

WOMEN ¹ **of CHINA** 1996

中国妇女

**Historic
Milestone
for Global
Women's
Development**

**Gathering in
Huairou — NGO
Forum on Women '95**

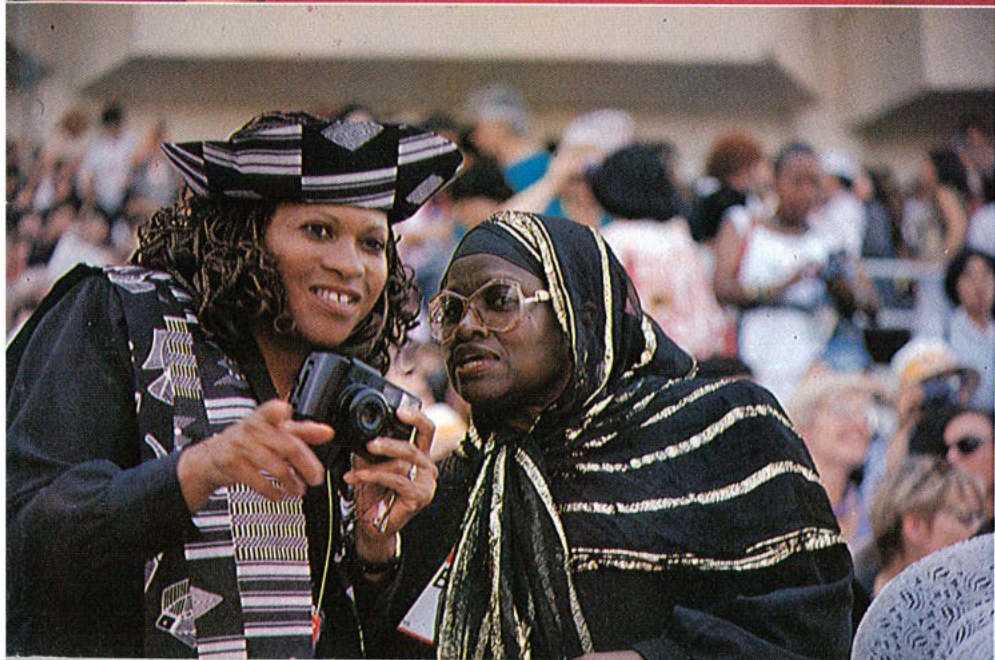
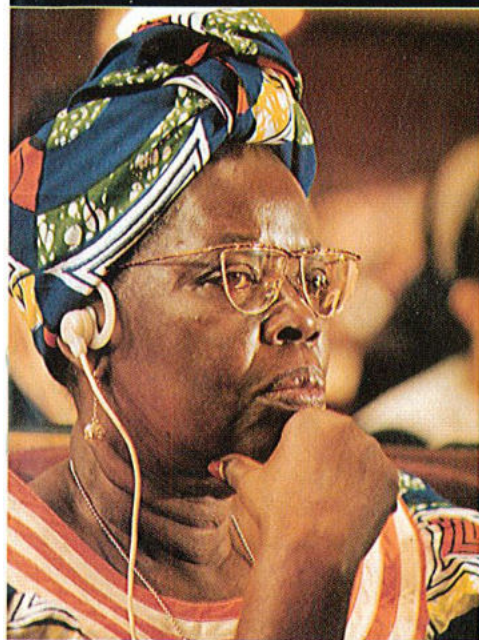
**Development and Peace,
the Common Pursuit
of Women of the World**



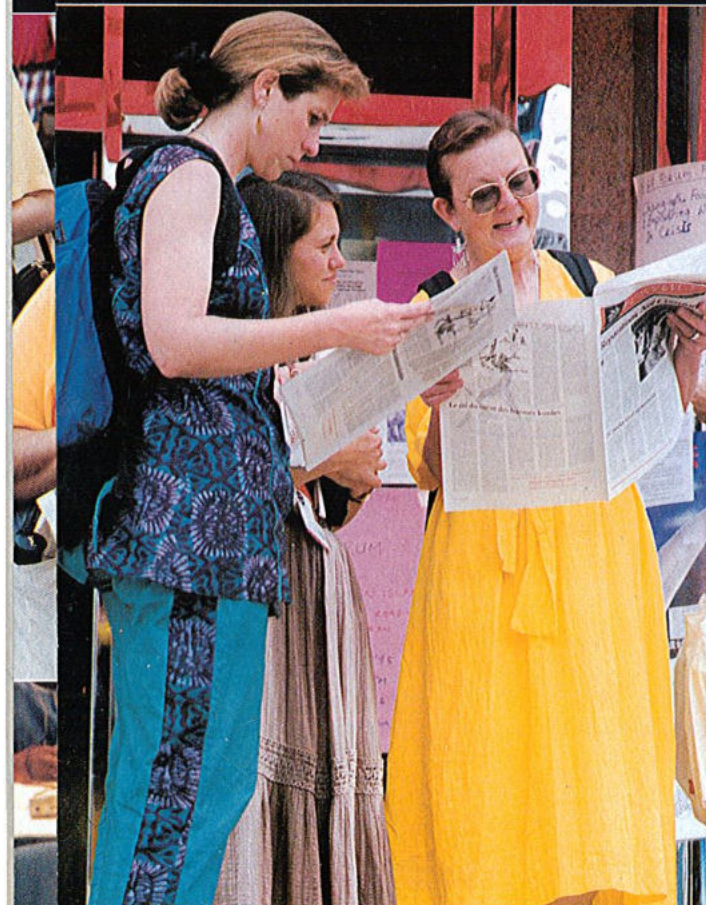
Let's Create a Beautiful Future



and Greet the 21st Century



Let's Create a Beautiful Future and Greet the 21st Century





FRONT COVER:
The Torch of Peace Reaches Beijing.



Published by WOMEN OF CHINA
Deputy Director: GAN YUN
Deputy Editor-in-Chief:
 SHEN YANTAI
Editorial Board: GAN YUN,
 LIU ZHONGLU, SHEN YANTAI,
 WANG GUANMIN AND ZHAO HU
 Address: 15 Jian Guo Men Daijie
 Beijing 100730
 People's Republic of China
 Tel. 5221133 ext. 2809

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Graphic design by ZHOU JINLEI

1996

To Readers

AT the golden season of 1995, women and guests from all over the world gathered in Beijing. The UN Fourth World Conference on Women was a complete success.

The Conference approved the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, both aiming at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. This will definitely exert a positive and profound influence on the international women's course in the future. Reporters of *Women of China* magazine went to the sites of both the UN Conference and the NGO Forum on Women, and conducted on-the-spot interviews. These have been compiled in a special issue which we would like to offer as a special January issue to our readers.

During both the Conference and the Forum, many friends from various countries and regions paid a visit to the magazine. This helped strengthen our understanding of and friendship with each other. Here we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the warm concern and enthusiastic help our friends have given us.

Women of China started publication in 1956, and this year marks its 40th anniversary. From an innocent childhood, the magazine has entered its youth filled with vigor and vitality.

The current macro-environment now is that, with the reform and opening to the outside world, the Chinese economy has been developing rapidly with people living and working in peace and contentment. Also, the women's cause has made world renowned achievements. Whether in content or form, the magazine has also changed and developed much. It has also made sincere efforts in profiling Chinese women from all walks of life, and in promoting friendship and exchanges between Chinese women and women from all over the world. We are very gratified that the magazine has been well received by our readers.

To more actively devote our energies to peace and development, to further promote women's emancipation and development, and to meet the challenge of the 21st century, the entire staff will continue to improve our work and exert efforts to make the magazine scale new heights.

Women of China this year will retain some old columns our readers are familiar with, such as Women and Development, Society, Marriage and the Family, Friendly Exchanges, Travel and Customs, and Ethnic Women. We will also continue to present well-rounded and substantial introductions about the various aspects of the lives of Chinese women, authentically and vividly, with both words and pictures to meet our readers' needs.

We sincerely hope to keep in close touch with our readers so that we can exchange information, can hear often what your opinions and suggestions on this magazine are, and provide better service.

With best wishes for a Happy New Year to all of our friends.

—Ed.



The women from various countries happily gather in the Great Hall of the People during the FWCW.

Photo by XU ZHU

Speech by Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China Welcoming Ceremony for the Fourth World Conference

Distinguished Guests and Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the Fourth World Conference on Women will have its grand opening in Beijing. Such a propitious assembly of outstanding women and distinguished guests from around the world has added luster to the city that radiates with the colors of golden autumn. I would like to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, and in my own name, our hearty felicitations to the Conference, and a warm welcome to all the honored guests and participants of the Conference.

This Conference is a major event for women as well as for all people around the world. Its convocation here at this very moment, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, is of great importance in that it enables us to review the UN's progress in the advancement of women, accelerate the achievement of the goals of Equality, Development and Peace as set forth in the Nairobi Strategies, and further enhance the status and role of women.

Women hold up "half the sky" in human society. Both men and women are promoters of social development and progress, and they share in the creation of human civilization, both material and cultural. What is more, women have made a special contribution to the reproduction of the human race. It is they who have nurtured generations upon generations of new lives, among them millions of heroes, scholars and poets. However, over a long period of time in the development of human society, women were not treated as equals with men. Prejudices against women, like an invisible chain, fettered the hearts and minds of millions. Such an outworn attitude should have long been discarded, and such an irrational situation changed.

Since the founding of the United Nations, the world has undergone profound changes and the women's cause has taken an extraordinary turn. The international community has made strenuous efforts to promote gender equality and has made certain progress to

this end. However, one finds that the practices of subjecting women to discrimination, oppression and even physical abuse, have not vanished from the face of the earth. And obstacles which hinder the improvement of women's status are far from being removed. In today's world where the commanding themes of the times — peace and development — have become ever more pronounced, the call for respect and protection of women, as well as a complete change in the fate of women has become increasingly vocal. The theme of this Women's Conference — Action for Equality, Development and Peace — has undoubtedly instilled fresh vitality into the global women's cause. We are glad to see that women in all countries have come to share in the desire for world peace, national stability, economic prosperity, social progress, the liberation of women and gender equality. This, too, represents an irresistible trend of history.

At this important moment near the turn of the century, we have upon our shoulders the historical task of building on the past and opening a path to the future. It behooves us, therefore, to carefully study ways to advance the global women's cause and properly handle relations between equality on the one hand and development and peace on the other.

History tells us that the fate of women is linked with that of the whole of mankind. The liberation of women is part and parcel of national independence and people's liberation. A higher status for women is associated with the overall development of society and the progress of the times.

A full and equal participation by women is indispensable to the fulfillment of the two major tasks facing the present-day world, namely, peace and development. Only by actively involving themselves in maintaining peace and promoting development can women reach the goal of improving their status.

Maintaining peace is the primary prerequisite for the improvement of women's status. The two world wars brought a horrible scourge to mankind with women and children, the most

of China at the Women (Beijing, September 4, 1995)

vulnerable of all, bearing the brunt. Without world peace and stability, any talk about improving the status of women, while guaranteeing their rights and interests, would be out of the question. Since the end of the Cold War, the international situation has, on the whole, moved toward relaxation, but regional conflicts and local wars have raged on without letup and the world is not yet tranquil. It remains an important mission for all people, including women, of all countries to strive for the maintenance of world peace and stability, and for the removal of all factors that may lead to war.

Eradicating poverty is the essential condition for the improvement of women's status. A sound economy is the basis for the well-being of human society. Poverty and underdevelopment have deprived many women of employment, health care and educational opportunities. For them, the right to equal participation in the political and economic life of the state can only be an elusive luxury. To become true masters of their life and control their own destiny, women need to enjoy equal status not only politically, but also economically. As China's great writer and thinker Lu Xun put it, "I believe that if women cannot enjoy equal economic rights with men, all high-sounding remarks made about them are nothing but idle talk." At present, poverty remains a serious obstacle to the improvement of women's status in many countries, developing countries in particular. This is due to prolonged colonialist domination and the existing irrational and inequitable world economic order. The developed countries and the international community at large have an unshirkable responsibility to help people in the developing world to achieve economic growth, to eradicate poverty and to improve living standards.

The Chinese Government has always regarded gender equality as an important measurement of civility. Chinese women have become masters of the state and society since the founding of the People's Republic. Attaching great importance to the development and advancement of women, we in China have made gender



equality a basic state policy in promoting social development. We are resolutely against any forms of discrimination against women and have taken concrete steps to maintain and protect the equal status and rights of women in the country's political, economic and social life. As a populous country, China has taken upon itself the heavy responsibility of improving the status of a quarter of the world's women. We will continue to work hard and make further contributions to the advancement of the women's cause worldwide.

The question of women is an important issue of common concern in the international community. The women's cause is a lofty undertaking for mankind. Not only efforts by governments and peoples at the national level, but also extensive cooperation at the international level are required to advance the status and role of women. I believe that so long as we abide by the purposes and principles

of the UN Charter, respect each other, seek common ground while putting aside differences, and enhance our coordination, we will be able to steadily advance the global women's cause. The eyes of the world's men and women are on this Conference. They have placed high hopes on a positive outcome. The Chinese Government and people are ready to make great efforts and to cooperate closely with the UN and its agencies to ensure a successful Conference. I sincerely hope that the UN Fourth World Conference on Women will become an important milestone in realizing gender equality and in promoting peace and development.

In conclusion, I wish the Conference a complete success and wish all of you a pleasant stay in Beijing.

Thank you. □

Development and Peace, the Common Pursuit of Women of the World

—Greeting the UN Fourth World Conference on Women

CHEN MUHUA (Head of the Chinese Government Delegation)

THE United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women is soon going to be held in Beijing, the biggest international meeting China has ever hosted in its history. This Conference is also a major occasion for member states of the United Nations, and the international community overall, to study and act on women's issues. The Women's Conference, coincident with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations and the 20th anniversary of the United Nations' International Women's Year, is sure to receive worldwide concern.

That the World Conference on Women is being held in an Asian nation for the first time, is the pride of Asia and the pride of China. The fact that China was chosen to be the host nation of the Women's Conference, shows that China is publicly accepted as a nation with the ability to host the International Conference, that peoples of the world are concerned with China's development, and that China is playing a more and more important role in international affairs. To host the Conference confirms the great achievement of the women's movement in China. Therefore, it is the pride of China to host the Conference, and a contribution of China toward the United Nations and the women's movement globally.

The Fourth World Conference on Women has a strong and clear theme: equality, development and peace. Equality means that women have equal opportunities to enjoy their own rights, to give full play to their potential and talent, to participate in political, economic, cultural and social developments, and to have an equal chance to benefit from their achievements. Development means that women generally participate in activities of state and society, and that society must admit the contributions of women. Peace stresses the important role of women in maintaining



world peace, standing against violence, and protecting the world's environment. Equality, development and peace are an inseparable whole. Only by taking an active part in social development and protecting world peace can women win their own status and realize their goal of equality between men and women; only with equality between men and women can women take full part in the social life of various fields, and shoulder their responsibility for the future of their countries and of the world, and promote world peace.

Equality, development and peace are the common requirements and wishes of all global women. Women account for half of the 5.7 billion people of the world. Not only are they shouldering social production, they are shouldering the reproduction of the human race. They have made special contributions toward social progress and the advancement of mankind. Therefore, not only must women have equal dignity, rights and status with men, they are subject to special protection and admission to society. However, sexual discrimination is still a common problem in the world today, and remains a major obstacle toward equality

between men and women. In some countries, there are still laws and regulations based on sexual discrimination. Although some countries have enacted legislation favoring sexual equality, there are still obstruction in its enforcement, and as a result, sexual discrimination still exists in practice. Women are often excluded in policy-making, but they are always the first victims of an economic crisis and economic setbacks in developing countries. Take employment as an example. Although the situation in different countries varies, the amazing similarity is that the rate of women's employment is significantly lower than that of men. It is also true that women are paid less than men for doing

the same job. Among the 960 million illiterate in the world, two thirds of them are women. When world peace is threatened by racism, racial segregation and wars, it is also women who are the most vulnerable victims and who suffer the most, and their personal safety is not being guaranteed. Therefore, equality, development and peace are the common goals of women all over the world.

Equality, development and peace are becoming the aims and standards of action in the international women's movement. The pursuit of equality, development and peace can no longer be just lip service. More and more women, breaking the barriers of states, nationalities and life circles, help each other and work together for equality. There has been a rapid development of women's organizations globally, ranging from governmental organizations, semi-governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. In addition to its Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations has installed more women's groups such as the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the International Research and

Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and some international women's organizations crossing regions and countries. Global women's movements have accelerated the convening and implementing of concerned international conventions. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which came into effect in 1981, is an international legal document rich in contents and scope of influence. More than 100 countries have been approved to accede to the Convention. Global women have adopted united actions in major matters. For example, the International Women's Year (1975), the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), as well as the World Conferences on Women, are all important united actions of women globally in their efforts to gain equality, development and peace.

Chinese women, accounting for one fifth of the global women, have not only been in pursuit of equality, development and peace, but have won great achievements which attract great interest. Although huge in number, women in old China for a long time were kept at the bottom of their society. They possessed no political rights, were economically dependent, and enjoyed no freedom in marriage. The impact of several millennia of oppression and devastation imposed by the feudal patriarchal system on Chinese women was exceptionally grave. Only the leadership of the Communist Party of China brought light and hope to the Chinese women's liberation movement. The founding of the People's Republic of China ended thousands of years of feudal oppression and enslavement, and the history of being trampled and bullied by foreign aggressors. They have become masters of New China, as are all citizens of the country.

