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TAEF UPDATES

TAEF Held the Workshop on “Reviewing International Development Work from a Gender Perspective” Jointly with 9 Non-Governmental Organizations



Thursday, June 4, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has struck global politics and economics since its explosion, leaving many countries trapped in serious development problems. How could we re-

organize the collective efforts for international development work during and after the pandemic? And what roles could Taiwan play in order to sustain our long-term contribution to the global society?

In order to address these urgent issues, TAEF worked together with the Foundation for Women's Rights Promotion and Development to hold a workshop on "Reviewing International Development Work from a Gender Perspective" today. We invited 9 international NGOs at the frontline of development work from Japan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, among others, to facilitate an international platform for them to share distinctive experiences in different government and social sectors, and strengthen transnational cooperation among New Southbound countries.

In the opening ceremony, Dr. Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, Chairman of TAEF, emphasized that Taiwan's NGOs have devoted great efforts to Southeast and South Asia to help local development from various aspects, such as public health, medicine, education, poverty reduction, humanitarian assistance. In foregrounding the hidden problem of gender inequality in the aforementioned issues, this workshop aimed to engineer future development work toward a more sustainable model.

In a similar vein with Dr. Hsiao, Dr. Annie Lee, Director of Women's Rights Promotion and Development, pointed out that 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the promotion of gender mainstreaming in the global society. During the past two decades, Taiwan, Canada, and other international partners have spared no efforts to put the value of gender equality into practice. New international situations, however, stimulated all kinds of issues unthought before. In this sense, Dr. Lee called for a new version of gender equality and development assistance so as to design action plans that are more down to earth.

Ms. Murayama Mayumi, Executive Vice President of the Institute of Developing Economies-Japan External Trade Organizations, was invited to deliver a keynote speech. Ms. Murayama argued that collective efforts to promote gender equality and development assistance must be done by transcending national boundaries. Only by doing so could we expose differences in gender issues between developed and developing countries, explore possibilities of transnational cooperation, examine conflicting forces of politics, economics, and social transition on the global stage, and eventually envision a more flexible foundation for future international gender movements.

Echoing Ms. Murayama's viewpoint, Dr. Alan Yang, Executive Director of TAEF, emphasized Japan's contribution of adding gender perspectives into development frameworks, while recognizing other countries' potential to continue deepening cooperation in this aspect. This workshop could serve as a timely intervention to facilitate future connections.

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Frontline Development Workers Shared Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality



Thursday, June 4, 2020

In an experience sharing session of the workshop on “Reviewing International Development Work from a Gender Perspective,” international development workers at the frontline investigated how gender perspectives have benefited their distinctive works in spite of long-existing challenges.

Ms. Anna Minj, Director of Gender Justice and Diversity Program at BRAC, opened the discussion by pointing out that one of the most difficult challenges for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote gender equality lies in the distribution of resources among different projects while funding is shrinking. Even if we design a particular action plan for each society, it would take a long period of time to realize attitudinal and behavioral changes. Founded almost half a century before, BRAC has been quite active in 12 countries, helping more than 1.35 million people. By organizing local empowerment workshops, BRAC aims to help gender minorities devote themselves into future changes as well.

Ms. E’mi Lo’sing, Director of Taiwan Fund for Children and Families Vietnam Office, suggests that although female advantages have not been fully explored in the discussion on international development work, we should never neglect that certain female characteristics could actually bring forth positive changes. During the recent pandemic,

the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families have successfully sent necessary resources to those in need through four oversea-offices led by female officers.

Extending the discussion to issues of gender and nature, Ms. Claire Lin, Founder of Dharti Mata Sustainable Workshop, especially foreground the organic combination of women, environment, and start-ups. In training Bangladesh women how to transform local natural resources into commercial products (namely, organic vegetable dyed cloth pads), Ms. Lin hoped that such a project could value both economic profits and sustainability. Dharti Mata Sustainable Workshop also guided Bangladesh women to re-learn their bodies and get rid of social stigma on menstruation and female physiology.

While the idea that equal numbers of gender participation could lead to gender equality is widely shared, Ms. Shuang-Shuang Keng, Portfolio Manager of International Programs Group at World Vision Taiwan, reminded us that numerical equality still cannot solve long-standing structural problems. In order to transform the uneven gender power relations in society, World Vision has held workshops around the world to deliver correct information about gender equality, inviting male counterparts to participate in such social changes, and enable women to accumulate private savings through microloans to invest in their own futures or their children's.

As the moderator of this session, Dr. Lin Ching-Yi, Physician of Chung Shan Medical University Hospital, has devoted her life to various international medical programs in India, Nepal, and Kyrgyzstan. Dr. Lin agreed with the panelists that gender is an indispensable perspective in promoting development assistance. She hoped all the participants could transform today's transnational dialogue into future action plans.

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Government and NGO Representatives Shared Best Practice in the Roundtable Discussion



Thursday, June 4, 2020

Through the two sessions of experience sharing in the morning, TAEF organized a lively roundtable discussion in the afternoon, encouraging all participants to envision an equal and safe living space during the time of the pandemic. In emphasizing that women's active participation has become an undeniable fact, Dr. Hsiao, Chairman of TAEF, moved on to navigate heated dialogue on personal, institutional, and regional issues in promoting gender equality in development work.

