

# **WOMEN & POLITICS**

## **Korean Institute for Women & Politics**

February, 2012

KIWP was established in 1989 with the aims of heightening women's political consciousness and expanding political participation. Since that time, KIWP has worked relentlessly to accomplish those objectives, both domestically and in the international arena, through a broad range of programs and undertakings. These have included both academic and more pragmatically oriented workshops and seminars and the publication of materials designed to promote strategies to support women candidates in the electoral process. We pride ourselves on our commitment to these goals and on our resolve to maintain a pro-active stance until such time as genuine equality exists in the political realm.

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## Progress for Women, Progress for All !!



Jung-sook Kim (Ed.D)/Chairperson, KIWP

Seventeen years have passed us by since the 4th World Conference on Women was held by the United Nations in Beijing. Approximately 50,000 people, including government delegates from 189 nations, representatives from relevant United Nations organizations, and representatives from civil organizations gathered together with common purpose. The goal was to establish and articulate effective strategies to promote the status of women. Empowerment of women was the clear message of the Beijing Declaration urging nothing less than the achievement of gender equality.

Since the Beijing Declaration women have made great strides forward and noteworthy improvement in status relative to earlier times. To achieve this one must acknowledge the commitment and devotion of members of the International Council of Women and women leaders from around the world. Women leaders are transforming politics all over the world -- Chancellor Merkel of Germany, President Fernandez of Argentina, and Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra of Thailand. Likewise, the present women's target quota of 40% in corporations and public agencies is quietly but surely gaining a foothold, particularly in European countries with a relatively high status of women, such as Norway, France, and Sweden. The 21st Century may some day be characterized as the century of "soft power" based on the compassion tender touch women possess.

The year 2011 was a special year for women as the 'UN Women' was formally established as an independent body of the United Nations with gender equality and empowerment of women as the main tenants of the organization's charter. The UN's declaration of "the International Day of the Girl Child" and the Nobel Peace Prize having been awarded to three activist women are further signs of substantial progress (for women, progress for all !) during the year. However, despite many recent achievements, we still have a long, long way to go before realizing our vision of gender equality, where all women of the world enjoy fair opportunity for self-realization and the fulfillment that comes from leading a

decent life. In most countries, including Korea, women are still largely excluded from decision making. Worldwide, women account for less than 20% of the leaders of assemblies, cabinets, and corporations. In virtually all areas of society, women, who constitute half of the world's population, still do not enjoy equal rights with men as reflected in unequal wages and abysmal economic participation ratios.

Furthermore, in far too many darker corners of the global village, women live in disgustingly unsanitary conditions and even life threatening circumstances. They lack access to even basic first aid despite the prevalence of many of the worst diseases known to humankind. Other urgent issues for women demand resolution - serious human rights abuse, human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution and forced marriage, and severe domestic violence. Sadly, the list goes on and on for enormous numbers of our world's sisters. To tackle the myriad of problems associated with the environment, education, labor, welfare, and human rights that modern society faces, the active participation of women is a critical input if the conquering of these problems is to be accomplished. Therefore, it only stands to reason that the empowerment of women and the expansion of their participation are absolutely essential to achieve co-existence, co-prosperity and world peace. These are the tasks of our time and demand the concerted effort of all. Let me reiterate, "The Prosperity for women is prosperity for all."

The 33rd General Assembly of the International Council of Women to be held in Seoul from September 17 to 22 will provide a unique and effective forum for global networking among women leaders from around the world. Here they will be able to share in depth both success stories and challenges and in doing so learn from one another. The scope of considerations will be broad, encompassing a range of important women's issues in the fields of politics, economics, society, welfare and human rights, and ultimately collaborate in seeking future directions for women's development. The 'Seoul Declaration' will be derived from discussions at workshops and conferences during the General Assembly. Built on a foundation embodied in the "Beijing Declaration" there is good reason to anticipate that the new declaration will mark an innovative and bold step forward, and will contribute a great deal to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In order to ensure the success of 'The 33rd ICW-CIF General Assembly', I encourage and appreciate your enthusiastic support in our united quest for progress for all !

## ● KIWP Major Activities of 2011

### ○ Parallel event with the 55th UNCSW



KIWP dispatched representatives including Chairperson, Jung-Sook Kim, of Korean Institute for Women and politics to the 55th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held between February 22 and March 4, 2011. The representatives held an NGO workshop on Women and Education in Asia-Pacific as parallel event at 4 pm at United Nations Church Center on February 25, Friday. They provided a turning point in promoting the image of Korea to the world by actively publicizing the gender equality policy of the Korean government, the policy of sharing responsibility between women and men, and the activities of NGOs at the Forum. The workshop as parallel event sought to formulate policies on Asian women and education and on women's participation.