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, "Women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life: political, economic, cultural and social, including family life." The fundamental laws, including the Marriage Law, Electoral Law, Law of Inheritance, Compulsory Education Law, General Principles of the Civil Law, Civil Procedure Law and Labor Law, all include clear provisions on women's equal rights. The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women, approved in 1992, has more overall, detailed regulations on the rights and interests of women in politics, culture, education, work, property, rights concerned with their persons, marriage and family, than all the previous laws. The promulgation and implementation of the women's protection law is a milestone of the Chinese women's liberation movement, a magnificent platform for the development of women's issue, a practical step of the Chinese Government

performing its duty to the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Besides, the Chinese Government has enacted over 40 administrative decrees and regulations. Local governments have devised more than 80 local regulations and rules. All these legislations include clear provisions on the protection of the rights and interests of women. In China, a comprehensive legal system, taking the Constitution as the basis and the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women as its core, has come into being to protect the rights and interests of women and promote sexual equality. No law in China contains clauses that discriminate against women.

The Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government consider the participation of women in government and political affairs an important component of the building of democracy in China. They issued special documents and called meetings concerning selection and promotion of women cadres, so as to accelerate women's political participation. Plans and steps of selection and promotion of women cadres are made and goals of women's political participation decided.

Under Chinese law, women enjoy equal political rights with men. They have the right, through various channels and in various ways, to administer state and social affairs, and enjoy equal rights to vote and stand for election. Since the first election of people's deputies conducted at grass-roots levels nationwide in 1953, the percentage of women casting their vote in the following nationwide elections have been more than 90 percent.

By 1993, when the Eighth National People's Congress (NPC) was convened, the number of women deputies had increased to 626, accounting for 21.03 percent of the total. In the Eighth National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), women accounted for 283 of the members, making up 13.52 percent of the total. Since the founding of the New China, China has witnessed one woman Vice President and Honorary President, two women have acted as Vice Premier in the State Council, and two women have acted as State Councillor. At present, women make up 32.44 percent of all people working in government organs. The various ministries and commissions under the State Council have 16 female ministers and vice-ministers, and the country has 18 female provincial deputy governors. In the nation's 517 cities, more than 300 women have been elected mayor or deputy mayor. As the executive Party, the Communist Party of China boasts more than 55 million Party members, of whom more than 8 million are women. Many outstanding women work in various leading posts within the Party.

The Chinese Government has made fruitful efforts in accelerating women's participation in state and social development in an all-round way. Women's employment proportion has been increasing, with total female employment reaching 246 million, accounting for some 44 percent of the total number of employees, higher than the average world rate of 34.5 percent. The number of urban working women has reached 56 million, their share of the country's total working population going up to 38 percent. In the countryside, women laborers make up half the rural labor force.

Women's areas of employment cover a wide range. Among 12 branches of the national economy, nine employ over one million women. These include industry, architecture, transportation and communication, commerce, public health, culture and education, Party and government organs, and social organizations. Rural women's professions have been widened: where they used to indulge in only planting, they are now found in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery, industry, commerce, transportation and service.

The principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women is basically in place and women's income and their economic status has improved. According to a survey conducted in 1990, the average monthly income for male and female workers in urban areas were RMB¥193.15 and RMB¥149.60 respectively. In rural areas, the average annual incomes for men and women were RMB¥1,518 and RMB¥1,235 respectively.

In 1989 and 1991, initiated by the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), and supported by concerned governmental ministries, a "Double Learning and Double Competing" activity (abbreviation for the practice of learning culture and learning technology, competing for achievement and competing for contribution), and the "Meritorious Services Rendering Activities" (abbreviation for the activity of women's "gain a sense of self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-strengthening," and making contributions to the country's Ten-Year Plan on National Economic Development and the 8th Five-Year Plan), were implemented among women nationwide, a show of Chinese women's role as "half the sky" in China's economic construction. The "Double Learning and Double Competing" activity was carried out mostly in the countryside. More than 120 million rural women had joined in, and 90 million of them had received practical technical training. Another 23.03 million women had learned to read and write, while 510,000 gained the title of agro-technician, and another 15,000 were awarded at provincial levels and above, the title of "Able Woman." The "Meritorious Services Rendering Activity" involved 37.76 million

urban women, of whom 4,672 women won the title of Exemplary Individual in the Meritorious Services Rendering Activity at provincial levels and above. Women, therefore, take part in the country's economic construction and have achieved significant achievements.

The Chinese Government also makes great efforts to accelerate women's education. In regular education, the state has adopted measures to increase the proportion of female school admissions, attendance and advancement to higher levels of schooling. In some remote, poverty-stricken areas and ethnic minority areas, there are free courses and schools specially for girls as a measure to remove barriers to female education. By 1993, China had more than 8 million women scientists and technicians, making up one third of the total, and 2.27 million medical workers specializing in maternity and child care, accounting for 55 percent of all those in the medical profession. Chinese women also play an irreplaceable role in promoting social civilization and moral progress, and safeguarding social stability. In China, marriage and sexual equality in families have become the main stream of families.

We always consider that women are a mighty force in safeguarding world peace. Peace is related to the future of the world, and the fate of its people, especially the fate of women. For many years, Chinese women have been struggling unrelentingly to safeguard world peace, against imperialism, old and new colonialism, hegemonism, racism, fascism and all forms of terrorism.

Since resuming legal membership in the UN in 1971, China has shown great enthusiasm in participating in UN activities related to women. China has been elected five times as a member state in the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and four times in succession as representatives on the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Chinese women have made vigorous efforts to develop links with women organizations and individuals around the globe to promote peace and friendship.

To date, the ACWF has established ties with nearly 480 governmental and non-governmental women's and children's organizations in over 130 countries and regions. The ACWF has cooperated with the United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Women's Development Fund, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations in over 700 projects in 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. Over 300,000 women have taken part in these programs, ranging from eradicating illiteracy and practical training among rural women, vocational training for unemployed urban young women, the training of teachers of pre-school children, the popularization of women and child care,

and in family education knowledge. Among these the "Help Young People to Find Job" project won the special award by the UN Women's Development Fund. Since 1980, China has provided 101 batches of material assistance to women and children's organizations in 50 countries, and has dispatched technical groups to developing countries to help raise productive skills of local women. These contributions have received high praise from the local governments and people. Chinese women have friends all over the world.

It is necessary to point out that some people in the world, with ulterior motives, make unwarranted charges and unscrupulously interfere with the Chinese women's liberation movement. Ignoring the great achievements China has made, they wantonly slander and attack the country's family planning policy, women's employment, and women's participation in political affairs and other issues. This is not what China should bear. The magnificent achievements of the Chinese women's movement reveals that the situation of human rights in China has been fundamentally changed. Human rights are, first of all, the right to development and the right to subsistence. With only seven percent of the world's farmland, China has basically solved the problem of feeding and clothing 22 percent of the world's population. The living standard of the Chinese people, including women, has never been higher. All these facts are enough to refute the shameful vilification against the situation of human rights and the situation of human rights of women in China. Critics distort the advancement of human rights of women in China as a falling back, and the protection of human rights of women as destructive of human rights. What else does such standing of facts on their heads explain, except for revealing their ulterior motive and evil will?

In order to realize equality between men and women, so that women can play a better part in the state and social development, the State Council recently promulgated The Program for the Development of Chinese Women (1995-2000). The Program determines the task and major targets for the development of women, points out appropriate measures, and is the platform for action that guides and accelerates the advancement and progress of Chinese women. The promulgation and implementation of the Program means a great deal to the comprehensive improvement of women's status and the protection of the basic rights of women; it enables women to display their great talents in the opening up and reform movement, and socialist modernization efforts. Presently, we must coordinate ourselves whole-heartedly with the government and departments concerned, make active efforts to publicize

the significance of the Program and its content, publicize the status and role of women in the open-and-reform and socialist modernization efforts, publicize the "four-selves" spirit of women, make known exemplary outstanding women in various walks of life, urge the society to build up Marxist ideology on women, ensure that all the targets as set in the Program are realized. In order to achieve these goals, we must go on to do a good job in the following aspects.

1. Entirely improve the quality of women. We should realize that the quality of women is not only related to the advancement of women and the improvement of their status, but is also related to the quality of the Chinese nation as a whole. Presently, the quality of Chinese women as a whole is comparatively low. The proportion of women taking part in state and political affairs is still low. The educational standard of women is not high, and in some remote, poverty-stricken areas and areas inhabited by ethnic minority groups, there are still many illiterate women. Women's production and management skills can not meet the needs in their work; in some cases women have difficulty in finding jobs. Feudal ideologies, such as valuing the male child only, men being superior to women, men taking the lead while women follow, are still firmly rooted in some people's mind. To improve the people's quality, the first step should be to improve ideology and morality in the society, so as to improve people's political awareness. We must mobilize women of all nationalities to study Comrade Deng Xiaoping's theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics, and study new situations and solve new problems from a Marxist standpoint and with Marxist methods, so as to hold firm to Marxist beliefs, and construct a correct sense of life and a sense of values, as well as a lofty morality. Women should display the spirit of self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-strengthening, consciously fighting against the influence and scourge of decadent bourgeois ideologies and ways of life. Women should also study hard to learn the techniques and skills needed in their professions, strive to become an expert and capable hand in their own profession, become qualified personnel in the course of socialist modernization so as to improve comprehensively the qualifications of women in politics, science and technology, psychology, and physics.

2. Actively plunging into the grand course of open-and-reform and socialist modernization efforts, women should take part in social activities in an all-round way at a correct road for their further liberation. The broad masses of women should plunge actively into the course of the open-and-

(Continued on p.20)



Commemorative Stamps of the FWCW

This set of stamps is issued by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications.

Stamp I (4-1)J depicts "equality." Streamers flying horizontally are used to symbolize both equality among all nations of the world, and also the equality of men and women. Stamp II (4-2)J takes "development" as its theme, which is depicted by rotating colorful streamers, and a molecular-shaped headpiece. This indicates the advancement of culture and technology of mankind. "Peace" is the subject of Stamp III (4-3)J, which is expressed by the peace dove and colored clouds. The peace dove and the phoenix, a symbol of the female in China, are combined in one depiction of "friendship" in Stamp IV (4-4)J. The tails of the bird are of five different colors, symbolizing women from the five Continents. A peony on the back of the bird symbolizes that friendship can be extended to all peace-loving people of the world.





Peacock and Peonies (Part)

(3.8m x 9m)

This piece of artistic work is the result of the cooperation of about 200 Chinese women painters, and stands as a welcome to the FWCW. The activity was sponsored by the Shenzhen Women Painters' Association in Guangdong Province. The peacock stands for good fortune, while the peony for extreme beauty. This piece of work, formed with a graceful peacock and a hundred peonies in full bloom, recalls "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend." This truly reflects the flourishing development of the women's cause.

A Peacock Displaying Its Tail looks like a huge

Chinese fan. There are about one hundred peonies painted on the bird's tail, each a different pattern done by a different painter.

The women painters who took part in the art work are Chinese, coming from 31 provinces and autonomous regions, as well as from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao, and Chinese women painters from Japan, Canada, the United States, France, Germany, Thailand and Australia. The work was exhibited in Beijing during the '95 UN Fourth World Conference on Women, and received high praise from the many visitors.



What the Chinese Government Asserts

—Speech by Peng Peiyun, Deputy Head of the Chinese Government Delegation and State Councilor, at the Fourth World Conference on Women

Madame President,
Fellow Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express, on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, our warm welcome to those friends who have come to Beijing from all corners of the land to discuss issues vital to women from all over the world. I would also like to congratulate you, Madame President, and members of the Bureau on your election, and wish the Conference a crowning success.

The issue of women ranks high among the major social issues of concern to the international community. Since the convocation of the Third World Conference on Women in 1985, equality, development and peace, as set forth by the Nairobi Strategies, have become the common objectives of governments and the international community. The liberation of women and gender equality

have become today's irreversible trends. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the fact that implementation of the Nairobi Strategies is far from complete in the world, and that women are still faced with difficulties which hinder their advancement. Many women are still under the threat of poverty, hunger, disease and war. Therefore, long-term and arduous efforts must be made before the further enhancement of women's status and genuine gender equality can be achieved.

Madame President,

The great importance of this Conference goes beyond this century. The Platform for Action and Beijing Declaration to be formulated by the current Conference, will be of far-reaching significance to the women's cause throughout the world. The Chinese Government wishes to put forward the

following proposals on women's development for discussion with you all:

—Women play a great role in creating human civilization and achieving social progress. Since women and men are both driving forces in the progress of mankind and creators of both material and spiritual civilization in human society, they should enjoy the same human dignity and respect, and the same rights and status. Therefore, respect for women, protection of their fundamental human rights, and providing conditions which give full play to their talent and potential is an important indication of social progress and should be included in the legal framework and ethics of a civilized society.

—The development of women's cause is always closely linked with the progress of the whole society. The realization of gender equality and the advancement of women's status are closely related to the improvement of the political, economic and social environment to which women owe their survival. Only when economic prosperity is energetically pursued in peace with a view to eradicating poverty and promoting overall social progress, can women have access to opportunities for extensive participation in development and enjoyment of equal rights. Progress for the whole of society, on the other hand, cannot be achieved without the development and advancement of women. Women should work together with men to promote social progress, share the accomplishment thereof, and achieve their own liberation while participating in social development.

—National Governments are duty-bound to achieve the goals set forth in the Nairobi Strategies by the end of this century. Governments should make a new political commitment to this end, formulate policies and measures suited to their national conditions, and put them into practice. Women, on their part, should also endeavor vigorously to achieve their own liberation.

—Development of the women's cause calls for enhanced international

cooperation. International cooperation must be based on mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, and must be consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. The developed countries have the obligation to assist the developing countries, and the United Nations and its specialized agencies should make new contributions in this regard.

Madame President,

The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 made Chinese women shared masters of their country and enabled them to achieve a higher status by actively participating in economic and social development. The development of the Chinese women's cause has entered a new stage since the country embarked on reform and opening up in 1979. After the Third World Conference on Women, the Chinese Government has continued to attach great importance to the cause of women in earnest implementation of the Nairobi Strategies. A series of laws and decrees aimed at protecting women's rights and interests has been promulgated, including the Law of the PRC on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women. A large number of women have become leaders at various levels. The women workforce has increased by 114 million, up 25 percent than that of 1985. Tens of millions of women have shaken off poverty and become prosperous. The number of illiterate women has gone down by over 30 million, and over 96 percent of young girls are in school. Marrying the partner of one's choice, maintaining family harmony, respecting the elderly and caring for the young, have become the order of the day. The average life expectancy of women has reached 72. In short, Chinese women are now enjoying the equal rights which were denied to them for thousands of years in old China, and which took the present-day developed countries hundreds of years to recognize. In the spirit of self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-improvement, Chinese women have made important contributions in the development of the economy, science, culture, education, public health, and

sports, and the promotion of the country's material and cultural progress.

Madame President,

China has scored remarkable achievements in the advancement of women. However, as a developing country constrained by inadequate social and economic growth and an outdated point of view, China is still faced with many problems in this regard. Therefore, we must continue to make efforts. Not long ago, my government, proceeding from conditions special to China, formulated and published the Program for the Development of Chinese Women 1995-2000. This is a program of action guiding and promoting the advancement and development of Chinese women. It is hoped that by the end of the century, the equal rights which women are legally entitled to in politics, the economy, culture, society and the family, will materialize through their full participation in the economic, social and administrative developments of the State. To this end, we will take, in the main, the following practical steps:

1. Ensuring women's full participation in economic development. The state will formulate a program for the development of human resources among women, featuring wider areas of women employment, more jobs for women, extensive vocational training and equitable remuneration for women, labor protection and social security, as well as higher levels of socialization of housework. Special support will be given to women in poor areas and special women groups in great difficulties so as to help lift them out of poverty as soon as possible.

2. Vigorously developing women education. The state will give priority to education. By the end of the century, we will basically wipe out illiteracy among young and middle-aged women, and universalize the nine-year compulsory education schedule. We will further reduce the drop-out rate among school-age girls and gradually increase the proportion of women receiving secondary and higher education.

3. Improving the health of women. The state will provide support and assistance to the health-care institution for women and children to improve the services so as to enable both rural and urban women to enjoy health-care, including good maternal and child-bearing services.

4. Taking concrete steps to protect rights and interests of women. The state will further improve laws and regulations for the protection of the rights and interests of women, educate people to become more law-abiding, and punish according to law violations of the rights and interests of women.

5. Further increasing the participation of women in political affairs. The state will formulate plans to train and select more female officials and actively create conditions to improve the quality of women officials with a view to enabling more women to assume important posts at various levels of government institutions.

6. Further improving women's institutions. The state will further improve women's institutions at all levels, establish a monitoring system of women's condition, and attach more importance to the role of NGOs.

Madame President,

It is a long-term and arduous task to achieve gender equality. We will join hands with all other national governments to make unremitting efforts for the advancement of women worldwide. The UN Fourth World Conference on Women bears a glorious mission. We are ready to work wholeheartedly with foreign delegates on the basis of mutual respect, friendly cooperation, consensus through consultations and the seeking of common ground while putting aside differences, as to make the Conference a success.

