



## **Report**

### **The 2nd Regional Conference on Women with Disabilities 2010**

**Guangzhou, China**

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**By**

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**On 29 March 2010**

## **Opening Ceremony**

The conference started its first date with an Opening Ceremony to celebrate the theme “Innovation with Vitality Development for Inclusion”. It had four host speakers comprising of Chairperson of Women Commission of Hong Kong, Chairperson of the Guangzhou Women Federation, Deputy President of the Guangzhou Disable Persons’ Federation, and Deputy President of China Disabled Persons’ Federation.

The opening ceremony highlighted the importance of Guangzhou and its connection with the disabilities issue. Guangzhou is claimed to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important city in China in terms of number of persons with disabilities whereas women with disabilities account for 48.7% among them. It is also set to be the pilot city for the promotion of social security for person with disabilities.

## **Plenary I**

**Plenary 1 welcomed two keynote speakers who are Charlotte McClain Nhlapo, from World Bank NDNISP, and Helen Meekosha from Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), respectively.**

**Ms. Charlotte McClain Nhlapo** was appointed by the President of the South Africa to be member of the South African Human Rights Association, and has been working in the child development. She has also received the Sir Henry Ford Empowerment Award.

Ms. Charlotte began her presentation with the slide on Women, Disabilities Development. – A Puzzle Yet to Put Together. She said that there are estimated 300 million women and girls with disabilities in the world of which the majority live in developing countries. Yet this figure is still an approximation which we are not sure about. Even though it is common to see that anecdotal evidence has shown exclusion of PWDs, but the knowledge is still patchy. We need more proper evidence-based research.

For the global picture, a detailed picture on how gender and disability intersect is not possible since the data collection is limited and often clouded by factors that resist quantification, such as feminization of poverty, cultural concepts of gender roles and sexual and reproductive rights, violence, abuse and other types of exploitation, such as child labor.

Facts and figures show that almost most PWDs live in developing or resources-poor countries, while only less than 5 percent of children and young PWDs gain access to education and training. Moreover, girls and young women have faced with significant barriers to access education. Around 13.2 million children in developing countries have to drop out of school, of which two third are girls. Literacy rate of adults with disabilities is less than 3%. Africa and Southeast asia region have high gender gap in terms of participation in primary and secondary school.

Key issues for WWDs are violence, forced sterilization, reproductive rights, sexuality, motherhood and parenting, health issues, education, employment and income support, citizenship and inclusion.

She said that the reason we do not know more about WWDs is because of lack of space and voice. It could be resulted from the fact that widespread cultural biases based on gender and disabilities greatly limit their educational opportunities. Another reason is that those who committed to gender equity, by failing to consider disability and vice versa, have unwittingly reduced WWDs invisible.

Major barriers include negative stereotypes from both gender and disability perspectives, poverty, discrimination, non-optional cost of disability, under-employment, inequitable education opportunity and outcome, experience of and vulnerability to violence, inaccessible environments, issues relating to transport, child care, attendant care, insurance, and housing.

Suggested key strategies include ratification and implementation of CRPD, CEDAW and their optional protocols, development gender-specific measures to ensure that girls and WWDs have equal access to education and training, and labour market. Also, we need better data collection with disaggregated data for intended purpose, more solid evidence-based research, the establishment, support and strategies of organization led by WWDs themselves.

Lastly, Charlotte mentioned some examples of best practices from several countries in different continents, and suggested that WWDs should be considered as cross-cutting issues and global partnership of WWDs network is important to the success.

Note that there are around 83 signatory countries for CRPD all over the world, of which most of them are in the global South. This fact makes the CRPD the fastest UN convention ratified by the members.

**Ms. Helen Meekosha** emphasized the role of *Recognition, Respect and Rights*. She said that organization of disabled women have not achieved a level of equality as non-disabled women or disabled men. Yet, WWDs are always at the forefront of organizing and networking for change and support each other. WWDs have proven to be strong, proud, artistic, great mothers and good at organizing. However, it is not easy to find a solution to supporting the lives of WWDs.

Ms. Helen explained that we need to pay attention to the historical and contextual dimensions when we talk of disabled women. Disabled women who live in cities have different experiences from their rural counterparts and women who live in the global South experience more hardship than those in rich countries of the North. Many traditional and indigenous communities do not use the concept of disabilities. For example, persons with disabilities in the Australian Aborigines does not put themselves in this group.

Ms. Helen highlighted the three main issues facing Women with Disabilities which are Violence, Sterilization, Motherhood and Poverty.

Women with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence than other women. However, violence is not recognized as a crime in many countries and access to information about rights is still limited.

On sterilization, Helen defined “forced sterilization” as a procedure which result in sterilization in the absence of consent of the individual who undergoes the procedure. There is a historical precedent in several countries including for example the USA (until the 1950s), in Canada and Sweden (until 1970s) and Japan (until 1996) indicating that abuse of disabled women by sterilization occurred on a collective scale, that is, mass forced sterilization. This policy was rationalized by a pseudo-scientific theory called **Eugenics** – the aim being the eradication of a wide range of social problems by preventing those with “physical, mental and social problems” from reproducing. The European Disability Forum (EDF) recently released its “*Declaration Against Forced Sterilization of Girls and Women with Disabilities*” which recognized that forced sterilization is a form of violence that violates the rights of disabled women and girls to form a family by considering the number of children they wish to have, gain access to information on family planning and reproduction, and retain their fertility on an equal basis with others.

The WWDA has proposed that the Australian Government should take all necessary steps to stop the forced sterilization by:

- develop universal legislation which prohibits sterilization of any child unless there is serious threat to health or life
- address the cultural, social and economic factors which drive the sterilization agenda
- commit resources to assist disabled women and girls and their families and carers to access appropriate reproductive health care; and,
- create the social context in which all women and girls are valued and respected

Although there has been little research on any aspect of parenting and disabled women, anecdotal evidence suggests discriminatory attitudes and widely held prejudicial assumptions question the women’s ability and indeed, their right to experience parenthood.

