

2018 Taiwan-U.S. Global Cooperation & Training Framework –

Achieving 50-50: Empowering Women Leaders in the Indo-Pacific Region

Meeting Minutes

2018.12.10 (Mon.)

➤ Opening and Welcome Remarks

- **Li-Jey Tsao, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan**

Li-Jey Tsao gave the warmest welcome to all the participants and emphasized how this workshop gathered inspiring leaders from 14 countries. He also highlighted the importance of enhancing women's rights and opportunities and how Taiwan has shown great commitment with superb progress in women leadership, particularly in political fields. Tsao is proud of achievements and strives to take another step forward. Tsao said the GCTF spotlights the robust partnership between Taiwan and the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific and their shared commitment to enhancing collaboration on global issues. It is hoped that the workshop will help promote women's participation and leadership in the public and private arenas while strengthening social development across the region, he added.



- **William Brent Christensen, Director of American Institute in Taiwan, USA**

William Brent Christensen said the GCTF is a partnership to demonstrate and share Taiwan's strength and expertise with the rest of the world. When it comes to empowering women to not only *participate* in the political process, but to lead it, Taiwan truly stands out as a model to us all. The topic of this workshop is not a women's issue per se. It has great significance for us all. That should be an obvious point, but too often it isn't. Programs aimed at women are framed as if it were a niche issue. But the truth is, whether a society succeeds at empowering its women to lead is a key measure of the overall health of that society, and a powerful indicator of how likely that society is to prosper. But empowering women to lead is a journey; it takes time. And none of us has the luxury of resting on our laurels in confidence that we have reached our destination. Last but not least, William Brent Christensen emphasized



how glad and how eager he was to see participants from 14 countries and learn from their accomplishments, setbacks, and visions of victories yet to be won.

➤ **Keynote Speech - Are We There Yet? The Long Road to Women's Equality**

- **The Honorable Pat Schroeder, Member, U.S. House of Representatives, 1973-1997 (Colorado, 1st District), USA**

The Honorable Pat Schroeder first talked about the current situation and some recent progress of gender equality in the USA. She said that up until this year, American has not been in a great position to talk about 50-50 since it was rank as 89 in the world about women's leadership in politics. She believed many countries in the Indo-Pacific region have done better than the USA has. But one interesting thing that happened in the USA recently is that after Hillary Clinton lost, instead of getting discouraged and a little set back as Schroeder predicted, women got angry, marched down on the streets and never stopped. So the USA has just gone through what is called "a pink wave," and many women walk into Washington. Schroeder expected that the USA will step further in women leadership after all these young women take their positions.



Schroeder then talked about her inspiring stories of becoming the first congresswoman in Colorado. She said that she has been in a male culture a lot in her growing stage, such as going to a school with all males and learning to fly a plane, which was a very male thing then. Moreover, she went to the Congress in 1972, where there were only 14 women in 435 representatives, or in 535 if we count in the Senate. She received gender bias and discrimination during her time in the Congress, but she kept fighting for family leave and equal pay. She added that the USA recently figures out a new and fairer way to look at equal pay. Measures of the pay gap typically compare the wages of men and women working full time in a given year. But women are more likely to drop out of full-time work to take care of children or other family members. To account for this, the report's authors looked at women's earnings across a 15-year period, and compared those with men's. What they found was a pay gap nearly twice as big as what's traditionally reported: averaged out over 15 years, women made just 49 cents for every dollar men made.

In addition, Schroeder shared several things she figured out in Congress. 1. When people close the problem, they are closing solutions. 2. When we are lobbying or advocating, the best thing we can do is to tell stories, but not science statistics. 3. You can't just work for your own issues, you'd better be in coalitions. 4. If you are at the table, you're probably other than usual, which

is also a key thing of 50-50. 5. Engage in "daring discussions" with others every day. Try to understand what the other's concerns and issues are. If you don't reach the common ground, you'll never gonna get to the upper ground. 6. Try to be skeptical but never cynical. 7. Self-care is not being indulgent. In order to reach 50-50, we have to take care of ourselves first.

Schroeder believed that in achieving 50-50, there's little hope, but it's still a long way from being where we are. Lastly, she used her granddaughter's experience of making change by running for school president to bring optimism to the participants. She believed the next generation will view and apply themselves to the issue with a totally different perspective, but we must all keep striving for it.