Let women all over the world unite under the banner of Equality, Development and Peace to jointly create a brighter future.

Thank you.

The 21st Century Should Become the Women's Century

—An Interview with Ms. Leticia Ramos Shahani, the Head of the Philippine Delegation

LIU QIAN

At the end of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Leticia Ramos Shahani, a Senator of the Philippines, gave a speech on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Ms. Shahani said this Conference proves one fact, that the fate of women has a great bearing on world development. She hopes the Platform for Action is a bridge over which women will walk toward the 21st century. The following century should become the women's century.

This famous Philippine politician is both the head of the Philippine Government Delegation to this Conference, and was the Secretary-General of the Third World Conference on Women. Her name is familiar to women of many countries. She can be seen at every UN meeting on women's issues.

In her nearly 30-year political career, she held leadership positions in agriculture, education, culture and art, foreign affairs, family affairs, population development, economic development, and other fields. She acts enthusiastically on the various stages of her government, non-government and international politics, especially devoting herself to helping women obtain equal legal, economic and political rights.

At this Conference, the issues of poverty, lack of education, poor health, and violence against women from developing countries was given the greatest focus of attention. As the spokeswoman of the Group of 77 and China at this Conference, Ms. Leticia Shahani was duty-bound to appeal for justice for those sisters striving for and safeguarding women's equal rights. All these made her a particularly noticeable figure of this Conference.

The Philippine delegation to the FWCW congratulates the Chinese Government and the Women of China for the successful organization of the Conference. I am confident that the Beijing Platform of Action will be adopted by consensus and will serve as an inspiration to women all over the world!

(L. RAMOS SHAHANI)
L. Ramos Shahani
Philippines

In her plenary statement, she said, "To these and other forms of inequality and marginalization which continue to be inflicted on women, we say: Enough is enough! We said this loud and clear in Nairobi 10 years ago when we adopted the Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, which demonstrated the inseparability of equality, development and peace. These 'strategies' have shaped and influenced the world's agenda on concerns and challenges confronting women. But progress has been slow because the world is still dominated by man-made structures."

After reviewing the course of the

Philippine women's development and their achievements, she said, "In the view of the Philippine delegation, without budgetary resources, the objectives in the Beijing Platform of Action will again remain unimplemented, dying the death of an 'official' paper." Meanwhile she made a promise, "the Philippine Government will increase its annual contribution to UNIFEM by 700 percent. We hope other countries will likewise increase support for UNIFEM, which will play a crucial role in the post-Beijing period. We hope that UNIFEM's current capacity of US \$16 million can be doubled by 1996."

Ms. Leticia Shahani is concerned with the funds and resource issues, because these will be critical conditions to realize goals, and they will indicate the feasibility of action.

Therefore, she places her hope on South-South Cooperation. She said the developing countries can and should help each other regarding the problems of women's interest, where women can get benefits.

She said that women and children are still victims of illegal trafficking. She called for the industrialized countries, developed countries, the UN organizations, and international organizations to pay close attention to the issues of women from developing countries, and to provide funds and credit support for them. She said, "There must be a sharing of resources; the world can't survive three-fourths poor and one-fourth rich."

She still encouraged the mass of women, "We women must first transform ourselves

(Continued on p.20)





I'm happy to
be in Beijing for the
fourth Convention for women.
I wish that all nations
unite to fulfill the
human rights and give
a push to peace.
Youma Halawa

Many the
have created so ma
Beijing has touche
Now the shared-
woman at a tin

Common Themes— Equality, Development and Peace

Women are a great power to create human culture and to promote social development. So long as we ourselves, all our sisters and all people make an effort to understand this point, we can make more of a contribution to the advancement of mankind and the development of society.

—Huang Qizao



妇女是创造人类文化、推动社会发展的
伟大力量。只要我们自己、使
这有一姐妹、使 这有人人都认识到
这一点，我们就可以为人类进步和社会
发展做出更大的贡献。

黄启昭



Women should join hands and
fight oppression. The world wouldn't
be in this position without women.
Alula Continua —
M.W.K. SOUTH AFRICA.



women of China whose warmth and hospitality
table memories. The shared experience of
ally. We can never be the same again.
here must change the world - one

Karen Flowers
United States



Women in China should work together
to achieve advancement. They need also to
be connected to other women all over the
world to learn from them and teach them
I wish them success

Dr. Sidge Wash
PO Box 167
Sudan Khartoum

Dear sisters!
We can not express how
happy & grateful we are
for the days spent in China.
We admire Chinese people
& women especially.
We hope that the most
fruitful result of our
forum will be the friendship
& mutual understanding
between Russian & Chinese
women

Thanks a lot,
thank you ever so
much

Your
Russian
Sisters!

China:
together

not to learn from
want to stand with
with all our love
Mily Naumov.



Congratulations for the success of
the Conference in Beijing

Chinese Women did wonderful work.
I want to make a big and
tight network with women all
over the world

Think globally, act locally!

Noriko Yatazawa
from JAPAN



To the Women of China Magazine

It gives me real pleasure to have this chance to express to you my sincere feelings and impressions. This wonderful experience I am going through in your beautiful Hunan. The generosity, courtesy and friendliness is touching. I will always carry the best of souvenirs of

Beijing 95 Forum on Women.

Once again China influences the human civilization 31/8/95

Best wishes
Sheikha Jamayel Al-Jabir.
from KUWAIT

I think this Conf
a great opportunity
Share all about the
our sisters around
I hope to bring
learned and share
in TONGA.

Male
S
H



Best wishes
Wonderful thoughts &
sharing with Women
Over the world & the great
People

Elaine Hewitt Women
Univers
BALBR



Since Nairobi the grassroot women from the South Pacific have achieved so much after the Growth International established the Grassroot Women Network. Our presence in Beijing gave us the opportunity to have the grassroot women voice & views heard by other Women from other parts of the World

Susana Luning
Fiji

has bring me
am + to
ities + Work
would do.
what I've
with my people

pu lotu
Veikune.

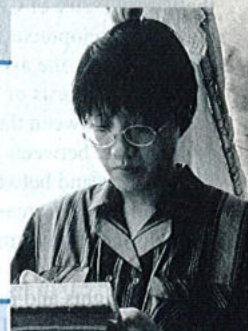


The United Nations World Conference for Women
and the NGO Women's Forum here in Beijing and
Huairou have been outstanding in their contribution
to changing the world for women. I have been very
impressed with the Chinese women's warmth,
kindness + progressiveness. Especially great
has been the "Women of China" magazine! - Very
informative! Women everywhere keep-up
~~having~~ the forward-moving strategies!

Ramona Perez Truck
9/8/95 USA

Common Themes—
Equality,
Development and
Peace

女人手牵手就是和平力量。



Women hand in hand means peace and power.

—Huang Su'en from Taiwan

Chinese

Development Unit
West Indies
West Indies Caribbean



The UN Conf on women promotes Equality
Development + Peace. Elements important
to achieve civil + economic justice
for women.

The attendance to this Conf of over
35,000 women shows the interest,
commitment, devotion + struggle
to achieve true peace + human
rights.

I hope women can achieve by year
2,000 the goals + objectives to
have access to true equality.
Gabriel Canepa (Curaçao)
Africa Americas

(Continued from p.10)

reform and socialist modernization; women should have a correct attitude toward the problems and difficulties they meet in the course of reform, deal correctly with the relationships between the interests of an individual and the interests of the collective and of the country, and between present and long-term interests, and strengthen their resolve to reform. They should realize that it is the socialist market economy system which leads to a steady development of the national economy, that the broad masses of people, including women, have gained economic benefit from the system. The socialist market economy has also created more opportunities and roads for women to take in social life. Therefore, the broad masses of women should emancipate their ideology, explore actively and bravely into new areas, and constantly make contributions to the reform and socialist construction.

3. Continue to do a good job in protecting the rights and interests of women. Owing to the vast territory of China, economical and cultural development in different areas is unbalanced. In the aspect of protecting the rights and interests of women, there are still great gaps between the cities and the countryside, between coastal areas and inland areas and between developed areas and old liberated areas, areas inhabited by ethnic minority groups, and poverty-stricken areas. In some places new problems where women's rights and interests are infringed upon have emerged. Therefore, it is going to be a long term and demanding task to implement the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women in an all-round way and to fight against all kinds of activities that infringe upon women's rights and interests. We must strengthen our efforts in publicizing and studying the women's protection law, create a favorable media environment so as to form a good social environment in which women are respected and protected. More organs to protect women's rights and interests must be established, and those which have been established must be further perfected so as to provide an organizational guarantee of women's rights and interests; negotiate among and urge all departments concerned to cooperate whole-heartedly and put the protection of the rights and interests of women into practice. We will firmly fight against any ugly social phenomena, violently attack any crime that infringes upon women's rights and interests, so as to purify the social environment.

4. Make full play of the role of the women's federations at all levels. Women's federations are the mass organizations that are established, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, by women of all nationalities and from all walks of life to

work for the further emancipation of women. The organizations shoulder the important task of uniting and educating the broad masses of women to work hard in order to build a prosperous, strong, democratic and civilized socialist country. To do a good job at the women's federations is the organizational guarantee in accelerating women's emancipation. The women's federations at all levels must use the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics as the guide, work in line with the country's economic construction, make full use of their own advantages, and do a better job in representing and protecting women's rights and interests. The federations should, through mass activities such as the "Double Learning and Double Competing," and the "Meritorious Service Rendering Activity," unite women of all nationalities and of all walks of life, and render new meritorious service in the course of open-and-reform and modernization.

Some people think that women's problems are the problems of women alone, that only the women's federations should deal with them. Such a thought is unilateral. We need the support of the whole society to solve women's problems. This is a common duty of the society. Cadres at all levels must set a good example and become the proposers and practitioners of Marxist ideology on women. The Party's committees and governments at all levels must adopt practical measures, contain the advancement of women and children into their plans of social development. With the understanding and support of the whole society, and the united struggle of all women, we are bound to promote the emancipation of Chinese women to a higher standard. In their efforts to pursue equality, development and peace, Chinese women are bound to make greater contributions for the healthy advancement of the global women's movement.

China has a proud tradition of women's emancipation and the women's movement, and has made significant achievements. The status of Chinese women has caused intense world attention and praise. With such achievements, China is worthy of being the host country to the Fourth World Conference on Women. We have made the greatest efforts for the preparatory work of the FWCW. Chinese women all over the country are looking forward to the Conference. I hereby congratulate beforehand a great success of the Conference. □

Translated by XIAOHONG LIU

(Continued from p.15)

if we want to transform the world into a better world. Empowerment must come within and without. We must lead, not follow. We must heal and cure, and not just the patient. We must be catalysts and initiators of change, and not just seekers of the status quo. Then there will be hope and happiness for our daughters and sons and future generations for they will be able to live, because of women, in a more humane, a more caring and less violent society, can become part of a more just and a more democratic world order."

As a politician, she attaches great importance to people's strength. She says the Philippine people play an important role in the development of Philippine women. She believes that if a woman wants to enter the political arena, then first must be good at learning and thinking. She must have enough courage and ability to compete with men, and she must be proud of being a woman and be devoted to the cause of all. Only by doing this can she become powerful.

Perhaps these words reflect the personal experience of Ms. Leticia Shahani. She has also emphasized the importance of knowledge to women and she herself is an excellent model of this. She continuously pursued her studies at famous American and French institutions of higher learning. She is a Baccalaureate of British Literature, a Master and Doctor of Comparative Literature, and has earned herself the honorary titles of Doctors of Anthropology and Law. She also wrote five monographs.

Ms. Leticia Shahani lost her husband in the early years of marriage. After that she has depended on herself to raise her three outstanding children. She said it is important to balance the relationship between family and work because she needs a happy family even though she is a woman politician.

Ms. Leticia Shahani is easy-going and amiable. She has deep feelings for the Chinese people. She said China and the Philippines are neighboring countries. Traditional ties between the two countries have been lasting for several centuries. Chinese people and the Chinese Government have made outstanding arrangements for this Conference. Chinese success is the success of our Asian Pacific region and the victory of Chinese sisters and women all over the world as well.

Translated by MAN



Photo by LIU SIGONG

The UN Fourth World Conference on Women was held at the Beijing International Convention Center from September 4 -15, 1995.

The Historic Milestone for Global Women's Development

—the UN FWCW in Retrospect

LIU QIAN

JUST as the Secretary-General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in his written statement on the afternoon of September 4 in the main meeting hall of the Beijing International Convention Center, "The recognition of the dignity and worth of women, and of the essential contribution of women, on an equal basis with men, to life in all its aspects, is an essential element of that better world.

"This global Conference is unique." "Securing the equality of women and men, in law and in fact, is the great political project of the 20th century. A crucial role in the realization of that project has been entrusted to the United Nations. We are

meeting to take that great enterprise forward into the 21st century and beyond: to consolidate the legal advances, to build on the political understandings and to commit ourselves to action.

"This Conference is a milestone in the history of United Nations work for women. It is the culmination of a chain of global conferences. It embraces the issues covered by all of them. This Conference is a call to action."

It is, no doubt, of significance for women of the world, at the moment when the twentieth century is ending, to come to Beijing — an ancient oriental country with a more than 5,000-year old civilization, and 1.2 billion people, and to convene the

grand conference on behalf of women of the world, who represent half the world's population, after having taken part in conferences in Mexico, Copenhagen and Nairobi.

People of the world finally turned their sights upon women at the end of the twentieth century, and took some measures to strive for their esteem and rights of equality, which makes us both excited and gratified.

"Let us not disappoint them. Let us not disappoint ourselves. Together we must follow our words with our deeds. We must take up the cause of the world's women."

This was Ghali's concluding remark, which raised the curtain on the Fourth

World Conference on Women.

Seventeen thousand participants from 189 countries, including 5,000 government delegates, more than 400 staff members of the UN organizations, and more than 4,000 NGO members and reporters took part in this Conference. Some of them were Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Princesses, and First Ladies. The government delegations of 130 countries were made up of members above the ministerial level. And also there were more than 36,000 participants of the NGO Forum on Women who were concerned with women's issues. They showed their concern and enthusiasm, and their substantial wishes of support to women's cause, which, no doubt, marks the UN Fourth World Conference on Women with significance.

Then, let us recreate the glowing and splendid speeches given by those committed to the fate of women, and also the moment which heightened the participants' morale and brought rousing applause in acclamation to this Conference.

Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was the first speaker to give a speech on behalf of her country at this Conference. She said, "On this solemn occasion, I stand before you not only as a Prime Minister but as a woman and as a mother.

"As the first woman ever elected to head an Islamic nation, I feel a special responsibility towards women's issues and towards all women.

"Social justice is a trial of freedom, of equality, of liberty:

Justice is political liberty.

Justice is economic independence.

Justice is social equality.

"This Conference must, therefore, express its complete solidarity with our sisters and daughters who are victims of armed conflict, oppression, and brutality. Their misfortunes must be our first priority.

"We must shape a world free from exploitation and maltreatment of women. A world in which women have opportunities to rise to the highest level in politics, business, diplomacy, and other spheres of life. Where there are no battered women. Where honor and dignity is protected in war and conflict. Where we have economic freedom and independence. Where we are equal partners in peace and development. A world equally committed to economic development and political development. A world as committed to free markets as to women's emancipation."

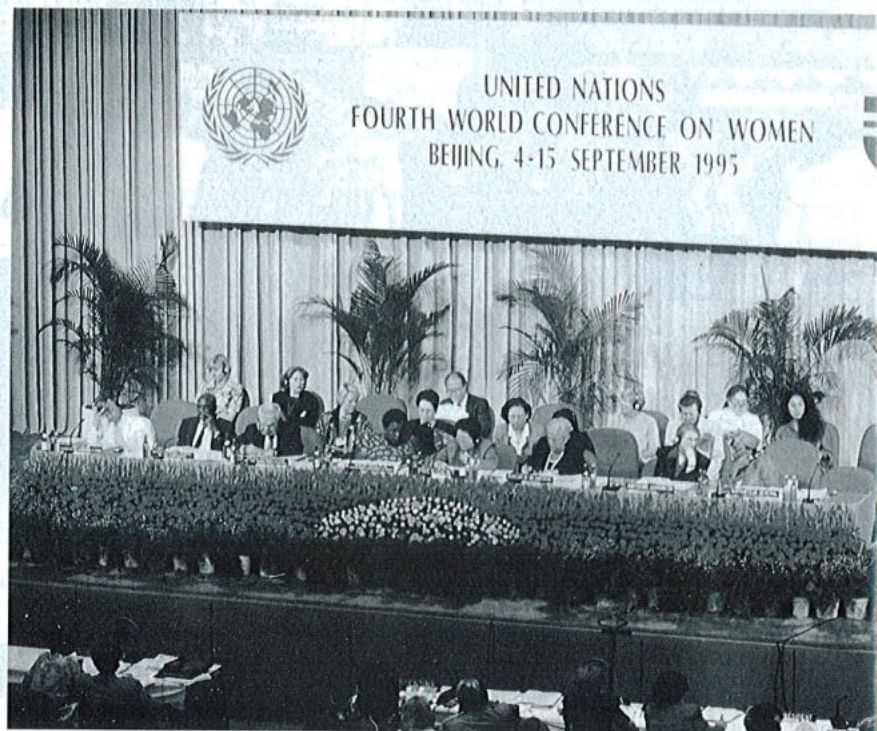
Finally she said, "Let us remember the words of the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 'Freedom has to be re-made and re-earned in every generation.' We must do much more than cry about the

past. We must change the future."