Finally, Helen suggested that, in order to address the issues, WWD organizations should do the following:

- Dealing with authorities
- Negotiating the local, the national and the global
- Using the new communication technologies
- Forming strategic alliances

## **Plenary II**

**Plenary II addressed the situation of WWDs in China, and Guangdong in particular. There were 3 speakers who are Ms. GaoYuanyuan, PhD Candidate from the China Disability Institute at Renmin University of China, Dr. Li Han from South China Agricultural University, and Ms. Wang Zongyi, Guangzhou Association of Disabled Women, respectively.**

The first speaker, **Ms. Gao** talked about her research on the social support network in Chino by presenting the paper titled “*Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Social Support Network on Women with Disability*”.

According to her, social support should be defined as an influence on a person when he reduce his psychological stress through social tires, relieve his tension through social context, and

improve his social ability to adjust. A better social support network is considered to be beneficial to slowing down life pressure, improve body and mental health, as well as personal happiness. A lack of social support network will lead to personal physical and mental illness, causing difficulty for an individual's daily life.

A Research conducted in Guangzhou through questionnaire among unemployed found that the government and enterprise still play a key role in terms of their economy and employment support. At the same time, neighborhood organizations and informal social networks including blood relationship, genetic relationship and other social relationship play a more and more important role. Note that the social support can be either formal or informal one.

Ms. Gao found out in her research that family is a major form in China, yet not stable, while the support from government is still limited. She stated that women with disabilities return to their normal life after the rehabilitation, but they have to take certain action and efforts to obtain social support resources in both formal and informal forms, in order to seek a suitable survival social space. During the integration process, women with disabilities are faced with different social exclusion factors from all sorts of directions including:

1. the lack of social security benefits
2. rejection from labor market
  - 2.1 labor market exclusion from within the system
  - 2.2 outside the labor market exclusion system
  - 2.3 exclusion from family and friends

The key problems of improving social network support for women with disabilities include 1) filling vacancy for formal social support network 2) focusing on informal support network's construction and 3) involvement of social work in supporting women with disabilities.

Next, **Dr. Li Han** from South China Agricultural University divided her representation into three sections: status quo, interpretation of the status quo, and recommendation of key strategies.

She started her presentation with the status quo in the Guangdong region. It is estimated that more than 60% of person with disabilities in Guangdong are women who are facing with more serious problem in terms of income and employment than the men counterpart. Only 45.9% of women with disabilities are employed while the rest, accounting for 54.1% are unemployed. The main reasons for their low rate of employment are basically low educational level and social obstacles. Moreover, women with disabilities are facing with more proportion of divorce and separation; around 76% of women with disabilities are non-married. In conclusion, she remarked that Chinese society failed to take care of this vulnerable group and participation in social security of WWDs is very low.

She interpreted that biological impairment and gender bias still dominates in Chinese society. Loss of rights to work of women with disabilities makes WWDs more vulnerable since they have to rely on their own families and become more dependent. This lack of social institution support is even more severe in rural areas. All these factors result in the lack of voice of WWDs in society.

Lastly, she suggested that we should promote gender-sensitive policy and measures, improve awareness of the prevention, develop rehabilitation practices, and promote accessible environment to increase the participation in education.

The last speaker for the plenary II is **Ms. Wang Zongyi**, Chairperson of the Guangzhou Association of Disabled Women.

Ms. Wang emphasized the mainstreaming of women with disabilities issues by raising social awareness of gender issue. She said that the most important symbol of promoting the rights of women occurred in 1995 when China hosted the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. As a result of this meeting, there is a consensual commitment to realize the gender equality in the world community. We also celebrate the 100 years anniversary of International Women's Day this year. She noted that Guangzhou Association of Disabled Women is the first gender group founded in the Mainland.

Ms. Wang highlighted values, self-esteem and independence as essential to the promotion of well-being of women with disabilities. In order to realize all objectives, it is critical to promote the concept of self-help and self-reliance with women with disabilities. Guangzhou Association of Disabled Women sets forth to eradicate the bias toward WWDs by organizing the exhibition and inviting disabled women who are wife and mom to speak on several occasions. Ms. Wang remarked that mainstreaming is new strategy. It should be regarded as one of the means, but not goal. We should work together to improve the policy and regulations, and enhance the awareness of the members. She said that reality has shown that WWDs' needs and demands are not yet included in the women's right movement, and we want our sister to fully participate in the process.

### **On 30 March 2010**

**On the second day of the conference, the workshop session were divided into four sub-sessions while workshop 1 Equal Participation & Education workshop 2 Poverty & Employment , Health and workshop 3 Harmonious Society & WWDs , Family & Marriage workshop 4 Media & WWDs , Violence were simultaneously organized in two separate rooms.**

**On workshop 1 Equal Participation** Mr. Hong Chuan Lee President of Special People Association of Teluk Intan (SPATI), Perak, Malaysia present for Accessibilities for PWDs. In Malaysia public transit only in koulalamper access for PWDs, For PWDs in Malaysia they are very difficult for living in community, cannot take public transportation and also, has problem for wheelchair to put in the Taxi. Car park is not access for wheelchair user as well as toilet. Because of Malaysia government is not support. Every country want to develop they country and in the same role equal participations have provide for PWDs. Accessibilities is not for PWDs only but everyone can have to use and also elderly peoples.

**New Life** Ms. Lee Yuen Tai, Sam Chairman of Direction Association for the Handicapped. Went I get disability I want to kill my life much time I try my self to do. After that I try to make sure my life independently. Went I has friends who are has disabilities. They are consult me to learn how to live with disability I am very happy went I know that. Now 12 years pass I have my new own life I am designer and working for Direction Association for the Handicapped.