Following Dr. Hsiao's emphasis on women's active role in engaging with development projects, Mr. Alex Shyy, Deputy Secretary-General of International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF), suggested that aside from financial assistance, technological transfer, and capacity building, ICDF also focuses on how to evaluate international development work from the perspective of gender equality. ICDF designed a checklist to conduct such analyses. As a major organization promoting development work in Southeast and South Asia, ICDF has in recent years encouraged women's participation in public health, medicine, technology, among other industries. In so doing, ICDF has endeavored to make sure that no one would be left behind in development work.

Viewing gender equality as a universal value, Ms. Martina Hwa-Yuh Deng, Deputy Director-General of Department of Gender Equality at Taiwan's Executive Yuan, pointed out that the promotion of gender equality in Southeast and South Asia should devote efforts in improving gender-related legal regulations, investigate women's underrated participation in agricultural sectors, and emphasize women's suppressed experiences during climate changes. In addition, an establishment of a complete

database regarding gender equality in Southeast Asia could also benefit international development work in the region.

Mr. Jay Hung, Chairperson of Taiwan Alliance in International Development, also attached importance to the evaluation of gender equality in international development work. Introducing Istanbul Principles and gender equality indicators established by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Mr. Hung shared his experiences of how using these evaluation principles effectively could contribute to better performance in development work and put gender equality into practice.

In drawing attention to the current COVID-19 crisis, Ms. Hui-Jung Chi, Executive Consultant of Garden of Hope Foundation, reminded us that the pandemic once again showed how women have suffered from continuing domestic violence. As the pandemic has fundamentally changed the contemporary society, Ms. Chi suggests, we must start thinking about how to re-organize collective efforts to pursue gender equality and create a safe world during and after the pandemic.

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NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY NEWS

Focus Taiwan

Taiwan Looking for Closer Exchanges with India in Post-COVID-19 Era

Monday, June 1, 2020

Taiwan is looking forward to enhancing closer trade and economic ties with India in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, the country's top envoy to the South Asian country said during a recent interview.

In the interview published by eGov Magazine Friday, Tien Chung-Kwang shared his views on Taiwan's economic outlook and its economic prospects with India.

In terms of promoting trade and economic ties with India, the envoy said Taiwan has since May 2016 launched its New Southbound Policy, which seeks to enhance closer exchanges with India, the neighboring Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members, Australia and New Zealand.

As a result of the policy and India's "Make in India" policy, Taiwanese companies have been building up a supply chain for electronics in central and southern India, Tien noted.

"As India has been working extensively on sustainable development, Taiwanese industries have continued to exchange knowledge with their Indian counterparts during various forums to seek effective and feasible collaborations," he added.

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REGIONAL HEADLINES

CNN

India and Australia Sign Pacts to Strengthen Military Ties as Tensions Simmer in South China Sea

The New York Times

Philippine Dissenters May Face Terrorist Designation

The Guardian

Australian Government Asks China for Same Reduction in Trade Barriers as US

June 5, 2020

India and Australia signed two bilateral military agreements Thursday in the "first step in deepening of the defense relationship" between the two Indo-Pacific powers, according to statements from both countries.

The deals were announced after a virtual summit between prime ministers Scott Morrison of Australia and Narendra Modi of India.

June 4, 2020

President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines is expected to sign sweeping antiterrorism legislation that critics said on Thursday would allow the authorities to classify government opponents as terrorists and detain people for critical social media posts.

The measure, which has passed both houses of Congress, neared finalization as the United

May 28, 2020

The Morrison government has asked China to grant Australia the same reduction in bureaucratic trade barriers that Beijing has promised the United States.

The request emerged as experts warned that US allies such as Australia could suffer "collateral damage" from a deal between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump to massively increase

"India is comprehensively and rapidly committed to strengthening its relations with Australia. This is not only important for our two nations but also for the Indo-Pacific region and the whole world," Modi said.

"We are committed to an open, inclusive, prosperous Indo-Pacific and India's role in that region, our region, will be critical in the years ahead," Morrison added.

The new pacts, known as the Australia-India Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement and the Defence Science and Technology Implementing Arrangement, come as military tensions increase in the Indo-Pacific region, which includes in the South China Sea, where China has been fortifying its positions on disputed islands.

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Nations released a scathing report that cites widespread human rights violations under Mr. Duterte, including the extrajudicial killing of more than 8,000 people.

Despite years of international and domestic criticism over rights abuses, Mr. Duterte appears eager to double down on his strategy of suppressing dissent and to give the police an even freer hand to crack down.

Critics said the legislation was so broadly written that it would allow the arrest and detention of people without a warrant or a charge for criticizing the government or acts such as causing property damage or carrying a weapon.

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China's imports of American agricultural goods and energy products.

Similarly, a former Australian government foreign affairs adviser argued on Thursday that Canberra could not afford to play "a never-ending game of chicken" with China without greater reassurance from the US on shared end goals.

China's decision this month to impose 80% tariffs on barley from Australia – amid tensions over the call for a coronavirus inquiry – coincided with a move to allow imports of the same product from the US.

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