H.E. Alberto Fujimori was the only male President who attended this Conference. He said, "I believe, however, that this is not a simple assembly of women, but a forum of fighters who deserve respect and attention from all states and governments.

"Any social, cultural or economic transformation can be sustained only if it involves women, who make up half of the world's population, and if it also eliminates the injustices endured by millions and millions of poor women around the planet.

making in recent years, they were strongly dissatisfied with the reality of women's poverty, inequality of education opportunities, the school dropout rate among girl students, all sorts of violence, the low rate of women's participation in policy-making, and the armed conflicts endangered women and children's lives. Meanwhile, they called for actions to solve these serious problems. They claimed the need to win more international aid and international cooperations, and establish partnerships between men and women,



The rostrum of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women

"During the next five years of my constitutional mandate I have an important task in my country: to continue, even more vigorously, with determination and political will, the struggle against poverty and secular backwardness. This is the ultimate war against poverty declared by Peru and its people.

"I hope that the Platform for Action may secure that women may be the masters of their destiny in the 21st century."

The delegates' brilliant speeches constantly pushed the Conference to the upsurge. The government delegates, the NGO participants, and the UN representatives all unanimously declared their claims to respect women's values, women's human rights, realize gender equality, heighten women's political, economic and social positions.

Although the delegates fully affirmed the achievements women have been

well as between young people and women so that they can strive together for equal development and peace in the world.

* * *

As far as poverty was concerned, the delegates pointed out that there are 1.3 billion people who suffer from poverty in the world. Each of them depends on only one U.S. dollar to support themselves everyday, and sometimes even less than that. But 70 percent of those poor people are women. So women are the poorest in the world.

Mrs. Vilma Espin Guillois, President of the Cuban Women's Federation, said that even in the developed countries, women are always the first sufferers of unemployment. They suffer a great deal from exploitation and discrimination, not to mention the generally low status of women and children in developing countries.

Yvonne Coude, Minister of Women's



One corner of the conference hall

Development and Children of Guinea, said that in developing countries women suffer the most from economic crises. She strongly appealed for a challenge to poverty, saying that it is most important to totally eliminate women's poverty. In order to realize this goal, she believes that women should have the political ambition to take concrete action, and that they should unite together and work with some new measures. In this struggle, women should gain the development through their own effort.

She said poverty has not discouraged the Guinean people from abandoning their efforts while taking lasting actions. However, the largest barrier to implementation of the Nairobi Strategies is a lack of financial and technological resources. In Africa, the majority of the bilateral and multilateral countries did not keep their promises.

Freeing women from poverty as soon as possible has become the strongest voice of this Conference, especially a voice from the developing countries. They demand that the UN organizations and the developed countries offer their financial support to these poverty-stricken areas and thus, make it possible for women to develop sustainably. The UN organizations and many government delegations have made such a promise: they will challenge poverty through real action.

* * *

As far as education was concerned, as we all know, there are 900 million illiterate people in the developing countries, among whom women are double the number of men. There are 130 million children who

can not go to school, and girls are 60 percent of these.

Federico Moyer, Director-General of UNESCO, said education can empower and liberate women, and also secure that every female is able to decide her own fate. Only when women bring their roles into full play in the course of development can they obtain equal opportunity. He suggested that funds used for education account for at least six percent of the gross national products by the year 2000.

James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, said, "As the African proverb tells us: if we educate a boy, we educate one person. If we educate a girl, we educate a family and a whole nation."

Mr. Wolfensohn also continued, "Education for girls has a catalytic effect on every dimension of development: lower child and maternal mortality rates; reduced fertility rates; increased educational attainment by daughters and sons; higher productivity; and improved environmental management. Together, these can mean faster economic growth.

"In addition, educating girls opens the door to economic and political opportunity for future generations."

He made a promise: "We (the World Bank) expect to increase over annual education lending by about 20 percent to US\$ 2.5 billion over the next five years, with US\$ 1.5 billion per year going to primary and secondary education. We will plan that 60 percent of that amount —about US\$ 900 million per year —goes into girls' education."

* * *

As far as violence and armed conflicts

were concerned, the delegates pointed out that, whether in developing countries or developed countries, there still exist domestic violence, sexual violence and genital mutilation. Meanwhile, women are still the most miserable sufferers of armed conflicts. Some are raped and then killed. Many more people have nothing to eat and have nowhere to live. These should not be allowed to happen in such a civilized world.

Ingumba Alogsia, Minister of the Ministry of Heightening Women's Status in Rwanda, said the racial slaughter has thrown her country into an abyss. The situation of women and orphans are especially poor. She hoped that through this Conference, the international community can put an end to this brutal action against human rights. She put in a claim for the international community to provide economic aid to Rwanda, support those suffering women, and to punish those criminals who stirred up the racial conflict.

The call for peace as part of the call for women's equality, finally turned into a silent tribute to Gertrude Mongella and the other participants at the last meeting of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Mme. Mongella said: Peace is priceless. We must have peace, peace, peace.

* * *

As far as women's participation in government and political affairs was concerned, at present women only account for 10 percent of state parliament members, and only six percent of minister-level positions. And in developing countries, the number of women in high-ranking administrative departments is still less than one-third. There is even the serious fact that there are no women in the parliaments of over 100 countries. The delegates from various countries expressed their wish to change this inequality.

Chen Muhua, Head of the Chinese Government Delegation, said: "Women share the world with men. They play their special roles in creating civilization and in the course of social development. Women's development helps accelerate social development. Women's views and their voices should be included when a department, a region or a country is making policies."

A Greek delegate said that the chances for women to participate in policy-making bodies, whether domestically or internationally, are very slim. This fact forms a very serious undemocratic situation. It also reflects that the experience, knowledge and skills of women who account for half of the world's

population, have not been fully taken advantage of. And also that this condition is out of place with promoting democracy, development, peace and human progress.

These views were paid close attention to by the Conference, and there is a clear explanation of this in the Platform for Action: Governments should be devoted to taking equality between the sexes as their main target in the organizations and committees; political Parties should consider their structures and operating orders so as to eliminate discrimination against women's participation in policy-making. The UN organizations concerned should appoint women to take high-ranking positions in their systems.

At the Fourth World Conference on Women, all sorts of personal infringements and violence exerted on women were fiercely attacked. The hard situation of the world's women, especially women from developing countries, was commonly sympathized with. The viewpoint to changing the current status of women and making them really enjoy the same rights as men, were greatly publicized. Women saw the good conscience of society at the Conference.

The discussion to seek South-South cooperation and South-North dialogue could be seen in the convention center and the special meeting places for UN organizations. As the delegates from various countries emphasized, we do not spend time on flowery language. It is time we began to act. The spirit that all the delegates lost no time seeking the feasibility and the road to action filled this Conference with a down-to-the-earth atmosphere.

What is more, seeking common grounds while reserving differences and reaching unanimity through consultation were also conspicuous features of this Conference.

When the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with 361 paragraphs in 147 pages, which originally had over 400 brackets (points of disputes), were adopted on schedule without any brackets left, a satisfied smile played upon all the women's faces, and the delegates from various countries as well.

Although such countries as the Vatican, Malaysia, Iran, Libya and Ecuador still

have reservations about some of the contents of the Platform for Action, all the people in the world have realized the good results of this Conference.

This Conference proves that differences of social values, ideology, religion and cultural traditions, should not become a barrier to the cooperation of global women. The theme of seeking equality, development and peace through action expresses the voice of women from various



Caricature by MIAO DI and GEN HUA

countries. They are satisfied.

The world openly agreed that this Conference was grand, with its abundant and excellent results — the adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and considering its unprecedented scale.

The governments made their promises to the global women, and the women won a splendid victory. As Chen Muhua, President of the FWCW and Vice-Chairwoman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China appraised, "This Conference will make the world more concerned with women, and heighten women's status by a large margin. Many problems that women face and need to be solved promptly have been improved to a great extent at this Conference."

The Secretary-General of the FWCW Gertrude Mongella believed that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are the blueprints through which women can obtain their rights, are the blueprints that women were promised, and the blueprints of women's action. And their adoption marks the beginning of a new era in the women's movement. The document for the first time stressed the issues of girls, for the first time gives prominence to the views opposing violence against women, and for the first time puts forward the idea

that men and women must solve their problems hand in hand. All these represent a new approach. The Platform is powerful.

The delegates and participants spoke highly of the preparatory group of this Conference led by Mme. Mongella and many efforts made by the Chinese Government and the Chinese people for this Conference. Mr. Ghali said in his written speech, "You (China) have invested in it (the Conference) great care for detail. You have invited the world to your capital. And the world is grateful, which also indicates that 'China is making clear intention to play its full part in the international community across the entire range of its most important work.'" "With the full and active support and participation of China, the United Nations can act as a truly universal forum."

After her long-term cooperation with China, Mme. Mongella said sincerely that China and China are good partners. The success of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women is the result of joint efforts made by the United Nations and the host country China.

The warmth and hospitality of the Chinese people, the attitude of the Chinese Government to the cause of women, and the reality of China's rapid development will also remain at the bottom of people's hearts who ever came to China.

"Those empowered by nature to create life itself have had their own lives impoverished. Those who have proved their skills at raising children have been considered unfit to participate in popular governance on equal terms. Those who have built homes upon foundations of love and affection have been denied the share of society's concern and care." (Ghali's remark)

Such a reality will change because "revolution" has begun from the Conference in Beijing. Keep what we promise. Turn the promise into action. Action will prove the real significance and effects of the Conference, which will bring us a world of equality, development and peace.

The world will remember Beijing just because of this.

Translated by MAN



Photo by XINHUA

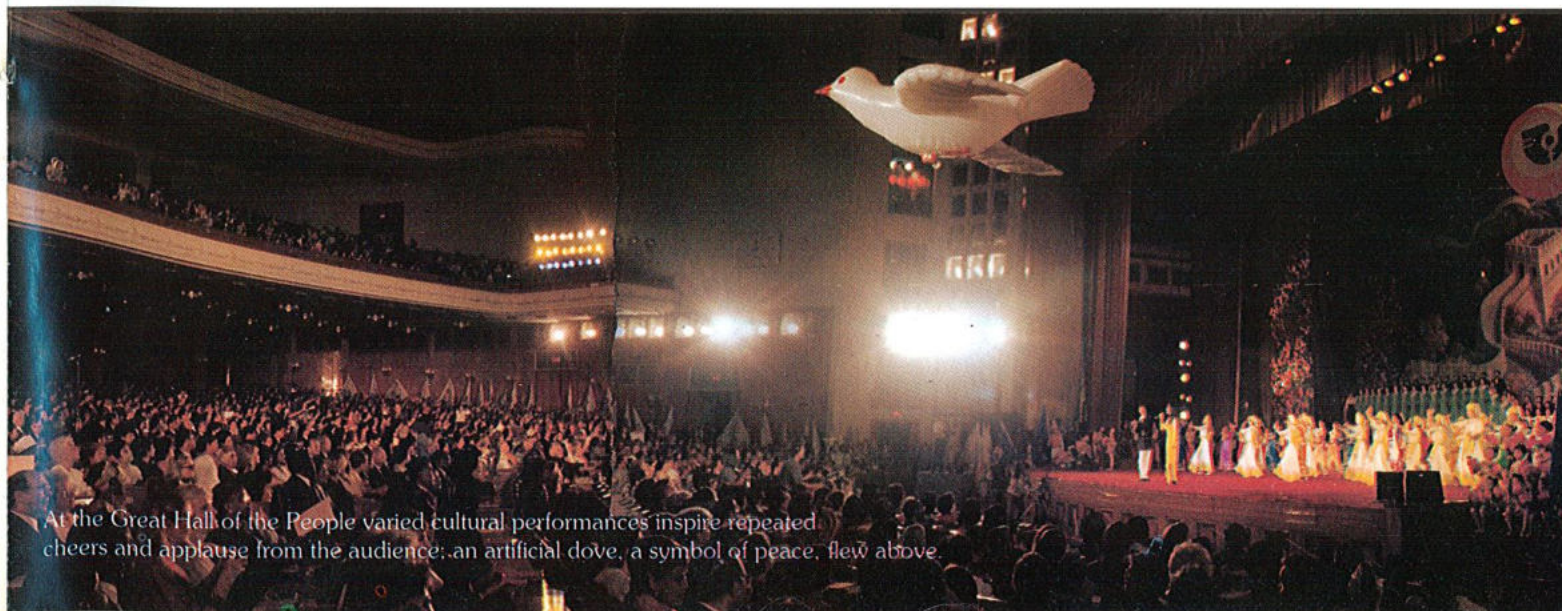
The Chinese Government held a warm welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People on September 4, 1995. About ten thousand government delegates and guests from various countries gathered there in goodwill with the representatives of the host country. Attending the ceremony were President Jiang Zemin, Peng Peiyun, Chairwoman of the China Organizing Committee and State Councilor, and Ismat Kittani, special adviser of the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of UN FWCW.

Photos by WANG GUANMIN,
except the named ones

Historic Milestone for Global Women's Development

—the UN Fourth World Conference on Women

The UN Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) was held from September 4 to 15, 1995, in Beijing. It was another United Nations' grand gathering discussing women's issues after the Nairobi Conference which was held ten years ago. About 17,600 participants from 197 countries and regions engaged in meaningful discussions on women's issues. At the end of the conference, delegates reached unanimity after removing 438 different points, and adopted the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.



At the Great Hall of the People varied cultural performances inspire repeated cheers and applause from the audience: an artificial dove, a symbol of peace, flew above.

Historic Milestone for Global Women's Development

—the UN Fourth World Conference on Women

SEPTEMBER 1995
CONFERENCE MONDIALE
DES FEMMES



Government delegations frequently held news conferences to advocate their views and opinions.



Photo by XINHUA

Two government delegates discuss women's unpaid contributions to the society with an NGO representative to the Conference.



Thirteen general debates and more than 50 special meetings were held during the Conference.



Parliamentarians speak their opinions on "Parliamentarian's Day"





Posing for a souvenir photograph under colorful national flags of member states to the UN at the Beijing International Convention Center.

The spiral structure in the conference hall, symbolizing no answer to the social economic problem, emphasized the importance for the Conference to probe for an answer.

Photo by XU XIANGJUN



Chen Muhua, President of the FWCW (right), chaired and addressed the final plenary session. She said, "Let us take action and forceful measures to turn commitment into reality."

During the Conference, 16 plenary sessions were held. At the final one, delegates from countries all over the world cheer and applaud for the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Photo by DING WENGUO



Photo by XINHUA



Four secretaries-general of UN FWCW met in Beijing. From left to right are Helvi Sipila, Lucille Mair, Leticia Ramos Shahani and Gertrude Mongella.

Gertrude Mongella,
Secretary-General of the
UN Fourth World
Conference on Women



Photo by DING



Photo by LIANG PING

Gertrude Mongella sings "Song of Africa" together with young African women on Youth Day.

Impressions of Gertrude Mongella

LIU QIAN

*I am very happy
on Chinese
hospitality
Jhpell
08 09 95*

AS the first African woman to organize a UN conference, Gertrude Mongella's demeanor, courage and insight, as demonstrated in the preparations and procedures of this largest UN conference ever, is sure to be remembered by people around the world.

Since her appointment as Secretary-General of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in December 1992, Mme. Mongella had been the focus of attention for women all over the world, and for people who are concerned about the women's cause. The solemn and long-awaited moment came at last on September 4, 1995, when she went to the platform and said, "At long long last, we are here in Beijing participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women — a Conference which is phenomenal in several aspects. It has generated much interest and debate globally, among men and women, old and young, from country to country. It has brought together the largest gathering of persons ever to attend a United Nations conference on any subject. All the indications point to a social revolution in the making!"

The applause was amplified and recorded by many microphones and cameras. This was perhaps the best of her many glorious moments in the 50 years of her life. A reporter once compared Mongella's career, starting in 1992, to climbing a mountain, but the trip was not easy. Tangled obstacles and great responsibilities caused her to take every step with great effort. The hopes of women around the world, and how they should end a century and start a new one, are linked to this trip. Yet, Mongella succeeded. She mounted the top of the mountain when the "Beijing Declaration" and the "Platform for Action" were passed to great applause, and when she said again firmly, "Let Beijing be the first step of our thousand miles to implement the attainment of true equality, development and peace in the world. Let Beijing be the platform from which our global crusade will be carried forward. Let us all commit ourselves, as we have been doing all along, to carry the spirit and hopes of all

women, men and the young in our hamlets, villages, towns, cities in every nation of the globe. Disseminate the platform on your return home to your countries and let the message be loud and clear: Action, Action, Action." "Let us ensure that we carry the torch which was lit in Mexico, and rekindled in Copenhagen and Nairobi, further forward from Beijing." However, she said: I would be an executor, whether in the world, in Africa, or in my own country.