**On workshop 2 Poverty & Employment**, Ms. Usa, a representative from Nepal talked about the “Question of Generating Employment and Reducing Poverty of Women With Disabilities”

Ms. Usa said that, according to the survey in 2001, number of persons with disabilities in Nepal is around 0.45-1.63% of total population. The survey conducted in 2007 showed that numbers of men and women with disabilities are similar. However, caste and patriarchy are causes of discrimination in Nepali society.

The Disabled Person Protection and Welfare Act (1982) has laid down some provisions making stakeholders responsible to generate employment for persons with disabilities.

Visually challenged: receptionist, teacher and officers

Physically challenged: receptionist and sewing

Amputee: receptionist, dancer, officer, sewing

Spinal Cord Injury: handicraft, writer, counselor, journalists

Intellectual disabilities: making candles. Dancer, playing instruments

Deaf: writer

There is also 5% reservation of government civil service for person with disabilities.

In the survey with 64 women with disabilities, it is found that 56.3% are employed, while 10.9% used to work and 32.8% have no job. For the latter group, 28.6% thought that they were denied because of disabilities while 21.4% cannot find any job.

Ms. Usa said that main barriers in terms of employment in Nepal includes:

- Lack of orientation about nature of disabilities
- Lack of special support
- Lack of information
- Lack of attitude and self-respect with criticism
- Lack of assistive devices such as appropriate wheelchairs, software, earphone, toilet, rest place
- Lack of appropriate policies with implementation and monitoring

Findings from the consultation organized by her organization with 34 persons with spinal cord injury aging between 18-57 years show that the causes of the injury includes falling from tree, hill, and building, accidents and road accidents, armed conflicted and social/political movement and others.

WWDs require health care, individual need based-supports, child care, education, and etc. Ratification and implementation of the international instruments and convention are also critical.

**On Health, Cindy Wan and Kitty Law from Association of Women with Disabilities Hong Kong (AWDHK)** presented their ideas on *Women with Disabilities Speak Out*.

They said that women with disabilities in Hong Kong have poor access to health care, especially to service such as check up for breast cancer, cervical cancer and osteoporosis. AWDHK urged the government to develop gender and disability approach in managing the chronic care delivery model. In 2004, AWDHK conducted a survey on the barrier-free facilities in Maternal and Child Health Center & Women Health Centers in Hong Kong, aiming to reflect the difficult situations that WWD face when they attended examination or treatment in these centers. In response to our

request as a result of this study, the Health Department agreed to provide appropriate health services for WWDs. In late 2008, diagnostic couches for women with disabilities were installed in 4 maternal and child health centers in different areas. AWDHK regularly works with the nursing professional to organize health educational programs in order to raise health consciousness of WWD. Women with disabilities face more adverse conditions than women without disabilities, as incapacity to exercise make them more vulnerable to a range of secondary health conditions such as obesity.

### On workshop 3 **Harmonious Society & Women with Disabilities**

**Maria Wells B.Sc., CQSW., M.Ed.,LLM** PhD Candidate in Law at the Center for Disability Law and Policy, NUI Galway, Galway, Ireland. Government of Ireland Research Scholar in the Humanities and Social Sciences

She explains the framework that supports the rights of people and specifically women with disabilities across the European Union (EU). The European project has been evolving since post Second World War, but at what point in its development did it move from being “Gender neutral or Gender blind” to pursuing gender equality. When was it inclusive of people with disabilities and when in this process did it specifically recognize women with disability? While gender equality between men and women is agreed as one of the fundamental principles of European Union law despite progress in some areas, particularly representation is very slow. So clearly it is major challenge to push for equality between men and women in order to create a reality of equality. However, the right of women with disabilities is somewhat new to the debate; this paper will explore the key landmarks on this uphill journey so far and will attempt to discern the view of women with disabilities within the EU on this journey.

The evolution of the EU which creates the context for the development on disability within the European Union; including the structure to address disability particularly through the EU Commission; the development of disability strategy and policy, Leading to the EU legal authority in member states on disability issue and the recent welcome development arising from the convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities, Overall you will see the growing competence in the areas of non discrimination. But where are women in this process? The past thirteen years has seen increasing awareness if the intersectionality of gender and disability and to some extent poverty. This paper will chronicle this progress looking at International and European action.

### **Independent Living of Shenzhen Women with Disabilities**

Ms. Huang Suning Shenzhen Fellowship Association for Women with Disabilities President

Shenzhen government is always concerning about women with disabilities. Over the years, several departments of government have worked hard on the policies to protect the women with disabilities on legitimate rights and interests. The government has ceaselessly increased efforts to help the most vulnerable population and thus enable them to enjoy medical care, rehabilitation, education, employment and other social welfare equally.

Meanwhile, the government has implemented women's development planning, and made development tasks and goals for the women with disabilities and encouraged them to actively participate in social activities. All these make the women with disabilities enjoy equal rights just like ordinary citizens. And so they live by their own with self-esteem and self-reliance; and share the rich fruits of social and economic construction in Shenzhen.



I. Shenzhen government makes preferential policies to protect the rights of women with disabilities.

In the Women's Development Plan (2001-2010) made by Shenzhen government, goals and measures for protecting women with disabilities to live independently are laid out. The development plan clearly defines: ensure the disabled girls' school enrollment rate of 95% by the year of 2010; offer free training on vocational skills to women with disabilities, the number of women should account for above 40% of the total number of trainees with disabilities; employment figure of women with disabilities who have employment aspiration and abilities, should be no less than 40% of the employment figure of persons with disabilities.