Panel I: Women Lead the World to Step it Up for Gender Equality – Cases Sharing on Self-Awareness, Self-Confidence and Self-Affirmation

- **Marci Hodge, Senior Policy Advisor in the State Department Office of Global Women's Issues, USA**

Marci Hodge said that girls who lead grow up to be women who lead, thus we should focus on education on women leadership across the globe as challenges and obstacles are similar. Hodge shed light on how we should focus on helping women reach their full potential not only in private sectors but also in public sectors, striving to push for change step by step in a male-dominated environment, and change the perspectives of the governments, private sectors, social communities on women leadership.



- **Janelle Reiko Sasaki, director of gender brand, marketing and communications for EY Japan, USA**

Janelle Reiko Sasaki elaborated diversity and inclusion by describing diversity as the "what", and inclusion as the "how". She shared the situation in Japan, where diversity is not only limited to gender, but it also occurs in generations, LGBTQ topics, work styles, and perspectives. Meanwhile, she explained why there wasn't even a word for "inclusion" in Japanese and thus it required case examples and specified elaboration to share the idea with Japanese leaders. Yet diversity is a business



strategy, and Janelle is determined to see the progress made in Japan, including relevant regulations, certificate incentives, and active promotions, continue to transform social perspectives on women in the workforce.

- **Hope Ong, Director of Corporate Affairs of Mediatek Corp, Taiwan**

Hope Ong shared her own experience of the process of realizing the importance of gender equality from participating in the APEC women networking meeting in 1990. She provided examples of how the government could help women pursue careers on even ground with men via regulations for women in the workforce and emphasized the importance to observe the environment around you to get to know more about the issues. Ong shared further on the obstacles she encountered during her career change from the IT industry to banking. She observed that women often need to achieve something great in advance to have a chance of getting promoted, and she called for business leaders to spot women's potentials.



- **Supapan Seraphin, Senior Advisor of National Nanotechnology Center, Thailand**

Supapan Seraphin said that she was the fourth child of her family, the fourth disappointment, as she grew up in a traditional Asian family that has a stereotype of favoring sons over daughters. She continued to encounter conventional perspectives from her professors while she was studying for her Ph.D. in Japan, yet, she became herself an inspiration and the warmest professor to educate the next generation. Seraphin advised women to fight back self-doubt as females are likely to encounter biases all the time. She suggested we keep our voices, find our voices in life, be true to ourselves, and, at certain times, speak up. One more valuable advice to add, Mrs. Seraphin also mentioned that negotiation is so important for women. Negotiating skills has a lot of skills. You have to have data, then plan and plot. Last but not least, find your allies.



➤ Panel II: Achieving 50-50 in Public Participation and Decision Making in Civil Society

● Karen Yu, Legislator, Taiwan

Karen Yu is a legislator in Taiwan, who speaks for social enterprise, SDGs, gender equality and the youth. In her speech, she talked about the result of Taiwan's 2018 local election that has recently broken the record of female political participation at the level of city councilors. She also mentioned the importance of establishing a role model for young women in political fields. On the other hand, women's labor force participation rate rapidly declines after the age of 30 in Taiwan. Hence, Yu talked about 4 Strategies to encourage women in Taiwan to rejoin the workforce after giving birth, including promotion campaign, international linkage, resource connection, and policy adjustments.



● Jennifer Lu, Research Fellow of Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association and Chief Coordinator of Marriage Equality Coalition, Taiwan

Jennifer Lu spoke from the perspective of an NGO advocate and a lesbian woman. In her experience of devoting in gender equality movement, LGBTQ+ rights movement, in particular, there is still gender inequality regarding sexual orientation, that is, lesbian voices and needs are often ignored within LGBTQ+ community. She gave an example, the toilet in TaiwanTongzhi Hotline Association was often occupied by men, for there were more gay workers in the association. Hence, the toilet was usually dirty, which she considered being uncomfortable and inconvenient for women to use. To shed light on women and lesbian issues, Lu strived hard to introduce lesbian culture into Hotline Association by inviting female and lesbian speech givers. In the latter half of her speech, Lu introduced more about Hotline Association and Marriage Equality Coalition to audiences and shared the video which is used to promote same-sex marriage in 2018 referendum.



FILM: What is Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association?

