

# The 23rd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

On November 10 (Sat.), 2012, the 23rd Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women was held at the Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE, with the title "Get United - To Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls."

The keynote speech was delivered by the Executive Director of White Ribbon Campaign U.K., an organization that calls on men around the world to eliminate violence against women. This was followed by a panel discussion which featured experts from Korea and Japan. Participants discussed international trends, efforts being promoted in Europe, Korea and Japan regarding violence against women, what is behind violence, and many other topics, thereby identifying problems to be solved and what should be done to achieve a society free from violence.

## Keynote Speech

**"Violence against women will only cease when men speak out and challenge the violence of men."**

**Mr. Chris GREEN**

(Executive Director, White Ribbon Campaign U.K.)

Mr. Chris GREEN spoke about the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), an international organization in Europe with a focus on human rights and democracy, as well as about the White Ribbon Campaign, a movement currently gaining international momentum.

He first explained that the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe covers all forms of violence, such as domestic violence (DV), sexual violence, psychological violence, and stalking, and that the convention provides legally binding standards which are comprehensive in their coverage of violence against women. The convention's parties will be obliged to take necessary measures in order to protect all victims from any further acts of violence.



Keynote speech

Next, he gave an outline of the White Ribbon Campaign, in which men call on other men to prevent violence against women. This campaign is currently underway in the U.K. as well as more than 50 other countries around the world. He then explored why it is necessary to organize men in order to eliminate violence against women and said that when motivating men to engage in the campaign, it is important to emphasize to men that such engagement would be in their interest. He also explained that it is effective to approach men by identifying their relational interests and personal

wellbeing. Moreover, he presented the campaign's specific, effective strategies to get men engaged: while establishing close cooperation with local governments, companies, and schools, the White Ribbon Campaign has received endorsement from prominent male sports players and musicians.

## Panel Discussion

### Panelists

**Mr. Chris GREEN**

(Executive Director, White Ribbon Campaign U.K.)

**Ms. PARK, Inn hea**

(Director, Incheon Women's Hot Line, Korea)

**Ms. Muneko ISHIMOTO**

(Counseling Coordinator / Social Welfare Worker, Kurume Municipal Gender Equality Promotion Center, Japan)

### Panelist and coordinator

**Ms. Yukiko TSUNODA (Lawyer)**

At the panel discussion following the keynote speech, Ms. TSUNODA, the coordinator of the discussion, first spoke about efforts made by the U.N. and Japan to combat violence against women and girls. She explained the U.N.'s view that it is necessary to recognize that violence against women is a problem related to a social mechanism by which women are placed under the control of men and forced into a subordinate position, and that in order to improve the status of women, it is also necessary to eliminate violence against women and achieve gender equality. In addition, she emphasized that in a bid to eradicate violence against women, legislation is essential and that Japan lags far behind the international



Panelists

Mr. Chris Green's essay is available in Women Today (p.1).

standard in terms of such legislation. Moreover, Japan lacks awareness that violence against women is a form of discrimination based on gender bias, even though it is already well understood in international society.

Next, Ms. PARK, a Korean authority in the field of the prevention of sexual violence and the protection of human rights, spoke about the actual situation in Korea on violence against women and children and activities promoted in the country to eliminate such violence. She said that in Korea there are more than 20 one-stop centers where victims of sexual violence receive comprehensive support. She also explained that such organizations receive full financial support from the government. Her statements made the Japanese audience realize that Korea has a much more improved support system than Japan does.

Ms. PARK's presentation was followed by Ms. ISHIMOTO, who reported on the current situation of violence against women and girls from the viewpoint of a counselor. She explained that Kurume City, one of Japan's most advanced cities in terms of the provision of systematic support for victims of domestic violence, has a well-organized



Interaction event

administrative support system for victims of violence seeking counseling. Many victims blame themselves, which can result in a feeling of isolation. As a result, the violence becomes insidious, repeating and worsening over a long period of time. Moreover, with regard to the negative influence that children experience when growing up in an environment where they observe DV all around them, she spoke about the cycle of violence in which these children learn to solve problems by using violence.

These presentations were followed by exchanges of opinion among all the speakers. A particularly impressive discussion was on the fact that when DV occurs in Japan, it is not the perpetrators who leave home, but the victims. This means that the main trend of countermeasures against DV in Japan shows that in order to ensure safety, DV victims are forced to abandon all they have built up and run away. This point was regarded as problematic by everyone in the audience.

Finally, Ms. TSUNODA indicated that there was a possibility to find some clues for solving Japan's problems not only by focusing on the country's efforts, but also by attending the 23<sup>rd</sup> Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women and learning about measures being taken in other parts of the world.

The program concluded with her suggesting that the audience take the opportunity presented by the conference to unite in eliminating violence against women and girls.

After the end of the program, with the cooperation of the Council of Women's Groups of Kitakyushu, an event with the panelists and seminar participants was held on the 1st floor of MOVE to deepen interaction and further discussion.

For more details, please visit our website. <http://www.kfaw.or.jp/report/cat82/index.html.en>

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Seminar on KFAW Research Activities

Date: December 8 (Sat.), 2012, 13:30 – 16:00  
Venue: Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center, MOVE

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) conducts surveys and research on a wide variety of issues related to gender and women around the world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. At the 23<sup>rd</sup> Seminar on KFAW Research, KFAW researchers and visiting researchers presented the results of their research carried out in fiscal 2011 and fiscal 2012, and exchanged various opinions with the seminar participants.

### “Comparative Research on Effective Child-Raising Support Measures to Deal with Declining Birthrates in Japan and Korea”

Masami SHINOZAKI, Chief Researcher, KFAW  
BAE Hae-Sun, Professor, Graduate School of Human Sciences,  
Faculty of Literature / Faculty of Human Sciences,  
Chikushi Jogakuen University

### “Examining Education Trajectories and Views on Employment and Marriage: A Case of Female Students in Higher Education in Trivandrum, India and Kitakyushu, Japan”

Masako OTA, Senior Researcher, KFAW

### “Research Analysis and Network Development to Support Businesses of Rural Female Entrepreneurs”

FY2011/12 KFAW Visiting Researcher and Co-researcher

Kayo OKABE, Adjunct Lecturer, Hosei University  
Mayumi DAN, Adjunct Lecturer, Keisen University

### “A Study on Women Marriage Migration from Transition Countries in Asian Region to Japan: Case Studies from Indo—Chinese Refugee Families and Chinese Families in Japan”

FY2011/12 KFAW Visiting Researcher

Mika HASEBE, Lecturer at the Center for Multilingual Multicultural Education and Research, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