In recent years, Shenzhen government has introduced policies to help women with disabilities including:

First, from September 2007, the city has implemented completely free compulsory and high school education for the students with disabilities includes girls with disabilities;

Second, Shenzhen Trial Procedures for Social Insurance for Persons with Disabilities, Women with disabilities will also be offered subsidy for medical insurance and pension insurance according to their difficulties. At the same time, to encourage them to be self-reliance, the self-employed of women with disabilities will be offered with pension insurance;

Third, Implementing the Notice on the Implementation Opinions of Nursing for Persons with Severe Disabilities, Welfare agencies and social service agencies provided nursing to women with severe disabilities;

Fourth, implementing the preferential measures of Shenzhen Measures for Assisting Persons with Disabilities, For example, there are over 5,000 women and girls with disabilities who enjoy free bus and subway in the city. Furthermore, more than 500 hearing-speech-impaired women and girls have been offered with mobile information card; more than 100 visually-impaired women have been offered with GPS mobile phone.

II. Actively promote the employment of women with disabilities and create environment for their independent living.

Shenzhen Disabled Persons' Federation has actively promoted the employment for women with disabilities. The federation guides employment service centers for the disabled at different levels to hold all kinds of free employment skills trainings for the women with disabilities annually. For example, home-based training, psychological counseling, cooking, floral art, handicrafts, computer operation, animation design and production, computer-aided software and other training courses for the blind. These free training enable them to master skills and then find suitable jobs.

Every year there will be about 400 women with disabilities getting jobs through the recommendation of employment service centers for persons with disabilities. For example, Yum Brands Inc. (Shenzhen) has recruited about 50 women with disabilities. At present, the employment of women with disabilities in Shenzhen has nearly ten thousand. They are working in the community, factories, shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, government organizations and institutions and so on. Getting out of home and going to work, the women with disabilities create life value, enhance self-confidence and win the respect of society through their own hard work.

III. Self-reliance of women with disabilities made contributions to a harmonious Shenzhen.

Courageously fighting, Shenzhen women with disabilities overcome various difficulties and work hard to make contributions to the construction of spiritual civilization and a harmonious society in Shenzhen. Shenzhen artistic gymnastics coach Wang Qihong has trained up artistic gymnastics world championship team. She has been elected as representative of the 17th Congress of the CCP, the only woman with disability in Guangdong Province to attend the Congress. Wang is also a member of Shenzhen Municipal Political Consultative Committee and was the torchbearer for 2008 Beijing Olympics.

In the picture Women with disabilities tenaciously struggled for getting champions at Paralympics. Shenzhen archery athlete Xiao Yanhong has won glory for China. She overcame great difficulties and became the Winner of team gold and individual bronze of 2008 Paralympics, torchbearer for 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Women with disabilities work hard and create a beautiful life. Su Liping, webmaster of a website for persons with disabilities has led her staff to be positive in their work. Her psychological paper got first prize at the First International Forum on Mental Health for Persons with Disabilities. Su was a torchbearer for 2008 Beijing Paralympics. Wu Miaochun is a wheelchair meanwhile the head of community-based rehabilitation station for persons with disabilities in Shenzhen Lianhua North Village. She has organized rehabilitation training, computer training, and cultural activities in the station. Wu has been awarded Shenzhen Civilized Citizen.

Physically-disabled Xiao Wenyang has herself at home since childhood. Overcoming got university degree in English Major National Higher Education Self-taught she is a Top Excellent Student. Deaf girl finished her novel--"If I were Helen" in her days. The novel got National Good Book



studied by difficulty, Xiao through the Examination; Zhang Xini middle school Award.

Deaf girl Xu Mengqi has studied playing piano with perseverance. And she got Excellence Award of Schumann International Piano Competition and third prize of National Art Competition for Persons with Disabilities. Deaf girl He Baiyun successfully became one of the dancers of Opening Ceremony Performance of Beijing Paralympics in 2008. Through the stage, she has brought out the best side of Chinese women with disabilities to the world.

There are numerous full-time members with disabilities specially serve the persons with disabilities in the communities. Among them, 40% is women. At present there are about 180 women with disabilities active in all communities around the city. They help persons with disabilities to solve various difficulties, such as rehabilitation, home care, psychological counseling, employment service and legal assistance.

With remarkable achievements in all areas of society, Shenzhen women with disabilities live on their own with self-esteem and self-reliance. They make contributions for social economic development at the same time achieves their own values. They actively integrate into the big social family and struggle for a better life!

Shenzhen women with disabilities are involved in exchange with women with disabilities in Hong Kong, Macao and overseas. Inviting Hong Kong women with disabilities to Shenzhen to give seminars or forums; participating in the East Asian Women's Conference; participating in International Conference on Women with Disabilities • 2008, Shenzhen women with disabilities will share good experiences and practices from all countries and regions to achieve gender equality and eliminate disability discrimination. Let's work together to meet the new challenges

## **Workshop 4 Issues to Tackle to Eradicate Violence against Women in Japan**

Tomoko Endo All Japan Shelter network

Looking back upon the 15 years of NGO action against gender-based violence, we must admit that change comes slow in the Japanese legal system and social structure, and women's actions are by no means sufficient. I will introduce about issues to tackle to eradicate violence against women in Japan.

The main issues are below.

### **1. Crimes of sexual violence**

- There is no rape shield law.
- Rape and indecent assault are the only acts of gender-based violence stipulated in the Penal Code.
- Physical assault or threat of violence is required to make rape and indecent assault a crime.
- Genital penetration is required, in disregard of male rape.
- Rape must be claimed by the victim; the victim must press charges.
- There is no emergency support facility for victims.
- There are no trained support staff in the facilities. (Female police officers are still few.)
- Penalty for rape is lighter than that for robbery.
- Act on Criminal Trials Examined under the Lay Judges System

### **2. Domestic violence**

- Domestic violence is not considered a crime.
- Victim support is only offered to married spouse (includes de-facto marriages and ex-spouses).
- Voluntary organizations are not seen as collaborating partners by the government. With no guarantee of operation costs, shelters are perpetually facing a financial crisis.
- There is no long-term support system for victims/survivors; only general livelihood protection system is applied.
- Shelters that are not barrier free deny access to women with disabilities.

