

## **Outcomes and Challenges of Dynamic Cities Needs Women**

Hyun Kyung Park

President, Seoul Foundation of Women and Family

Good morning! My name is Hyun Kyung Park and I'm the President of the Seoul Foundation of Women and Family. It is my pleasure and honor to introduce you about **achievements** and **challenges** of Metropolis-Women International Network.

The Metropolis-Women International Network is the confederal body aiming at **improving** women's representativeness in a local government, **promoting** their participation in the decision making process, and **implementing and sharing** gender sensitive city governance.

The Metropolis-Women International Network held the **first** women international network forum in 2007 in Brussels, participated by women from cities all over the world with the theme of "Dynamic Cities Need Women."

As representing the Seoul Metropolitan Government which has acted as an antenna for the Asian region, I would like to **present, outcomes and meanings of the forum** held in 2009 and this year, in cooperation with city representatives, local antennas, and international organizations, and **discuss about direction** of the Metropolis-Women International Network in the

future.

## **Visions and Challenges for a Women-Friendly City**

The Seoul Metropolitan Government hosted the second Metropolis Women International Network, 'Dynamic Cities Need Women: Visions and Challenges for a Women Friendly City' at Seoul, from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of October in 2009.

In the forum, there were 1,815 participants including officials of city governments, NGOs, scholars, and experts and 68 speakers from 39 cities of 34 countries, and 4 international organizations. The forum was divided into 8 sessions under different themes including gender governance of urban policies, economic crisis and women, safe city for women, and cultural diversity and women's creativity.

Based on what had been discussed during the forum, Seoul produced and proposed the **Seoul Declaration** composed of policy issues to be implemented by each city government.

First, it proposes that **to expand gender mainstreaming** over the entire urban policies and administration: to make use of gender analysis, gender impact assessment, and gender sensitive budgeting in a systematic way.

Second, it proposes that more policies be prepared to create ‘**stable jobs**’ **for women** to be economically empowered and, in the economic crisis, to solve their poverty issue.

Third, it demands that in order to build **a safe city for women**, women should be **protected** from any form of **violence** at home, work or public places, and **more support** against domestic violence be given.

Fourth, it demands that **to promote** diversity and women’s creativity, **needs** for various policies should be **satisfied** for women in physical difficulties, migrant and elderly women, and realizes that women in these categories could contribute to city development.

For the follow-up of the forum, Seoul made the **Seoul Declaration translated** into Korean, English, French, and Spanish, added Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Malay, Arabic in the following year and **distributed** it to membership cities.

The forum paved the way for the Women International Network to be consolidated within the Metropolis. It has been officially organized as a 6th commission of the Metropolis, in which women’s issue has been accepted, and thrown spotlight on improving women’s representativeness.

Further, more attention has been paid to women's policies within the Seoul Metropolitan Government. After hosting an international forum, Seoul's Women Friendly City Project has been vitalized and actively joined by top ranking officers of the city government or major government departments. Until today since the forum, 13 cities in Korea have adopted and implemented the Women Friendly City Project. It also won the UN Public Service Award in 2010 and 2011 in a row.

The bottom line is that **the forum** helped to set up and share a key agenda to be dealt in the Metropolis-Women International Network. In the forum, the 'Women Friendly City Project' became a common **goal** of the Women International Network, then, as a newly formed structure for its policy direction.

We, Seoul, hope that any city ask for hosting a **third forum** as soon as possible to promote **activities** of the Women International Network. We wish women living in a city around the world and regional antennas **gather** again and look forward to seeing our **desire for the next gathering** fulfilled in this meeting.

### **Women in Asian Cities: Crisis, Agency and Change**

Seoul tried to host an **open Asian Dialogue** as a regional antenna where women in Asia have gathered for regional solidarity in Asia. This was to

**keep promise** made during the Asian Women's Roundtable meeting in 2009.

It was held at Seoul from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of September in 2011 and joined by 344 including **representatives** from 20 cities of 13 countries mostly in Asia and **experts** from 10 international organizations on the theme of “**Women in Asian Cities: Crisis, Agency, and Change.**”

This forum was held to **expand** regional network in East and Southeast Asia centering Seoul as an Asian regional antenna and to **discuss** about a common agenda of women in Asia.

The forum focused on Asian women's current **situation** in the global economic crisis: poverty, unemployment, unstable employment, and migrant worker issues.

With *the Great East Japan Earthquake* as a momentum, it becomes a key agenda to women in Asia that **climate changes** and **natural disaster** requires gender perspective approach.

Women representing each Asian region who came to the forum tried to find a **way**, in this crisis, to make **women** in Asia as a **key agent** for social development and changes. In the forum, Asian cities **resolved** to **implement** the 1<sup>st</sup> Declaration (of Brussels) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Declaration (of

Seoul), for Dynamic Cities Need Women, and, for this, prepared and announced an **agreed conclusion**.

The forum gave **credit** to the **Asian Women Network** for sharing their best practice of policies and experience to achieve governance collaboration and **suggested** that it hold a meeting in a regular basis concerning **present issues** related to city development. These are:

First, we understand that the majority of women in a city are **economically vulnerable** due to unstable economy and inflations.

Second, we acknowledge that the **global economic crisis** makes things worse coupled with **natural disaster** cause by climate change and unprecedented radiation danger.

Third, we closely investigate the **situation** that women are severely affected by the economic crisis and natural disaster, based on which we understand the need for **gender sensitive approach**.

Fourth, when setting **city governance strategy**, we review the situations such as unemployment, food crisis, flood, and earthquake from the women's point of view and, with this, seek for **women-friendly measures** against those risks.

Fifth, we create **decent jobs** for women in an active way. Job creation could be led by women **themselves** and be done in such a way that **those** related to the project from various sectors of city **take actions**, effectively.

Sixth, because poverty and natural disasters would intensify violence against women, we **integrate** the meaning of **safety** from economic crisis and natural disasters **into** the concept of safe city.

### **Proposal for Women International Network**

After hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> forum of the Metropolis-Women International Network and meeting of Asian Women Network, to make progress of the Metropolis-Women International Network, Seoul proposes as follows:

To expand and consolidate the Metropolis-Women International Network, **online and offline network** should be well established. For this, a **forum** for the Women International Network should be held in a **regular basis** and active participation be made to forum, and international events to be held at each membership city.

Each **regional antenna** should **strengthen** its role. The 6<sup>th</sup> commission, Women International Network, has regional antennas of 13 cities in Asia, Middle East, Africa, South and North Americas and Europe. All regional antennas need to have regular meeting or working group meeting at least

once in a year to discuss mutual cooperation. Further a regional antenna needs to encourage **other cities** to become its member. For this, its primary target should be membership cities of the Metropolis, and an antenna city for each continent should urge other cities in that region to be part of this activity.

Each antenna city, internally, has to help urban policies directors to **understand** the **significance of women network project** and to receive more financial and administrative **support** from the decision makers in its city.

I believe that all of you agree with me that the Metropolis Women International Network has played a **key role** in building **solidarity and cooperation** among women in a global city.

In order for **women** to become a **key agent for changes** in these transition periods, **now, you and I**-as representing Seoul- need to go **hand in hand** with the Metropolis Women International Network for future **challenges**.

Thank you!