Photo by WANG HAIYING

A portrait of Mme. Gertrude Mongella, a present for her 50th birthday during the Conference by Wang Haiyan, a young Chinese painter

Swarthy of skin, wearing a long and graceful dress with strong national features, with a gentle and amiable smile, and always looking energetic, Mongella was a very popular figure. And her clever mind and witty remarks won the people's admiration and praise. Wisdom and feelings are in perfect combination in her. Perhaps this was the reason why she was calm and unhurried when organizing a world meeting with so many disparities and arguments.

Once at a press conference, Mme. Mongella was asked what she thought about a remark made by Chen Muhua, President of the All-China Women's Federation. Ms. Chen had said that family planning is an issue related to a state's sovereignty. Mme. Mongella said: I agree with Ms. Chen. Those who wear the shoes know how the feet hurt. China should have a space to handle its big population problem and at the same time not go against the will and wishes of Chinese women.

Many times she repeated the words which she spoke at the opening ceremony

of the NGO Forum on Women: "Millions have placed their trust in us. We must not fail them." This woman politician, from the poor land of Tanzania, possesses an inspiring sense of responsibility and mission. She also has unique things to say about women's issues. Her many speeches during the Conference won warm applause because they spoke from the hearts of millions of women.

She said: Women's conditions will change to better. This is not only inevitable, but is also a right and a basis for a better life for men, women and children all over the world.

"Not only do women represent 50 percent of the world's population, they also contribute substantially to the world's riches. It is not by chance that the time has come for women to receive their rightful place in all societies and be recognized once and for all, that they are no mere guests on this planet. This planet belongs to them, too."

I make an appeal on behalf of all participants to this Conference: we should not ignore the tears of women in Burundi, Rwanda, Bosnia and Hercegovina any longer. We should not forget Somalia; women there cannot attend our Conference. We should express support for those under military attack—women looted, tortured and raped in the war who are silenced by the bombardment of gunfire. Civil strife and international war make women and children become destitute and homeless and wander into refugee camps. It is a misfortune of the modern world.

Peace is priceless. We must have peace, peace, peace.

"Our agenda must address eradication of illiteracy, ill-health, poverty, unemployment, violence and promotion of decision-making and empowerment. It must focus on actions that will eliminate discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion." "Action is the only way forward. There is no substitute."

"We have been saying all along that women and men must be together if we are to bring this world safely and successfully into the coming century—so too, must we ensure the participation of the young. They are our hope and future and can be the only beneficiary of society."

Women should have the courage to compete with men. In political participation, you are elected not because you are a woman, but because you are a capable woman. All capable women should work toward this goal. You will be elected.

With just this courage, Mme. Mongella has gone forward till today. She was born in a typical African family, her father, a carpenter, and her mother a farmer. She has three brothers and sisters. She thinks her greatest fortune is that her father thought girls should also receive an education. As a result, she went on a path different from other girls in her hometown. After graduating from Dar es Salaam University, she became a teacher. She then took the office of Tanzania's Minister of State for Education. Later, she was Tanzania's Minister of State for Women's Affairs, Minister of Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism, and Tanzania's High Commissioner to India before she got involved in international politics — she became a backbone of the United Nations, working at women's affairs. She once told reporters, "Entering into an election campaign is a challenging experience for me." But she gave up the chance this time for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Nobody knows about the details of Mongella's many hardships along her way to Beijing, and to ultimate success. For example, how she made the whole globe focus on this Conference while taking part, how she kept order at a conference with more than 40,000 participants, moreover, how she opened the more than 400 brackets to let all sides reach agreement and make promises? As an organizer, Mme. Mongella's contribution cannot be left unrecognized. □

Translated by JANE SHAW



Opposing violence and calling for peace is the common voice of women.

Voice from

At the NGO Forum site, the most attractive and busy place in Huairou, Beijing, was composed of two large groups of colorful tents in a variety of shapes. Here, there were not only many interesting discussions, but also songs, music and good-will cheers from those in the tents. People here could easily feel the pulse of the worldwide women's movement, and also hear its innermost voice.

* * *

Among the concerns discussed in this atmosphere included the problems facing women's health in this changing world. Nearly 100, mainly women doctors from various countries took part in this forum on women's health. They argued about three topics harmful to women: nutrition, the quality of health, and to prevent and cure the harm that violence brought to them.

Some people believed that women should understand and learn more about the science of nutrition. Equally important, women should not ignore their own nutrition and health just

because they want a slender figure. Spokesmen from undeveloped countries and regions said that women's health in their own countries and regions was even put on the agenda. Almost every participant mentioned the issue of women suffering from violence. They pointed out that women must change their attitude toward violence by realizing that it is an error for them to think that the violence they suffer was caused by themselves.

* * *

More than 30 disabled women left Tent for the Disabled either by wheelchair or under the support of others. They came out to the street to propagate their claims. Almost all of them held up placards which said, "It is our right, not compassion" and "Disabled women are the main focus of the Conference." The Women's International Linkage on Disability pointed out that disabled women have self-esteem and ability. They are a valuable asset and treasure to society. There should be representatives of the disabled women in the UN.



American women attach importance to the development of grass-roots organizations of urban and rural women.

the Tents

WANG XIAOMING

More than 80 women from more than 40 countries took part in the Workshop on Elderly Women, which was conducted by the China National Committee on Aging. They pointed out that the world has entered the phase where the aged represent a growing segment of society. More elderly women are in need of the care and help which society currently offers. Elderly women are an important human asset. They are becoming increasingly concerned about their roles in society, their health, their marriages, and their cultural life. And they also discussed the continuation of their education, their health, and the chance to live out their lives in dignified retirement.

* * *

The environmental issue is always a concern for women. Members of the Women's Economic League, whose general headquarters is in Canada, all wore white blouses and straw hats with decorative laces made in Newfoundland. They recreated joyful scenes from a few years ago when they would go out fishing with their families. Now,

everything has changed. No fish have been found in Newfoundland fishing waters for four years. This organization hopes the UN will develop a program to protect the oceans of the world as soon as possible, so as to make fish supplies as important resource in the world.

In the "Women and Environment" Workshop, the participants focussed on garbage disposal and its utilization. Some called for restrictions on the production of products harmful to the environment and a decrease in the consumption of products of this sort. Also people should pay greater attention to the recycling of these products.

* * *

A 14-year-old Nepalese girl in the Youth Tent appealed to the participants to attach importance to the issues of early marriage and adolescent mothers. In the "Girls' Voice" Workshop, held by the Children's Protection International and the Asian Women's Human Rights Council, a speaker mentioned that in the American media, sexual violence and pornographic literature have a damaging influence on girls. There are nearly no



They dance in a friendly way in the tent.

programs suitable to girls during TV's prime time.

Several speakers from Asia and Africa pointed out that in poor regions, girls have little chance to be educated.

* * *

The Latin-American women called for legalized abortion. In the "Sexual Right and Reproduction" Workshop, women from Chile, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, and Mexico pointed out that in some Latin-American countries, women were deprived of sexual and reproductive rights, and that abortion was illegal. Women in these countries who do not want to deliver children after conception, have to have abortions by non-scientific, unhealthy and illegal means. Thus, a large number of women die from this practice every year. They pointed out that the reproductive right is one of the basic rights of women. They claimed that this conference on women

will urge the governments of various countries to enact laws so as to make abortion legal.

* * *

In the "How to Abolish Sex Discrimination in Education" Workshop, held by the Society of Mills University Women's Leaders, the participants pointed out that, as far as the university's curriculum was concerned, in subjects such as mathematics and science, female students were discriminated against. This results in a disparity of knowledge in science and engineering between boys and girls. They also analyzed the reasons, concluding that it is not because girls are inferior to the boys in science and engineering, but that parents and teachers have different attitudes and expectations for boys and girls. Most people feel that girls should stay at home, and therefore, they need not learn much mathematics, physics and chemistry. The participants suggested that the current educational system be reformed to balance the knowledge structures for men and women, and thus, to foster many more women who work in science and technology.

* * *

The Muslim women's voice against the war in the former Yugoslavia area was especially moving. On September 2, a large group of women with black veils held a demonstration in the forum site. They carried banners calling for a fight against violence and opposition to the slaughtering of innocent people. One demonstrator who led the way, said, "save the women and children of Bosnia." Their demonstration caught the attention of many people.

* * *

In the "Socialize the Household Service and Promote the Women's Participation in Development" Workshop, the Tianjin Municipal Women's Federation put forward arguments for making major efforts to develop the household service business as a critical approach to realize the goals of the Nairobi Strategies, and to improve the status of women. They pointed out that governments, in order to counter the

perception that career women are distracted by heavy household chores, should support and invest in the development of such social service industries as kindergartens, housing for the elderly, and the snack industry. This would help promote the modernization of household chores.

Furthermore, they feel that governments should increase the salaries of intellectuals so as to give them the economic strength to afford the services of household help.

* * *

The Indian Women's Self-Independent Society deemed that a women's economic organization should be set up to coordinate the economic activities of women who are engaged in labor at home, by providing them with the supply-demand information of the market which would help them sell their products. While studying how women should realize their economic independence, this organization has decided to help women in lower cultural levels succeed in managing their own small businesses so as to help them be independent economically.

* * *

The most eye-catching item in the tent areas were the slogans which could be seen everywhere. Some were written in paint on red cloth; some were daubed with colored pens, and even some were written on billboards. Although the contents were numerous, they were generally concerned with women. For example, "Distribute half the rights to women and half the household chores to men," "Men who exert violence on women are not real men," "Men's voices and women's voices, when put together, are a real voice," "A decision made without women is imperfect," and "from legal equality to real equality," and so on.

Translated by MAN SUJIE

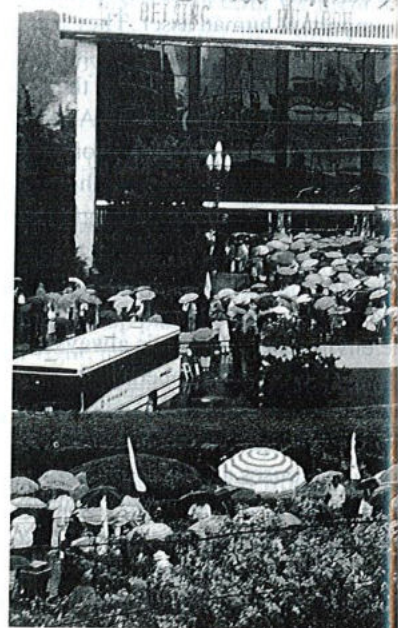


Gathering Huairou — NGO Forum on Women '95

XIAO MING

THE Non-Governmental Organizations Forum on Women '95 was held from August 30 to September 8, 1995 in Beijing, China. It was a distinguished gathering of women's organizations, unprecedented in scale in this century. During the ten-day period, about 31,000 women from over 2,000 organizations in nearly 200 countries and regions around the world gathered in

Participants of the NGO Forum on Women



Huairou, Beijing, expounding their viewpoints on various issues, especially problems concerning women's rights and interests. They also had a profound influence on the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, which was also held in Beijing, aiming at promoting the development and progress of the international women's cause.

Within the 42 hectare large meeting place in Huairou were housed 75 different size meeting rooms and 86 tents in various shapes. Altogether, more than 5,000 various activities were held. They included plenary sessions, symposiums, workshops, and exhibitions, as well as colorful artistic performances.

Participants of different races, speaking in different languages, gathered and discussed issues together. They explored many constructive suggestions around the theme of "equality, development and peace," and also issues women all over the world are concerned with the most, including poverty, education, health, violence, armed clashes, economic participation, the sharing of rights and interests, participation in decision-making, etc. These suggestions were submitted to the UN Conference by nearly 3,000 NGO inspectors and played an extremely active role in the drawing up of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

A foreign participant described the scene of the Forum in these words: "There are discussions and exchanges in every corner every minute, along with merry songs and laughter. This is the real forum!"

During the ten days, Huairou, near mountains and waters, was a sea of friendship. Women from over 50 countries and regions in the Asian and Pacific area, felt proud that this convocation was held in Asia's Beijing. They sponsored a friendly activity, "Knitting the World Together." Women from many countries embroidered the 1,000 meter long Carpet of Peace, a part of which is hung at the Great Wall.

As the host country, the Chinese Government and people provided as good conditions as possible for the Forum, which included 5,000 hours of recordings, videos, slide shows and projections, 500 hours of simultaneous interpretations, organized nearly 10,000 buses and cars to ensure convenient transportation, provided about 10,000 volunteers responsible for work in ten areas such as interpretation, guiding, information collection and help in moving or carrying things. Among them more than 200 volunteers provided special services for disabled participants.

Accordingly, a European woman who had been to previous conferences said that the services of this one provided by

Beijing was the best. During the closing of the Forum, in many places within the meeting area, participants from various countries put on many banners or streamers to express their friendly feeling to the Chinese people. On those banners or streamers, they wrote both in English and Chinese: "Thank you, people of Huairou! Thank you, volunteers of Beijing!" "Our sincere thanks to you, the Chinese people!"

Madam Khunying Supatra Masdit, the Forum's general convener, had remarked that this Forum marked a climax of a course as long as two years. This course included the participation of hundreds and thousands of women in all areas who were unable to come to Huairou. She said when the participants returned to their own countries, their action will show people the efforts and work they had done in Huairou. They would at the same time urge their governments to protect the rights and interests they had obtained, and adopt further measures to put more investment toward the cause of women and children, including their education, health care, and environmental protection.

NGO Beijing, '95 will go down in the history of the development of the world's women as a triumph. □

Translated by LIN MAN

about in front of the Huairou International Center



Almost every night during the NGO Forum, there was a theatrical performance showing different cultures from various regions in the world.

Photo by LOU FENG



Journalists from various countries work in the NGO Press Room.

11 percent, or 320. In addition, many women are continuing their higher education at institutions for adults. In 1994, there were 714,000 women students in higher education institutions for adults, making up 30.4 percent of the total. These women are now among the most important and talented people working in the fields of scientific study, teaching, technological research, and other areas, and are often entrusted with important tasks.

Based on her work experience, Professor Ye Lan expounds on the importance of studying training methods of women in higher education, especially regarding their special characteristics and problems. She said that the problems in women's higher education were made manifest in the

Women's Higher Education in China

CHEN SHANSI

At the Huairou NGO Forum on Women, participants in the Workshop on Women's Higher Education in China were inspired by Chinese speakers to give voice to their own ideas. The line for speaking grew so long as to require Qi Wenying, Workshop Chairwoman and Professor from Beijing University, to announce a new time limit of one minute for each speaker. "Now, money won't be able to buy time." Quoting a Chinese proverb, she was delighted that the workshop had attracted so much attention from the participants.

Among its major assets, higher education makes an important contribution to the sustainable development of society through descending generations. However, during China's thousand-year long feudal period, women were consigned to an inferior social position, and the great majority of them were excluded from schools. In more recent times, however, educational opportunities for women were expanded. Yet, women were still unable to affect fundamental changes in their social status in the semi-feudal, semi-colonial old China. True equality in education, therefore, was still denied them.

Statistics show that in old China, 90 percent of the women were illiterate and only 20 percent of school age girls could attend school. In all types of schools and at all levels, there were invariably fewer female students than males. Women's higher education was at a particularly low level of development.

"But since the founding of New China in 1949, women's education, especially women's higher education has developed rapidly," said Ye Lan, Vice-President of East China Normal University.

The number of women receiving higher education has increased greatly in recent decades. In 1993, of the 2.535 million students at 1,065 institutions of formal higher education in the country, about 33.6 percent, or 852,000, were women. The total number of women graduate students in college, and their proportion to all graduate students, both showed rapid growth. Of the 25,200 graduate students who received Master's diplomas in 1993, women accounted for 26 percent of them, or 6,600. Of all the 2,900 recipients of the Doctor's degree for the same year, women accounted for about



Participants line up to make their speeches at the Workshop on Women's Higher Education in China.

imbalance in enrollment between the humanities and sciences. There are more women students in higher education in the humanities and related disciplines than in science and engineering.

After women are admitted to institutions of higher learning, they usually study very hard and most of them succeed in their academic pursuits. But on the other hand, women have certain disadvantages. They are often courted by male students on campus, which in turn often affects their studies, because many of them are easily carried away by their emotions. In addition, many women students, influenced by some old concepts and continuing social problems, usually do not set high enough expectations for themselves and their studies.

"But there's a big difference between ordinary women students and excellent ones," Ye said. "From those excellent students, we should look for the inspiration needed to build confidence so that all women students can be outstanding. We called for the government to take measures to enhance women's higher education: paying greater attention to the

study of women students in higher education, adjusting the imbalance in the choice of disciplines, teaching women students how to balance and coordinate their studies and their pursuit of love, and providing women students with legal assurances for employment upon their graduation.

Zhuo Qingjun, President of China National Institute for Educational Research, summarized the major experiences in women's higher education in her speech. First, she said, the government attaches importance to women's higher education. It has given emphasis to raising women's political, economic and social status by enacting new laws, and has adopted a series of policies and measures to help women receive a higher education. Secondly, the social environment in China has become increasingly favorable for women to develop themselves and to obtain an adequate education. Thirdly, women, imbued with a strong sense of self-respect and self-confidence and now more determined to be independent and to make constant efforts to better themselves, have also greatly changed their ways of life and their thinking.