### **3. Trafficking in persons and purchase and sale of prostitution services**

- Protection systems for victims are insufficient; many victims are simply sent back to their country.
- No charges are pressed for purchase of prostitution services; only women are punished. The consumer/perpetrator goes unpunished. Traders who traffic walk free without being punished.
- The Anti-Prostitution Law stigmatizes the women who are arrested for prostitution.
- The legal system cannot catch up with the constantly changing forms of sex trade business, as exemplified by telephone clubs, cabaret-clubs, "delivery health" services, etc.
- No study nor survey is conducted on sex traders or sex workers. Japanese sex workers are offered even less attention.

### **4. Sexual abuse**

- There is a lack of trained personnel in schools and other child-support facilities.
- There is no systematic training to foster care-givers.

- No study has been conducted.
- Punishment is too light for abusive parents and relatives.
- There is a lack of temporary refuge.
- Children are not offered self-protection skills.

## **5. Sexual harassment**

- Sexual harassment is not defined as a crime.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Law obliges the employer to take measures, but it deals with penalty for the harasser, no system of victim support.
- “ Second rape” frequently occurs at consultation centers.
- Acts of violation are not recognized because the accused deny the charges.
- It is difficult to convince the labor office to recognize illness or disorder due to sexual harassment as occupational injury.
- Labor unions are slow in tackling the issue.

## **6. Sexual minorities**

- Sexual minorities are forced to come out if they want to make the claim as victims of violence. Much “ second rape” seems to be going on.
- No studies ask about sexual orientation or gender identity; so the problems do not surface as such.
- There are no shelter facilities for women with gender identity discomfort/disorder or vulnerable gay/bisexual men subjected to male violence.
- Either assigned to be female by birth, by rearing or by gender identity, issues of sexual minorities women are often ignored or excluded from Gender-Equal Society programs on the sole basis that they are not “ typical women” .

## **7. Violence prevention training.**

- Violence prevention training is not compulsory in schools.
- Almost no effective sex or relationship education is conducted in public schools.
- School curriculum guidelines (Course of Study) lack gender-based analysis.

## **Summary After lunch**

### **Women with Disabilities Issue in The Convention of on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities – Seeing from the Gender Perspective**

Mijoo Kim Representative of Women with Disabilities Arts and Cultural Network in Korea, The Consultant of The World Bank Social Protection & Labor, Disability and Development Team

## **1. Background and Issues**

### **1.1 The Reality of the Women with Disabilities**

The United Nations estimates the population with disabilities to be 10% out of 6.5 billion people throughout the world. It composes a single largest population group among many other social minority groups. Here, taking into account that women comprise 51% of the persons with disabilities, there are approximately 325 million of women live with disabilities in the world.

However, despite the significant numbers, policies accommodating requirements and desires of women with disabilities imposed by each government, even by the United Nations, are almost of non-existence. Even if there are, those policies are extremely limiting and partial, which does no good in a practical way. Responding to this bleak reality, the UN referred them to “Hidden Sisters” in Women and Girls with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region to explicitly describe the major problem of triple discrimination the women with disabilities must fight in general.

## **1.2 Absence of Women with Disabilities within the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

Issues of women with disabilities are nowhere included in the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Undoubtedly, since women with disabilities are also women, their rights are legally protected by the women treaty that includes “all” women. However, women with disabilities are not specifically protected by the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, nor become active recipients of the benefits generated by related policies in each country. This proves that issues of women with disabilities are not only excluded within the disability community but also in the issues of “Women.”

## **1.3 Controversies Surrounding Women with Disabilities-related Issues and Article Enactment**

After the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN Ad-hoc Committee for Enactment of Disability Rights Treaty and Korean government’s additional request to include an specific article of an official 15bis (women with disabilities), issues of women with disabilities along with a specific article of Children with Disability became the hot potato. In terms of women with disabilities issues, each government extensively acknowledged that women with disabilities face difficulties in their lives and multiple, complex discrimination that places them on the bottom tier of the society. Also, those governments agreed that the human rights of women with disabilities should be under any situation improved. However, the way to include the issues of women with disabilities within the Treaty, especially the claim that it should exist as a single, specific article, caused a heated dispute among pros and cons.

## **1.4 Alternative to the Women with Disabilities Article: Twin-Track Approach**

As it is mentioned above, how to include women with disabilities issues in an article remained a hot potato until the 7<sup>th</sup> Ad-Hoc Committee during which the very debate got more and more intensive without making any practical progress. Through Ad-Hoc Committee for several years, twin-track approach to the issue of disability, which indicates a combination of a specific article, focusing on equality of women with disabilities, and specific references to women’s issues in various relevant articles of the Convention of the world-wide representatives of disability-related NGOs? However, despite the twin-track approach, it was an unchanged goal of women with disabilities world-wide network to include particular issues of women with disabilities in the specific article in a way that has never been written in other articles in order to make sure that the issues of women with disabilities to be heard.

## **1.5 Last Dispute: Sex and Gender**

The official term for disabled women in the Treaty is “women with disabilities.” Then how do we reflect the gender perspective and concept throughout the Treaty? It was true that the very term that describes women with disabilities is not significantly important. Generally, when we focus on sexual characteristics of women, “gender” has replaced “sex” since the 4<sup>th</sup> International Women’s Forum in Beijing. In fact, the term “gender perspective” was widely used in order to reflect the advanced feminist perspective and social perspectives of women with disabilities within the major women with disabilities -related articles as a result of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ad-Hoc Committee. However, it encountered a huge problem due to a strong rejection from Arabic and African countries during the 8<sup>th</sup> Ad-Hoc Committee. It was because of the fact that gender has social quality while sex is confined only to biological quality. The use of “gender” in those countries will cause great socio-cultural controversy over Islamic family laws and/or religion laws, which forces them to reserve the women with disabilities-related or women-related articles. Therefore, the term “gender” is completely dropped in Article 6.

