
This year's theme is 'Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work'. Given the highly different developmental stages attained by different countries, one might query ‘how could any solid resolutions
be possibly made in a two-week conference’? The answer to this question became clear to me after going through the conference myself. During the conference, I had the precious opportunity to talk to government and civil society representatives from all parts of the world. Through different workshops organized by parties from all walks of life, the annual CSW became a place where women’s rights advocates could exchange their ideas freely and to be inspired all the time. With my keen interest in domestic helpers’ rights in Hong Kong, I managed to talk to government officials as well as NGO frontline workers from the Philippines, expressing my concerns to domestic helpers’ situation as a Hong Konger.

Indeed, women's issues in developing countries and that of developed countries could vary largely across the spectrum - from life-threatening issues to discrimination faced by women in the workplace. Yet, I believe it is through bringing out respective problems to the table during the annual CSW, these problems are 'made available' for the world to see and care thus solve, issues are being made imminent so that intellectuals and people who care can make an effort. These discussions as well as the submission of oral and written reports during the conference could also make those who are already in the field including government officials and different devoted NGOs accountable to their work.

One of the most significant reflections from the conference is that, many women's issues are so interconnected that they can't be possibly ignored by us Hong Kong people. We never knew there is such thing as 'holiday cut' of which believers of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) would send their children back home (such as Africa) where FGM is still a common practice; we never knew Hong Kong remains as a hot transit territory for human trafficking for forced labour and prostitution; we never knew the issue of exploitation on domestic helpers has already been regarded as a kind of 'modern slavery'...and we never realized how close these issues could be to us, in Hong Kong.

Although it remains unrealistic to think of ourselves as heros who can solve these problems all at once, only if we all become more socially aware and to also influence people around us in a discreet way, we can definitely make our community, society and world a 'less evil' place to live in. As said by Second UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, "the UN was not created to make mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell."
Attending the General Assembly (above) and a side event workshop on ‘Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Modern Day Slavery’ (below).
A photo taken with government representatives from the Philippines. We discussed about issues related to domestic helpers in Hong Kong and pathways offered by the government for reintegration of migrant workers.

A photo taken with Ms. Celina Caesar-Chavannes, a Member of Parliament in Canada, as well as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. She is a passionate role model who empowers others through our commonly shared vulnerability, which is totally inspiring.