Apart from the problems mentioned by Ye Lan, Zhuo also cited some other problems existing in women's higher education: women do not have equal opportunities for



Postgraduates at the Academy of Social Sciences in China are having a class.

admission to colleges and universities; there is still a regional imbalance and urban-rural disparity in women's higher education; in recent years, the job placement of women graduates has become a problem of wide concern for the community as a whole.

"Nevertheless, women's higher education in China has an optimistic future," Zhuo said. For further development, Zhuo believed that the government should improve the implementation of formal and non-formal higher education for women in a more coordinated way; actively develop vocational and technical higher education and open up new venues of such education suited to women on the basis of social needs and women's special characteristics and advantages; increase their opportunity of access to college; and help them find jobs by improving their qualifications as workers and their competitiveness in the labor market. "The key to the development of higher education for women is to raise the general cultural level of the nation and of the educational level of women," Zhuo said.

In her speech, Zhuo also made some suggestions. First, the government should set up special institutions designed to administer women's educational programs. Second, every two years, an international seminar or workshop should be held to exchange experiences and ideas on women's education.

At the workshop, professor Zhang Lixia from Beijing University talked about education for female postgraduates, and its problems in China. "Postgraduate training is the highest stage in higher education," Zhang said, "Therefore, the condition of women receiving postgraduate education to a certain degree reflects women's status and roles in a country." She believed that China has been playing a particular role in educating and training women postgraduates in order to meet the country's need for a higher level of talented people, and to change the people's outdated view that women are not suited for pursuing advanced studies, and taking on substantial work.

Since China resumed the postgraduate system in 1978, women have been provided with equal competitive opportunity in enrollment, training, the earning of degrees, and employment. They are now being trained in the fields of engineering, technology, agriculture, medical and social sciences, and the humanities. The highest proportion of women postgraduates is in the medical field. In some medical colleges and institutions, 40 percent of the postgraduates are women. In the fields of engineering and technology, the proportion of women postgraduates is the lowest, only 20 percent.

Zhang, however, believed that, in general, the proportion of women postgraduates is low and the proportion of women doctoral students is even lower. The reason is that basic education is still affected by the old traditional view that "women are inferior to men," based on Chinese history, culture and society.

Moreover, women postgraduates often meet obstacles in employment. "Some units would rather employ male graduates even if women graduates have better academic records," Zhang said. "Some units even refuse to employ any female graduates, saying that women have to look after their children and to do housework after they get married." Zhang believed that this was a common problem in the world. She called on the government to work out preferential policies for women postgraduates. On the other hand, Zhang said that women graduates should bring their own advantages into full play and dare to engage in competition by calling on their own abilities.

Zhu Chuzhu, professor from Xi'an Jiaotong University, spoke on the necessity and possibility for women's participation in advanced science and technology. Based on her 40 years' experiences in higher education, Professor Zhu talked about the factors influencing women to study science and engineering, and the problems women students have met after being admitted to universities and institutes of science and technology. She believed that psychologically women are not inferior to men, but there still exist some bias in public opinion.

Having heard these speeches, participants from Denmark, the United States, Britain and other countries wanted to express their similar concerns. "Women should help women," said a professor from the State University of New York. "I want to have further exchanges with my Chinese colleagues and students." Her words represented the hope of other foreign participants. All looked forward to setting up a network for promoting women's higher education around the world. □



Chen Muhua, Head of the Chinese Government Delegation, is elected as the president of the Conference.

BEIJING DECLARATION

THE following is the full text of the Beijing Declaration:

1. We, the Governments, participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women,
2. Gathered here in Beijing, in September 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations,
3. Determined to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity,
4. Acknowledging the voices of all women everywhere and taking note of the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances, honouring the women who paved the way and inspired by the hope present in the world's youth,
5. Recognize that the status of women has advanced in some important respects in the past decade but that progress has been uneven, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people,
6. Also recognize that this situation is exacerbated by the increasing poverty that is affecting the lives of the majority of the world's people, in particular women and children, with origins in both the national and international domains,
7. Dedicate ourselves unreservedly to addressing these

constraints and obstacles and thus enhancing further the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world, and agree that this requires urgent action in the spirit of determination, hope, co-operation and solidarity, now and to carry us forward into the next century.

We reaffirm our commitment to:

8. The equal rights and inherent human dignity of women and men and other purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Declaration on the Right to Development;

9. Ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

10. Build on consensus and progress made at previous United Nations conferences and summits — on women in Nairobi in 1985, on children in New York in 1990, on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, on human rights in Vienna in 1993, on population and development in Cairo in 1994 and on social development in

critical to their well-being and that of their families as well as to the consolidation of democracy;

16. Eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice requires the involvement of women in economic and social development and equal opportunities and the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people-centred sustainable development;

17. The explicit recognition and reaffirmation of the right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, is basic to their empowerment;

18. Local, national, regional and global peace is attainable and is inextricably linked with the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels;

19. It is essential to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programs, including development policies and programs, at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women;

20. The participation and contribution of all actors of civil society, particularly women's groups and networks and other non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, in

—Approved on September 15th by the 1995 UN FWCW

Copenhagen in 1995 with the objectives of achieving equality, development and peace;

11. Achieve the full and effective implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;

12. The empowerment and advancement of women, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, thus contributing to the moral, ethical, spiritual and intellectual needs of women and men, individually or in community with others and thereby guaranteeing them the possibility of realizing their full potential in society and shaping their lives in accordance with their own aspirations.

We are convinced that:

13. Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace;

14. Women's rights are human rights;

15. Equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and a harmonious partnership between them are

cooperation with Governments, are important to the effective implementation and follow-up of the Platform for Action;

21. The implementation of the Platform for Action requires commitment from Governments and the international community. By making national and international commitments for action, including those made at the Conference, Governments and the international community recognize the need to take priority action for the empowerment and advancement of women.

We are determined to:

22. Intensify efforts and actions to achieve the goals of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the end of this century;

23. Ensure the full enjoyment by women and the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms;

24. Take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and the girl child and remove all obstacles to gender equality and the advancement and empowerment of women;

25. Encourage men to participate fully in all actions

towards equality;

26. Promote women's economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women, including those in rural areas, as vital development agents, to productive resources, opportunities and public services;

27. Promote people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth through the provision of basic education, life-long education, literacy and training, and primary health care for girls and women;

28. Take positive steps to ensure peace for the advancement of women and, recognizing the leading role that women have played in the peace movement, work actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, and support negotiations on the conclusion, without delay, of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which contributes to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects;

29. Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls;

30. Ensure equal access to and equal treatment of women and men in education and health care and enhance women's sexual and reproductive health as well as education;

31. Promote and protect all human rights of women and girls;

32. Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people;

33. Ensure respect for international law, including humanitarian law, in order to protect women and girls in particular;

34. Develop the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhance their role in the development process.

We are determined to:

35. Ensure women's equal access to economic resources including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets, as a means

to further the advancement and empowerment of women and girls, including through the enhancement of their capacities to enjoy the benefits of equal access to these resources, *inter alia* by means of international cooperation;

36. Ensure the success of the Platform for Action which will require a strong commitment on the part of Governments, international organizations and institutions at all levels. We are deeply convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Equitable social development that recognizes empowering the poor, particularly women living in poverty, to utilize environmental resources sustainably is a necessary foundation for sustainable development. We also recognize that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to maintain social development and social justice. The success of the Platform for Action will also require adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources for the advancement of women's financial resources; strengthen the capacity of national, subregional, regional and international institutions; a commitment to equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal opportunities and to the equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy-making processes; the establishment or strengthening of mechanisms at all levels for accountability to the world's women;

37. Ensure also the success of the Platform for Action in countries with economies in transition, which will require continued international cooperation and assistance;

38. We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the following Platform for Action ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programs. We urge the United Nations system, regional and international financial institutions, other relevant regional and international institutions and all women and men, as well as non-governmental organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, and all sectors of civil society, in cooperation with Governments, to fully commit themselves and contribute to the implementation of this Platform for Action.



PLATFORM SETS FIVE-YEAR GOALS

THE 100,000-word Platform for Action adopted on September 15, 1995, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, includes six chapters of more than 300 paragraphs.

The Platform reviews and evaluates the progress of women since the adoption of the "Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies" in 1985, points out existing obstacles, and sets goals for those strategic actions which should be taken over the next five years.

As a blueprint for the progress of women around the world, the Platform for Action stresses that women have a number of issues of common concern. These issues can only be solved through the cooperative efforts of both men and women, and the realization of gender equality throughout the world. The Platform respects and attaches importance to the diversity of women's conditions and situations, and confirms that some women face special obstacles in the procurement of rights. The Platform for Action asks various sides to co-operate and to take immediate actions. All levels of government, and all forms of international organizations and institutions, should make serious commitments to carry out all agreements. They should pledge to realize equal rights, equal responsibilities, equal chances, and equal participation for men and women in all regional, national and international institutions. There should also be a commitment to make equal the involvement of men and women in the policy-making process, thereby strengthening the mechanism of responsibility at all levels for women all over the world.

The Platform for Action lists 12 "critical areas of concern," which constitute major obstacles to the advancement of women. The Platform sets forth corresponding strategic goals and measures which all governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and individuals may adopt in removing these obstacles. It also provides standardized instructions for all governments which should bear the major responsibility in implementing its strategic goals.

The 12 critical areas of concern listed in the Platform for Action are: that women are continuously and increasingly burdened with poverty; that there is great inequality in opportunities for education and training; that women suffer from inequality in health care; that violence against women goes unchecked; that women suffer especially from armed

conflicts; that women do not participate equally in developing economic structures and policies, and in the production process itself; that there is inequality of men and women in enjoying rights and policy-making at all levels; that mechanisms for the improvement of women's status at all levels are lacking; that there is little promotion and protection of women's human rights; that women should have greater involvement in the media; that women should participate in developing environmental policies; that the problems of young girls should be seriously addressed.

The Platform for Action says that more than 1 billion people in the world today, the great majority of whom are women, live in unacceptable conditions of poverty. Most of them are in developing countries. A discouraging tendency is that women are getting poorer, with the degree of poverty varying by geographical regions. Another important factor in women's poverty is the gender disparities in economic power-sharing. Women, for example, constitute major portions of pockets of poverty in the midst of wealthy developed countries.

The Platform for Action points out that the crucial factor in eliminating poverty is to give women greater power. Sustainable development and economic growth can only be achieved through improving the economic, social, political, legal, and cultural status of women. Especially in developing countries, women's production capabilities should be improved by various means so as to increase their income, improve their health, nutrition and education, and raise their status within the family. It is of vital importance that the cycle of poverty be broken in order to widen women's productive potential, so that women can fully enjoy the benefits of development and the fruits of their own labor.

The Platform for Action notes that education is essential for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. If we want more women to become promoters of reform, they should be given an equal chance to a meaningful education. The literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family, and to empowering women to participate in the decision-making process in society. Investing in formal and informal education and training for girls and women is one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth. Although girls and boys have achieved equal access to

primary education, girls lack continued access to higher levels of education. Science curriculums in particular are gender-biased. Girls' drop-out rates are much higher than boys. Consequently, two-thirds of the illiterates worldwide are women, most of whom are rural adults.

The Platform calls on governments to: ensure that by the year 2000, universal access to basic education and the completion of primary education by at least 80 percent of primary school-age children is guaranteed; close the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005 so as to achieve universal primary education in all countries by the year 2015; eliminate gender disparities in access to all areas of tertiary education by ensuring that women have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and by adopting positive action when appropriate; reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level by 2000; develop and implement education, training and retraining policies for women, especially young women and women reentering the labor market; develop non-discriminatory education and training, including vocational training, especially in science and technology; allocate sufficient resources for educational reform and monitor the implementation of reform.

The Platform calls on multilateral development institutions, including the World Bank, regional development banks, bilateral-aid parties and foundations, to increase funds to satisfy the needs of girls and women in receiving education and training as a priority item in their development and aid programs.

The Platform says that women's health is affected by many factors. These include physiological differences and social conditions, discrimination against women, a lack of medical treatment and health care, insufficient medical and health care services, etc. Lack of food, poor housing, a lack of safe water resources, and so on, pose threats to the health of rural women and women in other places. The rate of women who contract diseases and die due to a lack of care in reproductive health remains high.

Actions proposed to governments include: reaffirm the right to enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, protect and promote the attainment of this right for women and girls and incorporate it into national legislation; review existing legislation, including health legislation, as well as policies, where necessary, to reflect a commitment to women's health; strengthen preventive programs that address threats to women's health; prioritize health programs in rural and poor urban areas.

The Platform for Action says that, although women throughout the world are all among the main producers of food and make great contributions to the economy, they were

basically excluded from economic policy-making. In most countries, they cannot justifiably possess and control various productive elements, including land, finances, and technology; moreover, their work is not rewarded and recognized as it deserves. However, experience proves that once they have the resources, technology and training, women can take the lead in expanding production.

Governments are urged to: enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; adopt and implement laws against discrimination based on sex in hiring and promotion, the extension of employment benefits and social security, and working conditions; eliminate discriminatory practices by employers and take appropriate measures in consideration that women's reproductive role and functions to ensure pregnant women, women on maternity leave, and women reentering the labor market after giving birth, are free from discrimination; take action to help women win equal chances in resources, employment, market and trade; provide commercial services and opportunities to enter the market and use funds, information and technology for women with low income; eliminate professional segregation and all forms of professional discrimination.

The Platform for Action says that in many countries, girls are discriminated against from childhood to adulthood. They are often treated as sub-human and cannot get the encouragement given to boys to participate in and know about the processes of society. Therefore, they do not have chances equal to boys to participate in public issues.

Actions proposed to governments include: ensure universal and equal access to and completion of primary education by girls; enact and enforce strictly laws concerning the minimum age for marriage; raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary; develop and implement policies to protect girls' rights and ensure equal chances to them; develop and enact courses creating chances for girls in mathematical, scientific and technological fields; protect girls from economic exploitation; establish the minimum age for work.

The Platform for Action also addresses equal participation of women in political life to improve women's status, human rights of women, elimination of violence against women, protection of women and children in military conflicts, giving play to women's role in environment and development, establishing state institutions for the improvement of women's status, and enhancing equal participation by women in the press. Meanwhile, it calls on all governments and international organizations concerned to take concrete actions to implement the Platform. □

Translated by JANE SHAW

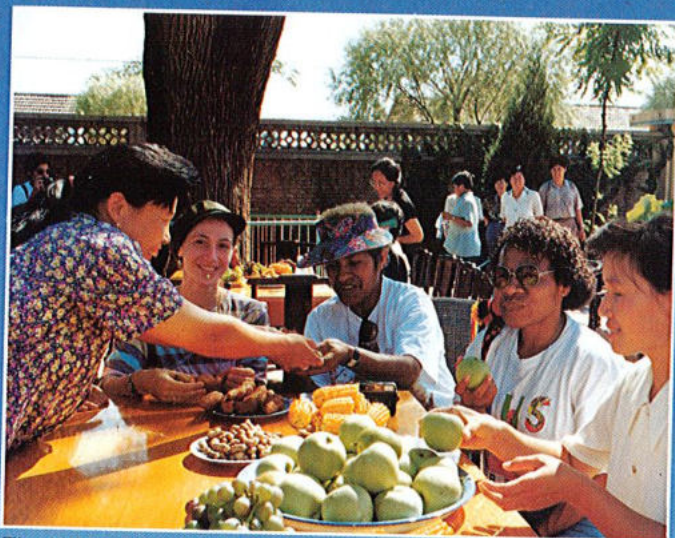


Photo by XINHUA

The NGO participants visit and investigate Angezhuang Village of Huairou. The villagers treat guests to cooked sweet potatoes, cooked corns and fruits.

Guests in Beijing

The participants of the Fourth World Conference on Women manage to find time to go sightseeing at Tian'anmen Square.

Photo by XINHUA



The NGO participants of China's Miao nationality introduce their handicrafts to international friends.

Teachers from the United States visit a kindergarten and are happy while watching a children's performance.

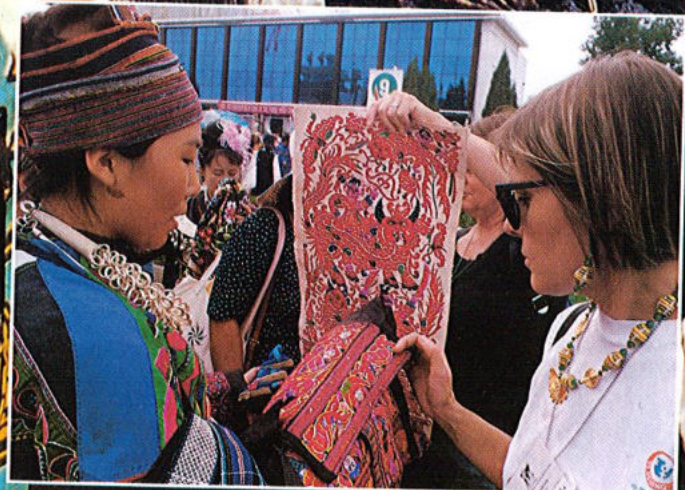


Photo by WANG GUOYUAN



Photo by XINHUA



Photo by ZHANG PING

The guests express enthusiastic concern and inquire about the history of Women of China.