<https://youtu.be/WFbVp6okwrA> ;

FILM: What love has taught us - Chun-Tao grandmother <https://youtu.be/sG0nOt6YbV8>

- **Chingyu Yao, Deputy Executive Secretary of Office for Gender Equality, Taipei City Government, Taiwan**

Chingyu Yao focused on whether Taipei City has reached 50-50 in political participation. As a gender equality advocate representing Taipei City, Yao also mentioned that after the 2018 local election, Taipei will meet the historic height of female share in a city council, which unprecedentedly includes 2 openly lesbian councilors.

Taipei City Government has taken advantages of an online ballot casting system called “i-Voting”, where the public can have their say about city policies and make a proposal. Once the proposal is approved by the public, the proposer will be funded by the government to carry it out. For neighborhood leaders, through this system, it is convenient to develop their own community. Yao pointed out in her speech that there is a female neighborhood leader who has a 100% approval rate, which showed that technology helped build a gender-bias-free environment, too



2018.12.11 (Tue.)

➤ **Challenges of Women in Leadership Roles**

- **Renee Yeh, professional conference interpreter, and serial entrepreneur, Taiwan.**

Renee Yeh developed several smartphone applications and other tech products. Yeh said that she created her business because she had identified problems and tried to fix them via technology. In her opening speech for the workshop, she emphasized that encouraging women to become an entrepreneur is one trendy way to take women to work. In her opinion, women are rarely encouraged to devote to innovation and technology, and it is time women take part in entrepreneurship to have their own business.



To establish a successful enterprise, it is essential to identify the real problem, said Yeh. Therefore she introduced “The 5 WHYS Problem-solving Method”. To adopt this method means you ask five WHY- questions until you identify the fundamental problem.

She took the Washington Monument for example. Several years ago, there was a debate over what is to be responsible for the surface damage of Washington Monument. Some think the corrosive cleansing detergent should be in charge of the problem. This is when they started to use “The 5 WHYs Problem-solving Method” The scientists first identify the fundamental problem. “Why do we have to use the corrosive detergent? It’s because of the great number of bird droppings.” “Why are there so many birds? It’s because there is one kind of spider that birds eat.” “Why there are so many spiders? It’s because there is one kind of insect that spiders eat.” “Why are there so many insects? It’s because of the lighting that attracts insects.” Finally, they moved the light and solve the problem.

“Why are there not enough female entrepreneurs?” is the designated issue for the workshop. Before beginning the group discussion, Yeh noticed that people usually come up with formal or institutional ways, such as schools and institutes, to address problems and convey information, but do not forget that technology might be the convenient and efficient way to reach out to more people.

At the Conclusion Session, Renee first thanked all of the participants for learning a lot from the discussions with them. She concluded the challenges discussed, which are the lack of legislation, policies, funds, confidence, and encouragement of taking risks that lead to the low representation of women leadership. She then issued two reminders for the participants. First, you don’t have to turn every woman into an entrepreneur, but you have to make sure the potential and influence are reached to everyone. Second, big changes start from small changes. The problem may seem big, but we can start from small things and change one person at a time. She took solving educational problems as an example. Instead of aiming for education reform as the only fundamental solution, we can use short clips to change people’s minds. If we start from small changes, the influence would be phenomenal.

➤ Group Presentation

- Group A

Group A started with pointing out that women have less reaction to policies and thus less supported by policy-makers. Also, women in most countries do not realize the benefit and value of becoming entrepreneurs. Group A then talked about what it means by gender, gender stereotype and conventional



gender roles are still haunting women. Finally, Group A end it up with the conclusion that we need a more clarified target, and we need to keep the discussion open, to fight for women's status and seats in all fields.

- Group B

Group B first emphasized violence against women(VAW) that caused female vulnerability. While in some participants' countries, most women are not economically empowered and are trapped by the solid yet conventional socialization of women, some of the countries still lack gender equality education, which put VAW and lack of gender equality education in a negative loop. Last but not least, not only women are lack of gender equality education, but men also have no access to education that teaches them to respect women.



- Group C

Group C issued that women are not encouraged to take risks to start the business. The solution they proposed is to build an alternative successful family image, where partners support each other to realize what they're good at. The targeted audience is millennials because they are the next generation who will build families. Group C wished to take story-telling through social media or education as a method to challenge gender stereotype.