### ○ Participated in the Grand Debate to commemorate the Centennial of International Women's Day



KIWP participated in the Grand Debate to commemorate the Centennial of International Women's Day at the Grand Auditorium on the second floor of the National Assembly Constitution Memorial Hall on March 8, 2011, which is held by Korean National Council of Women. This Grand Debate was held on the theme of "Social Participation of Korean Women, how far have we come?" Chairperson Jung-Sook Kim of KIWP, Ex-Minister of Policy Affairs II Youn-Sook Lee, National Assemblywoman Yoon-sun Cho, President Woon-sil Choi of Lifelong Education Institute, and President Junhui Joo of the Women's Institute of Negotiation & Leadership participated in the discussion. More than 500 women leaders from the total of 90 organizations participated as well as Minister in Special Duties Jae-oh Lee, Vice Minister of Gender Equality and Family Kyo-sik Kim and many National Assemblywomen. After the discussion, 5 resolutions were adopted summarizing the recommendations, and the debate was concluded by a performance where all the participants stood up for waving scarves saying "50% women's participation"

#### ○ Event to Commemorate 4th Girls' Day



KIWP was the organization which proclaimed Girl's Day, led by the Girl Scouts of Korea. In this sense, the institute participated in an event as a member of NGO Coalition as to commemorate 4th Girl's Day under the theme on "NGO Coalition for the Proclamation of Girl's Day". This event was held at Youido Park Culture Plaza from 10am to 3pm on April 23, 2011. At this event where more than 100 citizens' and women's organizations participated, Princess Azizah of Malaysia, and Asia-Pacific Region Chairperson of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides Low Lih Jeng participated, as well as more than 130 Girl Scout leaders from 15 countries, and about 6000 people including youth leaders nationwide and the members of about 100 participating NGOs. The Girls' Day is to assist and provide opportunities so that girls can grow up healthy with self confidence and self development

into a responsible member of society. The event this time was held in the form of Expo where girls presented diverse themes by participating organizations for self development and empowerment of girls.

#### ○ Participated in Global Women's Leadership Academy

KIWP participated in 'Global women's leadership academy' which was launched on April 4, 2011 held by Korean National Council of Women. This academy, consisted of three classes of politics, economy and international relations, was expected to contribute to the improved political culture and quality of life through strengthening the empowerment of women and promoting leadership, as well as to train women leaders with balanced global vision and values to carry out the leadership role in the global age of the 21st Century. Furthermore, it was aimed at "training women leaders equipped with international sense and expert knowledge suitable for the age of globalization."

#### ○ Debates to Commemorate the 22th Anniversary of KIWP



KIWP held the Lecture to commemorate the 22th Anniversary in the Press Center, on October 7. Chairperson Jung-sook Kim, directors of the Institute, advisory members, and sponsors participated to discuss the history and activities of KIWP on the theme of "Elections in Korea and Change in Politics". Through this discussion, the widely respected leaders in women politics promised to strengthen women networks and offer advanced training programs in order to fulfill the women's political empowerment.

### ○ Participated in the 47th National Convention of Women



KIWP participated in the 47th National Convention of Women on November 5, 2011, which was held by The Korean National Council of Women. On the day, the Convention began with glorious opening march of Korean National Council of Women-affiliated 67 member groups' flags with loud applause of all the guests as well as 4000 women leaders who gathered from all over the country. The President of Korean National Council of Women (Chairperson of KIWP), Kim Jung-sook was a moderator for the first session of major discussion with a theme of "The New Korea with Women's Participation!" For the discussion, six guest speakers stood on the platform in turn and delivered strong messages for national women leaders about the significance of women's roles and their participation in achieving a new leap forward for the further development of Korean society.

### ● Future Activities in 2012

#### ○ Dispatch representatives to the 56th UNCSW and hold a Parallel event

KIWP plans to send representatives to the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held with the priority theme of "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges". The 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from Monday, 27 February to Friday, 9 March 2012. Furthermore, the institute hold a Parallel event on "The empowerment of rural women in the Asia-Pacific region".

○ **Debates to commemorate the 23rd anniversary of KIWP**

KIWP will hold a debate to commemorate its 23rd anniversary at the Press Center in July, 2012. Directors, advisors, and members of KIWP as well as general public will participate. The theme will be on "2013 Presidential election and women's political participation". The focus will be on the direction of the 2013 presidential election and the status of women's political participation.

○ **Participated in the 33rd General Assembly of the International Council of Women**

KIWP will participate in the 33rd General Assembly of the International Council of Women (ICW) to be held in Seoul from 17 to 22 September, 2012. This General Assembly will provide a meaningful and effective global women's forum for strengthening network among women leaders gathered from all of the world under the slogan of "Progress for Women, Progress for All." .

○ **Call for articles on Women's Policy Development**

KIWP will call for research articles on women's agenda and women's policy as a whole by both undergraduate and graduate students nationwide, in order to review women-related issues perceived by students and the general public alike.

○ **Publish Korean and English Newsletter in regular basis**

**Join us!**

The Korean Institute for Women & Politics strives to raise women's political consciousness and at the same time provide an environment enabling women's political empowerment. We welcome members who wish to contribute to our efforts to promote women in politics. For more information, please contact us.

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**Korean Institute for Women & Politics**

**NGO in SPECIAL consultative status with the UN ECOSOC**

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