A Visit Brimming with Friendship

Guests from various countries sign their names for a commemoration.



Photo by LI JIANGSHU



Photo by LI JIANGSHU

Friends from various countries attending the FWCW, show interest in *Women of China* magazine and other publications

The visiting delegates are photographed with staff members of the maga



Photo by CHENG JINGJING



A Visit Brimming With Friendship

XIAO JING

DURING the Fourth World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum on Women '95, guests from various countries and regions visited the offices of *Women of China* magazine. As a young staff member of the magazine, I was very lucky and happy to have the chance to meet so many friends from all over the world. The pleasant time we spent together left a deep impression on me.

In order to let the visitors know about our magazine, we developed large photographs of Chinese women of various nationalities and in various fields as they were published in our magazine from as far back as 1956 when the first issue of the magazine was published. We framed these photographs and hung them on the walls. We set up two rooms of displays introducing the history, operation and characteristics of the magazine. We also prepared some traditional Chinese handicrafts for sale, such as cloisonne bangles, jade pendants and silk embroidery, which were once sent to our readers as New Year's gifts, along with some books and picture albums published at different times. Each guest was also given a gift.

On September 2 came the first group of visitors — 13 NGO Forum participants from Colombia, the United States, the Philippines, Venezuela and Hong Kong. Among them were Cecilia SO Chui-Kuen, Chairperson of the Women's Committee of the Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, and Doctor Edna Mitchell, Director of the Women's Leadership Institute of Mills College in Oakland, California, USA. There were other officials of women's organizations and social work groups. When the guests visited our offices and display rooms, they listened attentively to our

introduction, asking various questions while taking photographs. Traditional handicrafts were especially popular and a series of books on Chinese women, "Women's Education," "Women & Law," "Marriage & Family at a Glance," "Today's Women Farmers," "Women and Children's Health Care" and "Successful, Contemporary Chinese Women," also evoked much interest.

On September 3, nine NGO Forum participants from the United States, the Philippines and Hong Kong visited us. During the visit, a Philippine woman remarked repeatedly, "Very nice!" She recommended to us a journal of their women's organization. The visitors took away introductory pamphlets of our magazine which were available in the display rooms.

We received the third group of visitors who were from Kathmandu, Nepal, on September 8. During their visit, they showed great interest in our introduction and asked detailed questions. When I told them our journalists had been to many places in each province in China, one male participant pointed to Lhasa and Kathmandu on the map of our journalists' footmark and said, "There has been a bus going between the two cities, it is more convenient for our exchange now."

September 9 (the 15th day of the eighth month of Chinese lunar calendar) was the Mid-Autumn Festival, a traditional Chinese festival for reunion. More than 30 conference delegates came for a visit that day. Most of them were from Brazil and members of the Brazilian Women Confederation (CMB, in Portuguese), including Mme. Ana Maria Rodrigues, President of the CMB. During the visit, the guests were photographed with the staff members of the magazine. Many of them took this group picture with their

own cameras. These Brazilian women, who were good at singing and dancing, gathered in the lobby and acclaimed excitedly, "Long live Chinese women! Long live Chinese women!..." A delegate distributed badges of the CMB to us. Many of them bought handicrafts, and several bought the picture album in which they saw pictures of photographers of the album. When they discovered the photographers were there with them, they asked Shen Yantai, editor-in-chief of the magazine and one of the photographers, and other photographers to autograph their albums. When it came for them to leave, the delegates gathered again, clapped their hands and sang a song called "Beijing, China." We joined them. I was glad to help a woman hold a small flag when taking a group picture.

Another group of conference delegates from Nigeria and the area around the Caribbean Sea visited us on September 10. They were frank and casual, which impressed me. While purchasing the handicrafts, a woman told us proudly that she knew how to use chopsticks. When I asked her if she could speak Chinese, she said no, but she had a Chinese name, which was printed on the delegate card hanging from her neck. She showed us her card, the name was very unique and interesting, which read: Yin Yang (In Chinese philosophy and medicine, yin is the feminine or negative principle in nature and yang the opposite.) Some delegates asked us to take photos with them. A delegate shook hands with us before leaving and said, "It's beautiful! This place is beautiful!"

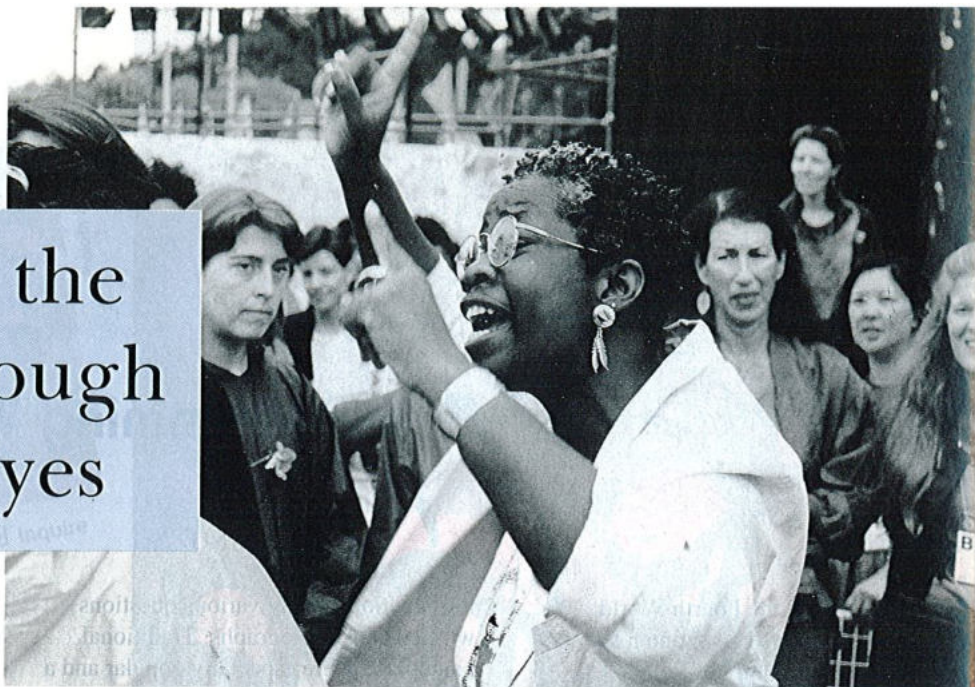
In the four-meter-long signature, the guests left many "Hello's," "Thank you's" and "Viva China's."

The moment for a gathering was short but our friendship will last long. □

A united song: Led by Shirley Mai Staten, a famous African singer, the NGO participants sing together.

Looking at the World Through Women's Eyes

XIAO MING



DURING the '95 NGO Forum on Women held in Huairou, Beijing, some 5,000 workshops on special topics were held, in which the global economy, the participation of women in worldwide development, and world peace, were of most concern.

It is Women's Right to Participate in Development

Men and women are the substance of society. Women, who account for half of the world's population, however, do not enjoy equality with men. That is why the advancement of women and their involvement in politics, became the focus of more than 3,000 workshops and panels during the '95 NGO Forum on Women.

Cheryl Carolus is a member of the South African National Congress. She was imprisoned for years for fighting for the cause of national liberation. When speaking about women's political rights in her country, she pointed out that these rights were won only through the unremitting struggle of all citizens, both men and women. She said that the release of Nelson Mandela marked the democratic progress of Africa. Women have realized their own rights, and, in spite of their belonging to different parties, they come hand in hand and demand that every political party should have two representatives taking part in the negotiating and promulgating of the Constitution, and one of them should be woman. Now this proposal has been accepted by society. Women have added

more contents to the Constitution to make it complete and it is very important that women be accepted by society.

Entering an era of democratic construction after a long period of war, Carolus continued to point out that there is still much more work to do. She said that they had done what they were doing and what they should have done, and that though they had made mistakes, they have the strength to correct them. She called for the support of women from all over the world. She also said that when they met difficulties, they hoped that they get the support of sisters from all over the world. "We need you!" She said, affectionately.

The more than one thousand participants in the workshop applauded.

A woman from Eritrea in the Red Sea region, which became independent in 1991, pointed out that it was only after 16 years of struggle that her country won its independence. The war has been a miserable catastrophe for women. They lost everything in the war, including their families, professions, properties, as well as their chance for an education. But women had also played an important role in winning national independence. They had been doctors and soldiers, and had fought shoulder to shoulder with men. To win world peace, she said, women should have more of a chance to participate in political affairs and the processes of policy-making. First of all, women should be enrolled in the highest level of administrative organs. Among the 15 ministers in Eritrea, two are women. Women also account for 20 percent of

the members of Congress in Eritrea. Secondly, women should be included in the peace talks. Being the most vulnerable victims of wars, and having keenly felt the pains of war, women understand the catastrophes war can bring to mankind.

A woman from Zambia believes that to eliminate violence against women, the law must be applied. The fact is that women are usually the victims of biased laws, which are usually made by men. Therefore, the key is that women must take part in the making of law.

Ms Fisher (translated from pronunciation), head of an organization concerned with the status of women in Canada, points out that, it is not enough that women are merely enrolled in decision-making bodies. It is of greater importance to ask whether or not they can take any real action. Not only should they take the lead among women, they should also work to reform those bodies, all of which were established by men, so that they serve women as well as men.

Integration of Global Economy and Women's Poverty

In spite of their coming from different countries and regions, rich or poor, many NGO Forum participants agree that poverty is a major obstacle blocking the improvement of women's status in the world. They suggest that poverty should be the number one problem for the FWCW's Platform for Action to tackle.

Ms. Esther Ocloo of the Sustainable End of Hunger Foundation in Ghana,



Free demonstration: Women express their concerns at the Forum.

who set a good example for women's self-reliance by being the first woman to establish a food processing factory, said, "Poverty is becoming worse in Africa. The global economy is experiencing a setback. In today's world, there are still many natural disasters, civil wars and political conflicts. Of all these, women suffer the most." She pointed out that it was women who had to feed their families during economic setbacks. The problem is exacerbated because it is harder for women to find jobs during these economic crises than it is for men. Although many countries are beginning to have democratic elections, women can still barely enter into the election process because they cannot afford it. Technological progress has accelerated economic development, making it more difficult for women to earn money by making handicrafts. Africa is faced with the challenge of employing technology without affecting women's lives. Ms. Ocloo suggested that foundations should be set up to give economic aid to women, and that NGOs should do more work to rid women of poverty.

In her speech, Marcia Rivera of Clasco & Dawn in Mexico, pointed out that during the last ten years, while the world's economy was becoming more integrated, it was also a time filled with upheavals. The science and technological revolution has made great achievements. The problem is, when rich people in developed countries are enjoying the fruits of their achievements, are the poor enjoying them as well? As polarization increases, 70 percent of the 1.3 billion

people of the world living in poverty are women.

Ms. Rivera called for an elimination of this crisis. Do not leave power exclusively to men for them to command the world, she said. Women should also grasp at new technologies, and increase their abilities by reducing the distance between themselves and men. They should be aware of the negative side of economic integration, and make unrelenting and greater efforts to overcome them.

Duan Cunhua, President of the Sumster Group Corporation in China, said that women are a great motivation for the development of a global economy. It is a necessary step at this new time that the international community allow women to participate in the global economy. Women should be fully aware of their duties and responsibilities, and, through their own individual efforts, they should affect and improve the environment, and the general outward condition of women's participation in economic development. While women are pushing forward the advancement of a global economy, Duan Cunhua admits that women are also faced with new problems: Few women are admitted to decision-making bodies; unequal pay for men and women doing the same job still exists to various degrees; and labor protection and a safe working environment for women needs further improvement. She calls on the UN women's organizations to include the issue of women and worldwide economic development in their studies, and to give

women more effective support.

Although their points of view are not exactly the same, the participants of the Women and Employment workshop all agreed that employment is an important aspect in eliminating poverty.

Chinese participants, according to the condition in China, suggest that women should be included in long term social production. They stress the need for women to realize their own value, and to improve their status in society and in their families by taking a greater part in social economic activities. Their Japanese sisters, however, stand for women's employment in stages. For example, women should go out to work before getting married, and then again in middle age. Domestic labor is also rewarding, they are assured. Some European and American scholars think women's part-time employment (e.g. women should work outside the home for less than 40 hours in one week) is a better alternative. Nevertheless, women have many ideas in common: discrimination against women in areas of employment and compensation must be eliminated, and special training programs must be set up for those women who lack experience.

The Call for Peace

During the Forum, the call for peace often moved the participants to tears.

Kora Maki, director of Kanagawa Women's Federation in Japan, criticized Japan for having spent nearly half a century invading and looting other Asian countries. She demanded that the Japanese Government fully realize its crime of waging an aggressive war, and for exploiting the will of the nation as an excuse. The Japanese Government should examine itself on this matter, she said, and apologize to and compensate the peoples of those countries who had suffered in the war.

Many postcards of various sizes and colors, written with words like "Chinese people, we are sorry," and "We long for a peaceful world without any wars," were displayed in the tent of the Japanese peace workshop. These had been written by Japanese women who stayed at home, and their messages were brought to Beijing by those who participated in the

NGO Forum. Now and then, people see Japanese and Chinese women hugging each other, with tears of enthusiasm in their eyes, and world peace as their common wish.

There are many reasons that we demand peace, said Francoise Daudihis-Offoumou, President of A.I.D. Afrique, and we will not stop our struggle for it. All nations, rich or poor, need security. In the process of pursuing peace for mankind, security is never granted by others, but is rather won only through the struggle of the people. We must fight against poverty and drug trafficking. We must also control population. Presently, there are no statistics on threats to the safety of human beings. But organizations that punish these threats must be installed.

In the peace tent, an elderly white woman said that although times have changed greatly, our love of family remains unchanged. We do not want our children to be in conflict with others. We hope that all Governments stop the production of weapons, and use the money for education and social welfare instead.

In front of hundreds in the audience, a Palestinian woman told the story of her and her family in the massacre in Beirut during the war between Palestine and Israel in 1982. "I will never forget that miserable experience all my life," she said.

After her, a UN medical relief member spoke for a Bosnian woman who was raped during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and who was so deeply hurt that she could not speak herself. Two Rwandese women whose motherland was experiencing a fierce civil war, and a

Filipino woman and a Korean woman who were both comfort women in World War II, all told about their miserable experiences, or of those they had witnessed during the wars.

Many participants of the workshop shed tears of sympathy. Everybody applauded when one of the Rwandese speakers said, "We have experienced tragedy, but we will live on firmly. We will struggle for a world without any racial slaughter."

Stand Against Violence, Safeguard Women's Rights

As women's sense of independence became stronger, their human rights and the violence against them became topics which caused much concern during the Forum.

As an Australian woman pointed out, domestic and social violence against women must be tackled firmly. She believes that it has nothing to do with a woman's education whether she becomes the victim of violence. Many women with a high educational background are also victims of violence. It is just that their situation is perhaps more embarrassing. Advanced education did not teach men not to be violent at home. She said that, although there are many laws in Australia against acts of violence, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, almost all the judges are men. In the supreme court, women judges account for less than one percent of the total. Therefore, the laws are hardly enacted for the protection of women. More and more women nowadays are studying the law. In

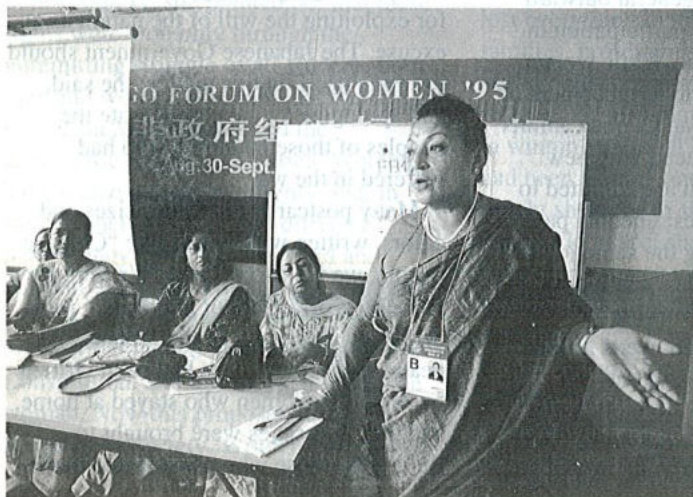
universities, women students in law departments now account for 52 percent of all law students.

There are more than 20,000 women judges in China. During the Forum, the Chinese Women's Judges' Association proposed a document entitled Stand Against and Eliminate Violence Against Women, aroused the attention of women participants from other countries. It is suggested in the document: 1.

International conventions standing against and eliminating violence against women should be convened, so that the Declaration Against Violent Actions Against Women, adopted in December 1993, has a stronger binding force on the nations which have signed the Declaration; 2. Amplify the legislature so that there are not only regulations forbidding and punishing violent actions against women, but also a procedure for implementation and measures for rescuing women victims of violent acts, so that the laws are actually implemented; 3. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation of judicial organs should be strengthened, so as to fight against the international trafficking of women, which is presently out of control; 4. We suggest that special courts be installed in all countries, according to their own conditions, to deal with such cases, so that these complicated cases can be dealt with justly, reasonably, and free of sexual discrimination; 5. Education and training in laws should be strengthened for judges, for women themselves, as well as members of women's Non-Governmental Organizations. □

Translated by XIAOHONG LIU

Pakistani women pounding against poverty at the NGO Forum.