- Group D

In Group D member's countries, women's participation rates in politics have decreased in general, which are not 50-50 yet. The challenges among the countries are similar, such as gender bias and stereotypes, social norms and structures, policies, and the lack of women's confidence in themselves. The possible solutions to the challenges are political training programs and policy change.



- Group E

Group E focused on gender inequality in the workplace, especially occupational segregation. The challenges they encounter are cultural norms and lack of policies in the workplace. They figured out that role models in the workplace, leadership workshops, flexible work practices (working at home or remote working but still have good contribution), supportive workplace, and supervisor's commitment are needed and therefore to make a change.



➤ Soapbox for Country Practices

- **Mi Kun Chan Non (Director of the Mon Women's Network, Myanmar)**

Mi Kun Chan Non said that the Myanmar government wants to have a reasonable number of women to get into the peace process. But to be honest, the process does not really move on. Women's participation in politics in Myanmar is not really reaching the position. In Myanmar, women's role is only to raise kids to become smarter. There are many steps need to move on in Myanmar, but they'll keep going and not give up.



- **Janelle Reiko Sasaki (Director, Gender Brand, Marketing and Communications for EY Japan, USA)**

Janelle Reiko Sasaki shared the film to show Japan's current gender situation. She said that the only way to release or change the mindset to accelerate gender diversity is to set it as a priority. The government really drives a lot of changes in Japan. If they start cooperating with big Japanese companies to work on diversity, others will follow, even industry competitors will follow as well. Besides, with the arrival of TOKYO 2020 Olympics, Japan has the chance to showcase its commitment to diversity. FILM: How technology can help promote diversity in Japan <https://youtu.be/1t0UH0lpDWA>



- **Rahayu Mohamad (President of Singapore Muslim Women Association, Singapore)**

Rahayu Mohamad shared a film to introduce SAWA (women's rights advocate coalition in Singapore). She said that while the issue of gender wage inequality is gradually being recognized by business and society in general, the significant impact of the gender retirement savings gap, a long-term consequence of the pay difference and unequal sharing of care responsibilities and paid work within couples, is still relatively underestimated. For Singapore, they focus on women in financial security in the next ten years. Given that women live longer than men on average, there is an increasing risk that retired women may end up in poverty or financial insecurity at an older age.



- **Anindya Restuviani (Co-Director of Hollaback ! Jakarta, Indonesia)**

Anindya Restuviani said that Jakarta is at number nine of the most dangerous city to live for women because of gender-based violence (race racism, homophobic, persecution of LGBT). She believes that legal, technology-used website and youth power can eliminate harassment in public spaces.



WEBSITE: <https://jakarta.ihollaback.org/>

- **Yuda Irlang Kusumaningsih (Coordinator of Move Forward Indonesian Women, Indonesia)**

Yuda Irlang Kusumaningsih said that in Indonesia, people are working together to solve problems, no matter those in parties or from NGO. To be honest, reaching 50-50 is almost impossible, especially in Indonesia. In Mid-2015, women's rights advocates made indicators in gender-responsive perspective in order to achieve 50-50. They also ask that the government put the mind to it, and the government said, this is the first ever in Indonesia. Since in Indonesia, they don't have the role model yet, so they have to work hard. Thing is already there, but how to achieve it? We're still working on it.



➤ Certification and Closing Remarks

● Yun Fan, Ambassador-at-Large for Women's Empowerment, Taiwan

Yun Fan thanked all of the participants first, and said it was an honor for her to say a few words at the end of the workshop. She briefly summarized the status quo of women leadership in Taiwan: From women's right to gender diversity, Taiwan's women movement has come a long way during Taiwan's democratization. Today, Taiwan doesn't only have its first female president, also enjoying having Asia annual biggest LGBT parade. Taiwan has the highest percentage of women in legislative body in Asia, which is 38%. Moreover, the percentage is higher than the average percentage of its counterpart in Europe. Therefore, it is important for Taiwan to contribute its experiences of women empowerment to the world. Then she affirmed that it is crucial for Taiwan to actively participate in international women's communities, because face-to-face interactions build mutual trust and keep the process in strengthening global women's network. GCTF is a platform for Taiwan to learn from other countries and feedback by sharing its own experiences. She believed that with the guests' expertise and assistance, Taiwan can find better ways to connect with the world. In the face of China's continuing actions to block Taiwan's way, the participation of Indo-Pacific countries is big encouragement.

