



## Staying in Hiroshima

Ms. Mihoko Kumamoto (Head, UNITAR Hiroshima Office)

Ms. Kumamoto came back from Indonesia to Hiroshima this January. “It has been 15 years since my last stay in Japan” she mentioned. In January, she was assigned to the third Head of UNITAR Hiroshima Office, which is the only UN entity in Chugoku and Shikoku Region. Now she is exercising on her abilities.

Ms. Kumamoto was born in Dazaifu City in Fukuoka Prefecture. After her graduation from her high school there, she flew to USA hoping to engage in a global scene in the future. Graduating from psychology major in University of West Virginia, she returned back to Japan and joined Kyushu Electric Power Co., Inc, where she was responsible for the international relationships of the company. As she worked for the company, she found it more interesting to contact with developing countries, and at the age of 29, she made a big decision to quit the job and study in Columbia University in New York. She successfully took her Master degree in development economics there, and in 2001, she finally started to work for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). First, she worked for UNDP Vietnam office and then transferred to the Headquarter in New York City. There she tackled with so many varieties of programs including African Adaptation Programme (AAP). In 2011, she worked for United Nations Pacific Samoa office and was responsible for conflicts, reconstruction of the regions, environmental issues and climate change. From 2012, she further transferred to Indonesia and returned to Japan with so many glorious international careers. From January 2014, she’s been the Head of UNITAR Hiroshima Office.

Ms. Kumamoto lives in Asaminami-ku in Hiroshima City with her American husband and her only daughter, Hotaru. She smiles and says, “I heard that the area which we are living is famous for fireflies, and that makes me feel some special connection between the area and us.\* Actually, at first, I didn’t have special feelings about moving and staying in Hiroshima, but now it is a little bit different. For example, when I go through the Peace Memorial Park to take my daughter to her kindergarten, I somehow feel so modest...I believe Hiroshima is a place where we can feel the virtue of peace. In fact, especially after my inauguration, I strongly feel so....UNITAR Hiroshima Office provides with the Fellowship for Afghanistan and when the participants come to Hiroshima, most of them think that their country can also recover from the status quo. And whenever I hear these feedbacks, I really feel that it is really appreciated we have our office in Hiroshima. From now, I would like to revitalize our activities more than we do now. And we are also trying to find out what we can do for spreading peace with maintaining good balance of the improvement of environment and economy. I also hope our office becomes more familiar to the citizens in Hiroshima.”

(interviewed in UNITAR Hiroshima Office, Naka-ku, Hiroshima City)

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\*“Hotaru” means “firefly” in Japanese.