## **2. Relevant Theories and Major Concepts**

### **2.1 Women with Disabilities Rendered Invisible**

Women with disabilities have been rendered invisible in discussing not only female issues but also disability issues. It is extremely hard to find women with disabilities -related concerns in most of the governmental policies and laws in the world. What is more surprising is that there is no huge difference between the developed and developing world. This shows that there is a strong need to reflect gender perspective and to acknowledge the reality of them being female in the disability policies, which is deeply rooted in the social stereotype that women with disabilities are third identities with no sexuality yet. Especially, the concept of asexuality perceived by the general public has enabled patriarchal practices in disability policies that resulted in aggravating gender discrimination.

### **2.2 Sexual Discrimination within the Disability Community**

Aristotle once said, “the only stable state is the one in which all men are equal before the law.” Since the beginning of history, the term “men (male)” has been effective in distinguishing men and women. According to the history, although equality is entangled with spiritual, materialistic, economic, sexual, and political problems, feminism began to gradually appear when people demanded that men and women should be treated equally. Sex-based discrimination is discrimination against a person or group on the basis of their sex or gender, meaning that one sex has more privilege or has more limitation than the other. In the issues of disability, it takes place in a way that women with disabilities are more likely to be discriminated against than men with disabilities. Equality does not necessarily mean that men and women should be equal; rather, it implies that equivalent rights, responsibilities, opportunities are given to a person regardless of the sex he or she is born with. Also, sexual equality is not necessarily restricted to women but women tend to emphasize the importance of gender equality more.

### **2.3 Sexuality of Asexuality: Women with Disabilities**

It is widely documented that women with disabilities are typically seen as asexual. This phenomenon has led to prevalence of male-centered perspective in political, economic, social, and cultural sections of society. As a result, women with disabilities often experience unequal

access to various social services. On the other hand, patriarchal social conditions have contributed to the unequal status of women with disabilities in society. In this sense, the gender equality in Article 3 the general principle (g) comes with great importance since it clarifies ambiguity of sexual inequality of women with disabilities and has made itself as an explicit indicator of what should be discussed in the near future.

## **2.4 Implications of Gender Perspective**

Gender perspective is absolutely fundamental in order to eradicate sex-based discrimination, not just demanding to pay extra attention to special desires of women with disabilities. Preamble (s) emphasizes “the need to incorporate a gender perspective in all efforts to promote the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities.”

Gender identity is a social quality; unlike biological sex. It replaced “sex” since the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in Beijing on September 5, 1995. Gender and sex are both translated as “sexuality” in Korean but there is a slight difference in English. While sex is more associated with sexual desire, gender indicates difference of sexuality apart from sexual desire. Gender in grammar is a word that is often used to define the sexuality of an object and not related to sexual desire. However, some intentionally use the word “gender” to disguise the true intention associated in the word “sex.” The concept “gender” which is widely used in many countries including the EU nations and the United States implies the achievement of gender equality, rather than biological sex.

Gender perspective is to look at the matter based on women’s experience and perspective. The way to assert the sexuality of women with disabilities within the disability-related section is to equip with gender perspective. An inspiring deed in that sense is to include gender perspective within Preamble (s) in addition to pre-existing disability laws and policies, as well as guidelines for future discussions.

## **2.5 Disability and Women: Intersectional Discrimination**

It is indeed not enough to describe gender inequality of women with disabilities is simply the problem within the disability community. It is because the “disability” surrounding women with disabilities intersects with gender inequality and therefore produces a severe form of discrimination against women with disabilities. In order to understand women with disabilities better, understanding gender perspective as well as disability is of great significance. The condition that women with disabilities can survive in a male-dominant society is to stick to formality that they should be more beautiful than women without disabilities. On the other hand, taking into account that the concept of normal and complete human being originates from physical, mental, and social suppression, women with disabilities suffer discrimination by non-disabled women as well. Disability becomes a necessary prerequisite of any suppression.

In conclusion, women and girls with disabilities are subject to intersectional discrimination on the grounds of disability and gender. It does not just mean adding a “disability” factor to a “gender” factor; rather, it is a totally different, more severe but harder to fight discrimination that only women with disabilities can experience. Therefore, disability or gender should not be used as a category to separate the experiences of women with disabilities; rather, they should be understood as new identities called “women with disabilities.”

Article 6 uses “multiple discrimination” to describe the reality of women with disabilities who face multiple forms of exclusion from all areas of life. Women suffer from multiple

discrimination by virtue of their sex, as well as their disability. Here, the degree of being discrimination becomes more and more severe as the woman with disabilities has more discrimination factors such as being indigenous, race, class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, language, age, being a refugee, capacity, economic status. Therefore, the Treaty asks each government to acknowledge the discrimination against women with disabilities and demands to “take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms” in Article 6 (1). And in Article 6 (2), State Parties shall “take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement, and empowerment of women.”

## **2.6 The Point of Destination: Empowerment of Women**

The point of destination for women with disabilities to protect their human rights and to eliminate discrimination is well described in Article (2). By definition, empowerment means a good management practice and facing reality for an individual or a group to take responsibility and authority for delivery of value-added output.

## **2.7 Protection from Violence and Exploitation**

The Treaty by defining the reality of discrimination as mentioned above has a characteristic of anti-discrimination, and demands each government specifically in terms of various issues of women and girls with disabilities. Among them, the issue that receives the most attention is the protection of women and girls with disabilities against violence in and out of household. According to Preamble (q), it is emphasized that “recognizes that women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.” Along with Articles, Preambles play an important role in judgment and serve as a standard for conducts to make a request that each country and society understand the violent reality for women. Especially, “both within and outside the home of violence” acknowledges that violence is being done in almost every place including protection facilities or local communities and the form of violence varies from violence, hazard, maltreatment, careless treatment, abuse, and exploitation. Furthermore, Article 16 deals with freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse to request each government to put effort to protect the human rights of women with disabilities in a more powerful and practical way.

