

September 19, 2006

Sub-theme 2: Women Entrepreneurs and Sustainable Development

Workshop 4: Women Entrepreneurship coping with Social and Environmental Issues

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Speaker 1: Ms. Judith Hawkins, Ministry of Maori Development, New Zealand – Towards on Dynamic Community-From a Maori Woman's Perspective

Ms. Hawkins is a successful Maori businesswoman specializing in horticultural export business. In the nineteenth century, Maori people were the owners and operators of shipping lines, factories, flour mills and large productive farmers. They were actually the economic powerhouse of New Zealand then. However, the entrepreneurship of Maori people has been inactive for over a century, until recently the tide is turning and there is a growing optimism for economic growth within Maoridom.

Judith's business involves the production of buttercup squash for local and export markets, mainly exporting to Japan, Korea and Australia. Her work involves in every stage of production, from the growing, transporting, grading, to the processing and exporting of her products. During the height of the season, she employs over 300 workers. However, behind her success story, there is a lot of fighting and struggling. As a common expression in New Zealand, to be a woman, one was disadvantaged; to be a Maori, one was disadvantaged, but to be a Maori woman, one is doubly if not triply disadvantaged. Being a business woman is difficult for women, especially for Maori women who always try to fight for the fairness of treatment. Therefore, beginning from her journey to entrepreneurship, she was faced with a great many difficulties and constraints; including cultural, social, and economic difficulties. For example, she couldn't raise finance to establish her business from the usual channels, including banks and from government funding sources.

Judith's dream is to be her own boss, to provide her children with education, prepared to sacrifice to be successful. And her greatest resource to achieve her goal is PEOPLE, as without people, there would be no business and no money.

Speaker 2: Ms. Hoang Thi Dzung, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Department, Vietnam –Vietnam Experience in Coping with Avian Influenza

Mrs. Hoang Thi Dzung shared the experience of Vietnam in handling HPAI Epidemic (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza). From February 2004 till December 2005, there were three major waves of epidemic in Vietnam. By end of December 2005, 32 provinces and municipalities of the country had reported human infections. Among them, 93 cases were reported, including 42

deaths. But from Dec 2005, no outbreaks were reported in the whole country.

How did Vietnamese government control and prevent the epidemic from further outbreaks? Firstly, there were strong political commitments and transparency. The National Committee for Avian Influenza Disease Control and Prevention was established in January 2004, as the national coordination mechanism for HPAI planning and supervision. The government also conducted technical measures to control AI in poultry, including rapid destruction of infected birds and birds in the high risk areas, control of poultry movement, and strengthening disease surveillance systems. Other measures included raising public awareness, strengthening international cooperation, and re-structuring poultry production.

The Vietnamese government approved several national strategic plans. For example, the National Preparedness Plan in Response to Avian Influenza Epidemic H5N1 and Human Influenza Pandemic, the Emergency Disease Contingency Plan for Control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Vietnam, and a Human Health HPAI Preparedness Plan. For 2006 to 2008, Integrated National Operational Work Programme is announced for Avian Influenza Control and Human Pandemic Preparedness and Response.

Speaker 3: Dr. Nafis Sadilk, Special Adviser to the United National Secretary –General and Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific – HIV/AIDS: A Threat to Women in the Asia-Pacific Region

HIV/AIDS is not a social issue nor a health issue, but a development issue and a gender issue. According to the estimates of UNAIDS in 2004, by the year 2010, 10 million people in Asia-Pacific region would be newly affected, and 3 million of them would have died. The economic cost would be 17.5 billion US dollars. This may well be an under-estimate – in 2005 alone, there were 930,000 new infections and 600,000 people died. According to Dr. Sadilk, one of the biggest risks in the Asia-Pacific region is refusal to respond to realities, whether it is drug use, prostitution, extra-marital sex or sex between men.

In all over the world, women are at particular risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Women account for more than half of new HIV infections in the Asia-Pacific region. 60% occur among young people. Moreover, the burdens of HIV care fall mostly on women. They are often last in line for treatment and are far more likely to bear the stigma of living with HIV/AIDS. At the same time, women's work underpins the region's economy. Many daily roles of women, as housekeeper, cook, health aide, educator, child care specialist, or nutritionist, for example, hold the family and community together.

Women and girls must have the means, information and power to protect themselves.

