.”

The government's revised Grand Design and Action Plan for a New Form of Capitalism includes a statement declaring that it will attempt to improve the environment for creative industries without interfering in the creation of private content. “Members of action4cinema were moved by the inclusion of the so-called arm's-length principle, which is standard in European cultural and artistic policies. While receiving support, the creator has a duty to produce works that present new values with more freedom. It is vital that we have that mindset,” emphasized Nishikawa.

Japan's private sector is also actively exploring new forms for the film industry. In 2024, producer KII Muneyuki launched the K2P Film Fund I, a Japanese film production fund aiming to

create a new ecosystem for Japanese cinema. The fund plans to attract money not only from Japanese investors but also from investors worldwide to support challenging projects, along with original projects by young filmmakers.

“The appeal of films is that anyone around the world can enjoy them simply through the use of subtitles and they take only two or so hours to watch. Watching a film produced in an unfamiliar country improves your cultural understanding and allows for the recognition of shared sensibilities. The more connected the world becomes, the more valuable it is for countries around the world to make their own films,” added Nishikawa.

By developing a healthy form of cooperation between the public and private sectors to support creators and improve content production environments, Japan aims to continue to deliver the best possible content to the world, preserving a rich cultural exchange. ●

Film director NISHIKAWA Miwa. After gaining experience as an assistant director for renowned directors such as KOREEDA Hirokazu, she made her directorial debut in 2002. “The appeal of Japanese cinema lies in the depth of its ability to express the unknowable through images rather than words.”



Nishikawa has endorsed the K2P Film Fund I, a Japanese film production fund. She spoke about it recently at a press conference held in Cannes in May 2024 during the Cannes Film Festival.

KAZUKO WAKAYAMA