## **2.8 Article 6: Women with Disabilities**

Despite strong resistance to the endorsement of the specific article on women with disabilities led by women with disabilities throughout the world and Korean government, the final decision was made in a way to emphasize the issues of women with disabilities within the Treaty and to clarify the responsibility of each country in a short, concise sentence. Article 6 (Women with Disabilities) includes the dignity of women with disabilities, rights of freedom, and equality and stipulates that discrimination suffered by women with disabilities is a form of multiple discrimination, asking each government to take action on a national level.

To be more specific, the first part of Article 6 delivers a declarative message in that women with disabilities are subjected to multiple discrimination and thus, it is of utmost importance to reflect gender perspective and empowerment of women in order to enjoy the human rights and basic freedom equally and completely. Although women with disabilities are



discriminated against on the grounds of disabilities, they are also more likely to be victims of restrictions and therefore, each government should take its ground on the gender perspective in devising and implementing relevant policies. Gender-sensitiveness is more than ever stressed. As well, the second part states that it is imperative to take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement, and empowerment of women seen from the gender perspective. While this project is being processed, it is also required to encourage women with disabilities to actively participate in the program.

## **2.9 Abolition of Sexual and Customary Stereotypes**

Since women and girls with disabilities are more likely to be exposed to all kinds of dangers such as violence and exploitation, and to be excluded from social or daily life, it is necessary to impose gender-conscious disability policies, programs and laws in order to improve the situation and status of persons with disabilities. This effort is well summarized in Article 8 of awareness-raising, emphasizing that each government should undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities. Stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to women with disabilities are result of multiple discrimination on the grounds of ‘disabilities’ and ‘gender,’ suggesting to further study about the customs of each society relating to this.

## **2.10 Concerns about Rights to Abort, Rights of Reproduction of Women with Disabilities and Women-friendly Healthcare Service**

According to Article 25 of health, it is stressed that each government should take all appropriate measures to ensure access for persons with disabilities to health services that are gender-sensitive. However, women-friendly health services of this part, like it is understood as equivalent to guaranteeing the rights of abortion and freedom of women when the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was enacted by the UN, has been controversial. Therefore, some countries, most notably the United States and Israel, strongly and extensively refused to ratify the Treaty. And, although the Treaty was passed in the UN General Meeting on December 13, 2006, the Vatican officially published a document addressing that they oppose to the entire Disability Rights Treaty since it is likely to grant women with disabilities the rights to kill life. Judging from this, it is probable that countries with Catholics as their official religions will make a reservation.

Besides, it says to “provide persons with disabilities with the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care and programs as provided to other persons, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and population-based public health programs.” It is proven that this part of the article makes each government feel burdensome. It is because some countries including the Vatican, the United States, and Israel strongly rejected to guarantee the women’s rights by ratifying the health care service as it is written within the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

However, persons with disabilities are denied from the rights to reproduce only because of their disabilities and, particularly, women with disabilities had no access to basic medical services and support in the course of their pregnancy. This makes Article 25 more important than any other Article. The fact that women with disabilities are granted with the rights to reproduce implies more than unhindered access to the medical service; it is to have the rights to exist as human beings as others, to reproduce, and to bring them up.

## **2.11 Adequate Social Security for Eradication of Poverty**

As a result of intersectional discrimination on the grounds of disability and gender, women with disabilities universally occupy the bottom of socio-economic status. In response to sad reality, the Treaty “ensures access by persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, to social protection programs and poverty reduction programs.”

## **2.12 Gender Balance of Disability Rights Committee: Incomplete Self-representation of Women with Disabilities**

On the other hand, the Treaty demands each government to select members of Disability Rights Committee who evaluate, monitor and advise each government’s performance of treaty obligations, taking into gender balance into account. Gender balance comes from gender perspective. However, in fact, it is worth paying attention whether gender balance automatically means the effect to be given to the right to self-representation in women with disabilities. When women with disabilities with complete absorption of the self-representation involve in the process of reporting and evaluation of each government in terms of its performance of treaty obligations, it is likely to develop appropriate measures to ensure full development of women with disabilities. Therefore, the desirable way to advance the human rights of women with disabilities and to ban discrimination based on disability and gender is for women with disabilities to actively participate in the Committee that review the issues related to women with disabilities, and in fact, their self-representation even goes a step further than drawing a gender balance.

## **3. Implications**

The Treaty marks as a turning point from vague discussion of the issues of persons with disabilities to the point where the differential treatment between men with disabilities and women with disabilities is clearly recognized, gender equality is acknowledged as essential to human development, gender perspective is required in all disability-related legal, systemic and political measurements, multiple discrimination that women with disabilities suffer is described and a specific article to correct the maltreatment is included. In the sense, the Treaty functions as a stepping stone for the establishment for dignity of women with disabilities, improvement of their human rights and eradication of discrimination. In terms of sexuality, the rise of “gender” since the 4<sup>th</sup> International Women’s Forum in Beijing is also shown in the Treaty, which is to say it is the most progressive treaty when it comes to women issues.

This is the resultant product of tight networks and struggle of women with disabilities, who rose above their personal problems to fight against the ill-proclaimed political situation through two big human rights movement: one with disability, the other with gender. Sisterhood of women with disabilities extends beyond borders as the effort of women with disabilities converged from every part of the world, showing more enthusiastic part of their lives than any other part of civil society. However, this is just the beginning. Living in a male dominator world characterized with proclamation to the international law and even abhorrence of women, also in many countries that regard women with disabilities as worthless losers of society, the day when women with disabilities enjoy their rights and live better free from all kinds of discrimination and suppression will surely come only when women with disabilities speak up for themselves to

ensure that each government meet the treaty obligations. It is because women with disabilities are, as they have been, important parts of our history with great responsibilities.