Women in the Asia-Pacific region need new prevention methods they can use themselves,

women leaders should press for more attention to the existing range of prevention possibilities, such as male and female condoms. For example, the Vietnam Women's Union has its own brand of condoms and distributed over 10 million condoms last year. Now the Union will produce its own female condoms, with the help from the UN.

Poverty makes women available for trafficking, and the spread of economic self-reliance among women in the region will contribute to ending it. UNAIDS would be pleased to assist APEC in the creation of an APEC-wide coalition to address gender inequalities and the impact of HIV/AIDS on women, particularly in the world of work. Working with the ILO to protect the rights of female workers, including labour migrants, represents a critical opportunity. Women entrepreneurs can ensure adoption of and adherence to the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. Women leaders must work together to stop the upcoming epidemic.

Speaker 4: Ms. Ingrid Abtonijevic, Former Minister of Economy, Chile - Women at Work

Ms. Ingrid Abtonijevic has always been a businesswoman. Coming from Latin America, in the new era of business, the gathering of WLN provides a chance for networking and experiences sharing with Asian businesswomen. Women are always workers, in charge of taking care of children, cooking, cleaning, working from morning to night. They don't have much time for themselves, but they are also businesswomen.

For women, paid work gives women independence, autonomy, dignity. How integrated are we as working women to the business community, to society and politics? There are different numbers of men and women in business, congress and other segments of society. In Chile, the path to business for women is a very lonely one. Among all businesses in Chile, 97% of companies are small and micro business - 30% of women led companies. Women need public policy to support them in trade. In association, network and education

In making measure for social development, emphasis should be put on how create a new working cultures, to encourage leadership of women, and to take care of the childcare issue. All these are social investment that will enable women to become more economic empowered. Women need to integrate in the society and business.

Final point of the presentation is the awareness of women's own delicately balanced environment, especially the conservation of our delicately balanced environment. We all should declare our commitment with our natural environment and the work of natural resources for humankind and future.

Speaker 5: Ms. Lin Lee, Lee, Founder and President of Medical Chain International Corporation, Chinese Taipei - A global health issue: needle-stick injuries

Ms. Lee has been in incubation business for more than 15 years. She is glad to share her experiences in coping with social and environmental issues by presenting one of her new projects on needle-stick injuries.

Speaking about needle-stick injuries, everyone has the experience of being injected and all know that needle-stick contamination occurs very often. In the US, it is reported that around one million injuries occur every year, while in UK and Taiwan, there are more than 100,000 injuries every year. It is reported that 33% of healthcare workers incur needle-stick injuries annually; and that 20 kinds of diseases are proved to be transmitted through needle-sticks, including HIV/AIDS, TB, SARS, and etc.

According to WHO reports, about 50% of the newly affected people are in the age of 19 -24. The average of track cost of one injury is USD3,000, making totally 3 billion US dollars of economic cost every year. In November 2000, the US approved the Needle-stick Safety and Prevention Act – the first legislation for such purpose, and so far the only legislation in the world. There are more than 200 patents approved to the needle-related devices, but usually only 1% of the patents have the chance to go commercialized. The global health issue has become an increasingly important issue that affects the economic and social development. As a woman entrepreneur, it is a challenge as well as an opportunity, depending on how you cope with the issue.

Speaker 6: Arch. Encarnacion N. Racalio, President if IMUS Institute, the Philippines - Labour Migration and Trafficking in Women and Children

In the year of 2004, among total overseas Filipino workers, 51.5% are male workers and 48.5% are female workers. From the year 1990 – 2005, total remittance from overseas Filipino worker reached 8 billion US dollars. These workers are faced with common problems, such as illegal recruitment, low pay, contract violation, physical abuse, and etc.

The government of the Philippines conducted various work programs for the protection of migrant workers. Examples include giving pre-departure orientation seminars, establishing women's desks for information distribution and other functions. The work programs also include setting up standard employment contracts for female workers. Moreover, the government engaged in negotiating and concluding bilateral agreements and memorandum to strengthen bilateral and international cooperation and coordination on working for the migrant worker issues.

Other work includes passing relevant legislation on trafficking in persons. In the past 30 years, more than 30 million Asian people have been trafficked. In 2002 alone, there were more than 1,000 reported cases of trafficking and smuggling from the Philippines. In the legislation, there is a re-definition of prostitution by punishing only women to include people involving recruiting, transporting, receiving, or hiding prostitutes, making the enlarged "supply sides".