Japanese women express their wish for world peace.



Forum Highlights Exchanges Between Chinese and Foreign Women

ZI MING



A woman from the China Association for International Understanding (middle) talks with Kuwaiti participants.



Ma Yuan, a Chinese judge, (2nd L. in the front), and women judges from other countries attend the Workshop Against Family Violence.

DURING the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, the NGO Forum on Women made deep impressions upon Chinese women. A Chinese proverb says: "Three women make a play," you can imagine how warm, joyful and colorful the gathering of more than 30,000 women was.

In the 42-hectare meeting place in Huairou, women in different attire and with different skin colors, different languages and different expressions, were found under the shade of the trees, in the meeting halls, and in the tents. Either several of them were holding close discussions, or a large group of them were listening to a speech. The

listeners burst out in understanding laughter when they were amused, shouted loudly together when they were indignant, and sang and danced together when they were excited. Whatever the race, the culture or belief they belonged to, they gathered in Beijing and the world became small. The meeting linked Chinese women to the world. Each of the more than 5,000 Chinese women attending the forum learned and experienced a lot.

Liu Guisu, director of the Department of Finance of Hainan Province, a southern province and the largest special economic zone in China, was the main speaker at the Forum on Women's Participation in Political Affairs sponsored by China. As the first woman

to receive a doctorate in economics trained in China, her warm-heartedness and fluent English won her many friends.

Liu said: I used to think that just having women take seats at political forums was the sole criterion of women's participation in politics and believe that women's will and rights can be reflected in making and implementing policies only if they participate in the policy-making process. But then I discovered during the NGO Forum that many sisters from Europe, South and North America and Africa put a premium on the sense of participation and the right to participate with whole groups of women. Most of their efforts were aimed at struggling for women's equal participation in their basic rights of

health and education.

What impressed Liu most was hearing African women tell about the poverty of women and children there. Many of them economized on food and clothing for a long time in order to collect funds for their trip to Beijing. African women were a very active group at the Forum. They told about the wars in Africa, urgently calling for international organizations and people the world over to be more concerned and to help women there. Liu said: I admire them. They have advanced from venting their grievances to meeting challenges.

Indeed, non-governmental organizations of women from various countries displayed their increasing strength and maturity. Our neighbors, Japanese women, raised the claim, sharply and firmly, that the Japanese Government make a self-criticism for the problem of so-called comfort women, and offer compensation to them.

Liu said the greatest inspiration she drew was to ask herself often "what I can do for my sisters in Hainan?" in her future work as a provincial financial official.

Wang Fang, of Bouyei nationality, is vice-director in charge of production of the Minzu Batik General Factory in Liupanshui City on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. The city leaders and her colleagues gave a farewell dinner to her before she left for Beijing. Of the more than two million Bouyei people, she and two other women became participants of the Forum. This was exciting for the local people.

Wang brought some batik products done by her factory — cotton and silk garments, handbags, decorative cloth, et cetera. They hung along the streets in the meeting area among goods from other countries. They were beautiful with strong national features.

Wang was most pleased that many people were very interested in products by the Bouyei women and their culture. She introduced her factory and her life to sisters from different countries. Their talks were very pleasant. Women from Canada, the Philippines and Taiwan were eager to know if people discriminated against women of minority nationalities, Wang told them, "I am a vice director of a factory, nobody

discriminates against me. The only problem is that my hometown is underdeveloped, and it is difficult for young women to get jobs. But we have preferential policy for minority nationalities. I set up a factory according to this policy and employed many young women. We do not want to depend on others; we will seek our rights by ourselves."

At one workshop of the NGO Forum, Jiang Fangying, president of the women's federation of Zunyi area in Guizhou Province, met Ms. Yang from the United States, a member of the Zigen (Chinese spelling, means "nourishing the roots") Foundation, who had been financing schools in poor mountain areas of the Miao Autonomous Prefecture in southeast Guizhou Province. This foundation was established by the donations of overseas Chinese. Ms. Yang came to this poor area on a visit in search of her roots, and was told that girls there were not able to go to school because of poverty. She decided to pay for the schooling of all the girls in 20 villages who were willing to go to school. Now more than 100 girls have written to her to express their gratitude. At the workshop, she showed a video to introduce the conditions of the girls attending school.

The magnanimous act of Ms. Yang moved many women attending the meeting. Jiang said, "Ms. Yang is not a rich person but only a teacher. Many of the overseas Chinese who contribute to the foundation are also ordinary women. But we've acquired a precious spiritual power from them. They show that everyone has the responsibility and obligation to contribute to the development of women compatriots even if the contribution is very small."

That day Ms. Yang had a long talk with the women from Guizhou Province to discuss how to help women shed their poverty.

The NGO Forum on Women '95 was short, but it gave profound inspiration to Chinese women. Chinese women have joined hands with women from all around the world. This is the source of their strength. □

Translated by JANE SHAW

China is Full of Confidence in Keeping Promises

LIU QIAN

Tsering Dolkar is the vice chairperson of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region.



AT the closing ceremony of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Mme. Peng Peiyun, Chinese State Councilor, said, "I believe that this Conference will become a starting point of the worldwide women's cause. The effect of the Conference depends on whether the governments of all countries will respond to the call of the United Nations, implement the Platform for Action, and do their duty. China will keep her promise earnestly and work hard to realize as early as possible the general goals of equality, development and peace."

Before the Conference was convened, the Chinese Government promulgated the Program for the Development of Chinese Women (1995-2000), which, in light of China's real conditions today, puts forward the goal of women and measures to achieve it, in the main areas of participation in politics and economic construction, education, health, and the elimination of poverty. It is China's plan for implementing the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and it showed the Chinese Government's promise for the Fourth World Conference on Women. As the first country which made this promise, how will China act and what difficulties will it face?

Mme. Peng Peiyun said, "I'm fully confident in realizing the goal put forward in the Program for the Development of Chinese Women by 2000. Of course, we have difficulties but we are confident in overcoming them."

Wei Yu, Vice Minister in charge of the State Education Commission, addressed: "This Conference is successful. It has demonstrated the awakening of women about their own emancipation. Improving women's education was one of the focuses discussed at the Conference. Participants reached a common understanding that education is the crux for women to obtain emancipation. Many people think that the educational level of women reflects the people's basic quality in a country, and the education of female children is the most rewarding investment. It is easy to see that in a modern society with a speedily developing economy, science and



Wei Yu, Vice Minister of the State Education Commission



He Jiesheng, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Public Health

technology, the more women are educated, the more opportunities they will have to participate in social development. Only by getting an education will women be able develop and to gain in status."

About the situation of Chinese women in education, Wei Yu said that the Chinese Government has been concerned with the women's cause in a way quite different from some other countries which are still at the stage of merely urging change. As early as 1993, the state promulgated the Outline for the Reform and Development of Education in China, with the objective

that, by 2000, illiteracy among the young and teenagers would be basically wiped out, and that the system of nine-year compulsory education would be universal over 85 percent of the country. Women, therefore, are to be included. "We should admit," Wei said, "that we had found an imbalance education between the sexes. So, when doing the national statistics on education, we put emphasis not only on age as we did before but also on the sexes. The statistics show that 70 percent of the illiterate population across the country are women. The poorer the areas are, the

poorer the popularization of education is, with the result that few girls receive a meaningful education. So we have now decided to do some special research on the elimination of illiteracy among women and female children."

Wei Yu continued, saying, "I still insist on this standpoint that women's emancipation is part of the liberation of the whole of mankind. Without the independence and development of a country, there is no possibility of even talking about women's emancipation. The development of the cause of women in China is still restricted by the level of social development. For instance, the investment in education is still comparatively low. We are making efforts to solve this problem through various channels. I believe it can be solved."

As the first woman to earn a doctorate in chemistry in China, Wei said that she would very much like to see more women make still greater achievements both in science and in education. She said that, besides just showing concern for them, she would also help them more directly.

Women's health was another focus of the Conference. He Jiesheng, Vice Minister of the Chinese Ministry of Public Health, has been in charge of work concerning women and children's health for many years, and was a member of the delegation of the Chinese Government to the Conference. She said, "About the objective in public health put forward in the Program for the Development of Chinese Women, the Ministry of Public Health has already made a promise. We fully prepared ourselves before the convening of the Conference. We have confidence in meeting the requirements on women's health in the Platform for Action. We will adopt workable, lawful measures, and plan to display the aim of the Conference of laying stress on action and implementation."

Mme. He also said that the Chinese Government has been paying close attention to women's health. It began to popularize the new midwifery as early as the establishment of the country. By 1993, the mortality rate of pregnant and lying-in women was reduced from 1,500 per 100,000 in the 1950s to 67.3 per 100,000. In addition, it has trained a large group of medical professionals working in a three-level network for women and children's health care.

The Law of the P.R.C. on the Protection of Mothers and Infants was approved in October 1994, and took effect in June 1995. It has put the health protection of

women and children onto a systematical and lawful category. Therefore, women and children's rights and interests are ensured. Besides, the Ministry of Public Health has defined 1995 as the year of strengthening health-care work for women and children.

He Jiesheng, who used to be a physician, also said, "The course of women and children's health care is closely related to economic development. To improve the health of women and children, the state needs to invest more money. China is a developing country and the funds for programs concerning women and children's health is still inadequate." She then illustrated her point with examples, saying that three provinces in China still have no maternity and child care center, and that over 100 counties have no women and children's health institution. China has a large population. As the development of the economy remains unbalanced, the number of people who are still in straitened circumstances is nearly 70 million. The problem of women's health is severe among these people. So, in order to thoroughly ensure women's health, we still need greater efforts. "Therefore," He said, "we are appealing to the Government, on one hand, to incline their policies toward women, and to carry out non-gratuitous services on the other. This requires that a certain fee be charged to solve the existing problems." The woman minister also called for an end to all wars, and that military funds be used to help the cause of women's health. "The United Nations, including both developed and developing countries, all should make efforts for this," said He. "Without peace and a stable life, how can we guarantee basic human rights. Without peace, a woman's right to health is out of the question."

Tsering Dolkar, the vice chairperson of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region, was a conspicuous figure during the Conference. "The Chinese Government has attached much importance to the realization of the general goal of the Nairobi Strategies," she said. The local government is now working out detailed rules and regulations for the implementation of the Program for the Development of Chinese Women. Though rules and regulations will be worked out on the basis of the reality of Tibet, where population is sparse and the economy is undeveloped, they will definitely not be far from the general goal. "It's true that we have difficulties in implementing the outline or the rules and regulations," said

Tsering Dolkar. "Because of the inconvenience of communication, poor natural conditions, and the comparatively lower cultural quality of people, we are appealing to the Government to give still greater support to poverty-stricken areas, especially to those women in minority nationality and remote areas. Investing in education should be most important. Women should be given better health services. Moreover, the Government should create more opportunities for women in the participation in economic development, in politics, and so on. Only by this can we realize the objective put forward in the Outline."

Last year, the state's educational outlay invested in Tibet was 150 million yuan. Fifty percent of it was used for women. Besides, more than 100 million yuan was vested in medical health work, 70 percent of which was used for women and children. "So we should say our state has made great efforts," said Tsering Dolkar. "During the Conference, we've learned a lot from many developing countries, which are rather experienced in problems concerning health, community service, educational funding, and women's participation in politics at the grass-roots level."

Finally, the vice chairperson, who used to be a serf before Tibet was liberated, emphasized, "Through this Conference, I feel that quite a number of foreign journalists and participants lack knowledge about Tibet. The great changes in Tibet, and the facts about the development of Tibetan women, can not be denied. We Tibetan women will work together with women from all over the world for equality, development and peace."

According to Ma Shujie, vice governor of Heilongjiang Province, her province is also drawing up the rules and regulations for the implementation of the Outline. To increase the proportion of women to participate in politics, the province has established a special coordinating group. "I don't stand for understanding sexual equality in a simple way. Society should provide equal opportunities and guarantees to both men and women according to their abilities and advantages rather than to sex. In China, with the concern of the government, I'm holding to an optimistic attitude toward the development of Chinese women." □

Translated by LIN MAN



Photo by XINHUA

The ten-day NGO Forum was held at over one-hundred meeting places in Huairou, a scenic suburb of Beijing. Over 30,000 participants from around the world gathered there and held more than 5,000 workshops, panels and sessions covering a variety of themes, including the economy, governance and politics, legal rights, education, health, the environment, science and technology, and the media.

A grand opening ceremony for the NGO Forum on Women was held at the Beijing Olympic Center on August 30, 1995.

Participants from all over the world gathered together hailing the goal of equality, development and peace.

At the opening ceremony, UN FWCW Secretary-General Gertrude Mongella, Chen Muhua, President of the UN FWCW, and Supatra Masdit, Convener of the NGO Forum, hold hands together.



Photo by XINHUA



NGO Forum on Women,
Beijing '95



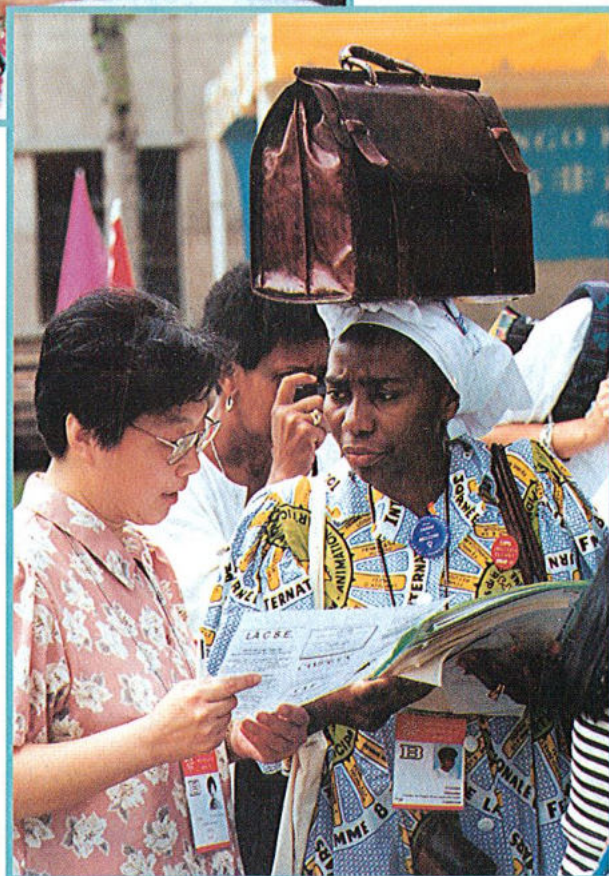
In the tent areas, discussions are held on varied themes.

Photo by LIU QIAN

NGO Forum on Women, Beijing '95

Women of different colors have similar interests concerning the rights of mothers and the assessment of education.

The signing of names expressed women's willingness and power.



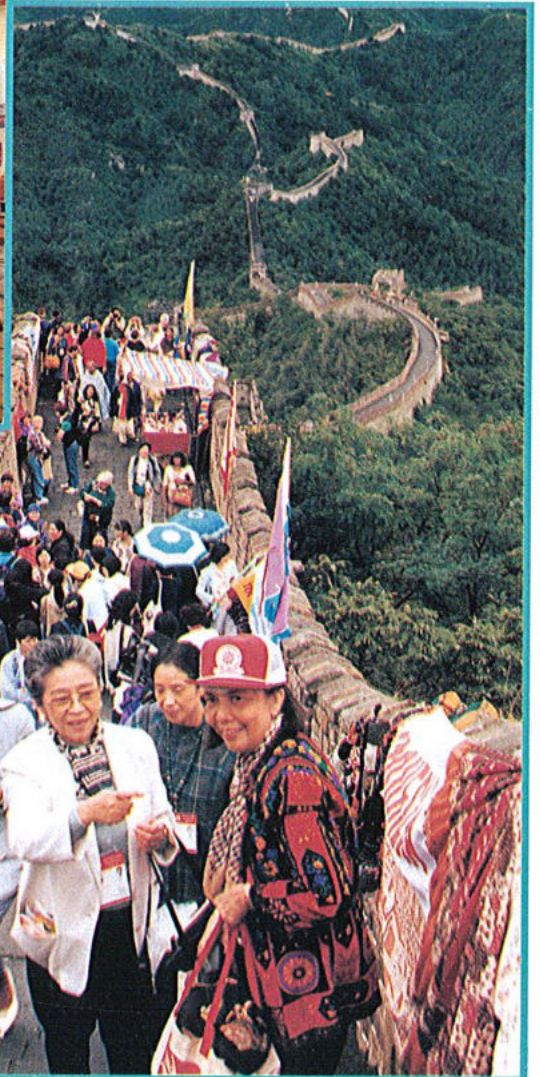
Disabled women actively attend the forum.



Photos by WANG GUANMIN, except the named ones.



Participants from African countries speak at the forum, demanding peace and education, and opposing violence against women.



Women from the Asian-Pacific region take their knitting to the Great Wall to demonstrate the power of "knitting the world together."



Environmental protection was closely linked with women and children's lives.



Outside the main venue are sites with various shows.

Participants sing songs together. The NGO Forum on Women, Beijing '95 was a milestone in the advancement of the women's movement.





Gathering in Beijing (Gouache)

Painting by LIAO KAIMING

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