### **Media & Women with Disabilities**

Ms. Haunzhen Yuan Association for the Handicapped. Hong Kong.

She has to studied and research for Media in very important and stereotypes. The are looking for Peoples with Disabilities like supper man looking like they are can not live in normally. When there are report.

- They care the social worker
- Negatives Representation
- PWDs believe like media
- Media have stereotype of PWDs

How to PWDs represent of PWDs. Special points is the opposite channel of stereotype of PWDs how many PWDs can work for media e.g. They think PWDs like supper man but when we say about job no one can answer.

In generally in western media compare with HK media, They have never negative about media reporting the peoples with disabilities

Problem

In the shot term = News paper can get money.

In the long term = PWDs get problem.

### **The Development of Women with Disabilities in Hong Kong**

Ms. Woon Chun, Q'sa Association of Women with Disabilities Hong Kong

Women are traditionally the oppressed group in the Chinese society. Situation is even worse for women with disabilities who have been invisible for many many years. In 1998, a large scale research on the situation of women with disabilities was conducted in Hong Kong. The report drew the attention of the Chinese for the first time. With the establishment of the Association of Women with Disabilities Hong Kong and the agenda being put on the table, more voice of the group is heard.

In the previous days, it was found that their rights of different aspects are violated. Inevitably, this battle is not an easy one. In fact the group is still being excluded in the mainstream. Nonetheless, optimistically it is believed that positive changes can be seen with the efforts made by the Association. Advocacy and lobby are the common means being used. We even tried to spread the message to different places in China. Hopefully more and more women with disabilities will form their own groups so that it becomes strong and powerful and are able to exert positive influence here and there with the final target of changing the world – make all women with disabilities become visible and are able to enjoy all kinds of rights everywhere.

### **Conclusions**

Women with Disabilities and reproductive right

We have key issue is

Key Issues : Motherhood and parenting

- Discriminatory attitudes and prejudicial assumptions
- Coerced abortions

- Lack of reproductive health care
- Poorly managed pregnancy and birth
- Lack of financial support and equipment
- Removal of babies from disabled women

“an opportunity to work together as women with disabilities to build confidence, self esteem and positive expectations about life's goals.”

Conclusions: Moving forward with disabled women at an international level

- We must both celebrate our achievements and condemn the abuses of our human rights.
- Society needs to recognize the harm done to disabled women, but also recognise our creativity and many talents.
- The global nature of these conferences, show that disabled women have much to learn from each other and much to offer in making the world a more democratic and caring place.

### **Key Issues for Women with Disabilities**

- n Violence & Abuse
- n Forced Sterilisation
- n Reproductive Rights
- n Sexuality
- n Motherhood & Parenting
- n Health Issues
- n Education, Employment & Income Support
- n Housing & Accommodation
- n Information Technologies
- n Citizenship & Inclusion

### **Barriers to Inclusion for women with disabilities**

- n Negative stereotypes from both a gender & disability perspective
- n Poverty
- n Discrimination
- n Non-optional costs of disability
- n Un/under employment
- n Inequitable educational opportunities & outcomes
- n Experience of & vulnerability to violence
- n Inaccessible environments
- n Issues relating to transport, child care, attendant care, insecure housing, inflexible work arrangements

### **Closing Ceremony**

Speech given by leader from Guanzhou Women federation

Speech given by the president of Guanzhou Disabled Women's Association

Speech given by leader from Guanzhou Disabled Person' federation

Dear all Friends,

We are gathered here again this evening, in your wonderful country, after 2 important days. The 2<sup>nd</sup> regional conferent on Women with Disabilities to promorte humant right of WWDs and

together we have experienced many strong commitment. We have shared many experience and a lot of idia to our friends in Asia-Pacific country. Thank you to the Peoples with Disabilities Organizatons in Asia-Pacific Women with Disabilities Organizatons, for your participats the conferrace.

In two days' time, the remarkable 2<sup>nd</sup> reginal conferent on Women with Disabilities. The conferented is success full because of your support. Thank you to the all participant, Thank you all volunteers. Thank you all staff and everybody. Thank you so much, Guanzhou Disabled Women's Association for an outstanding job. You have done it! You have won. Thank you also to the supportive public authorities,

May we all take that spirit home with us.

Thank you!

### **The Culture Eve**

In that time we has discuss and form " **Asia Pacific Women With Disability Forum** " **And discuss for** the 3th regional conference of women with disabilities, and also create a E-group either yahoo or google for future communication.

### **On 31 March 2010**

Fill visit of Guanzhou Administration Center for Paralympics Sports. Guanzhou Administration Center for Paralympics Sports. (Guanzhou Sport Center for Peoples with Disabilities) is the affiliated Organization of Guanzhou Disabled Persons' Federation. It is located in Jiahe Street, Baiyan International Airport. It covers an area of 44000 square meters with construction area of more then 30,000 square meters, total investment funds is more than 150 milloin yuan.

As the early comprehensive sport training center for persons with disabilities, Guanzhou Administration Center for Paralympics Sports in into account the features of persons with disabilities and their special needs. It has maximum convenience and freedom for person with disabilities to training, fitness and life by providing many equipments such as fitness, activities base, center venues, dormitories, restaurants, design, construction, construction process, Guanzhou Administration Center for Paralympics Sports is responsible for managing, Directing and coordinating municipal and district (country-level cities) sport events and also responsible for training and development for athletes with disabilities, referees, coaches. It always holds sports matches. It has the functions of maintenance such as assistance and service work.





**Take Accessible bus to  
Guangzhou Administration Center for Paralympics Sports**







**The 2nd Regional Conference on Women with Disabilities 2010  
Guangzhou, China**



**Flower's the symbol of Guangzhou**