

Statement of the 15th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women

Towards a Society that Secures Gender Equality and the Human Rights and Safety of All

Human security connects different types of freedoms - freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf. To do this, it offers two general strategies: protection and empowerment.

Outline of the Report of the Commission on Human Security

<http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/outline.html>

We, the 1,060 participants of the 15th Kitakyushu Conference on Asian Women held on 6 November 2004, reaffirm that the realization of gender equality is the basis of human security and we commit ourselves to building a society in which all people can enjoy the benefits of gender equality, development and peace as well as promoting co-existence between human beings and the earth.

We call for our friends of the world to join the efforts being made to promote gender equality and build a society in which all people are guaranteed their rights and dignity, and every individual can achieve her/his rich potential.

We will soon be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the International Women's Year and the passing of 10 years since the historical landmark of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). During these decades, we have made progress slowly but steadily towards women's empowerment and gender equality behind a banner of "Equality, Development and Peace." During this time, the reconstruction of war torn countries has started and women have been playing vital roles in this process. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, the world has faced uncertainty caused by the negative impacts of globalization of the economy, the escalation of so-called "terrorism" after 9.11 and unilateralism of the big power. People's lives are being threatened by this. We, people living in Asia, express our deep concern about this threat and our solidarity with victims.

To achieve human security for all, first societies and individuals must be free from the threat and fear of war and conflicts. It is vital that we integrate gender perspectives into all processes of conflict prevention, conflict management and peace building because the impacts of armed conflict differ on the basis of gender. We will continue to watch the implementation of the epoch-making UN Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted in October 2000 that acknowledges women's different experiences during wars and conflicts to men, and their important role in conflict prevention and peace building processes.

There can be no human security in a society where people are suffering from famine and acute poverty or in a situation where people are deprived of opportunities to achieve their

potential. While bearing in mind that wars are the major cause of poverty, we need to promote sustainable development in such a way that it reduces the gap between the powerful and powerless, enables all people to equally enjoy human rights, and strengthens the solidarity of people, thus contributing to the empowerment of communities. In particular, we need to recognize women's roles and promote their solidarity in this development process because women are the agents of development and the protection of peace, the environment and human rights, while at the same time they are often the victims of war, violence, poverty and environmental destruction. We also emphasize that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without gender equality and propose to place importance on them.

We are concerned that the protection of the rights and security of, and the promotion of gender equality among, vulnerable peoples, such as migrants, victims of trafficking, refugees, internally displaced people and people with disabilities, while the task of the whole of society, has not yet been fully realized. To meet these challenges, we propose making gender equal participation in decision-making among people and groups concerned the primary principle of community building. In this process we stress the importance of enhancing efforts to mainstream a gender perspective at the levels of civil society, the state and international society.

Consequently, we will initiate actions to realize a society that secures human security.

Actions to be Taken

1. We will make efforts to eliminate prejudice.

We will become sensitive to prejudice based on gender, nationality, ethnic group, generation, beliefs, religion, and culture, and will make efforts to eliminate it from our daily lives.

2. We will seek non-violent solutions.

We will not tolerate any form of violence, including gender-based violence, such as bullying, domestic violence, sexual harassment at school, home and in the work place, and will seek a solution to these problems that is non-violent or non-power based.

3. We will work in a connected way with each other.

We will endeavor to work in such a way that each individual gains self-confidence through a process of mutual assistance and cooperation in which there is problem-sharing with other people in the world.

4. We will endeavor to search for alternative ways of living and put the positive results of this process into practice.

We will endeavor to learn about the efforts being made by other people in the world and, as practice, attempt to build a society sustainable that is not based on gender stereotypes.