

Women have a unique opportunity to pave the way forward for our future

女性拥有独特的机会共同开创更好的未来

*Qufu, China, Nov. 16, 2016*

Good morning Excellencies, distinguished guests of Nishan World Women's Forum, ladies and gentlemen; I am very honored to be here in Qufu amongst such prominent ladies who are devoted to the empowerment of women in China.

I am highly impressed by your organization's belief in promoting the fine traditions of Chinese culture, which demonstrate openness, diversity, inclusiveness, and the pursuit of harmony of Chinese art. It is evident that you encourage exchanges and dialogue between Chinese and Western civilizations by enhancing mutual understanding and respect among various people in order to build a more harmonious world and I am among you today to support these precious goals. I have learned a tremendous amount from my dear friend Mrs. Hailin who is an extremely powerful and inspirational lady who promotes your cultures and ethics in the western world.

International Federation for Peacekeeping and Sustainable Development (IFPSD) was founded in 2001 by Mrs. Salwa (Sally) Kader, the organization's President. The work of IFPSD goes unparalleled and focuses on harmonizing diverse cultures, histories, religions, and traditions into an atmosphere of mutual respect and coexistence.

IFPSD's primary purpose is to expand these diverse cultural, traditional and religious acceptance and understanding while promoting unity and international peace

International Federation for Peacekeeping and Sustainable Development (IFPSD) is a non-profit, organization, which promotes the United Nations commitment to international peace, security and justice through educational programs, public relations and community outreach initiatives. In furthering its goal, IFPSD connects individuals and groups from various countries to participate in educational programs, workshops, roundtable discussions and seminars.

IFPSD works tirelessly to promote understanding, cooperation, and peace between people of diverse backgrounds in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, China and the other parts of the world. IFPSD's primary purpose is to expand diverse cultural, traditional and religious acceptance and understanding while promoting unity and international peace.

IFPSD is dedicated to raising awareness in five key areas:

Empowerment of Women,

Youth Leadership,

Interfaith Dialogue,

Human Trafficking and

Human Rights

As you may be aware, the World Values Survey of 2014 (a survey, which is issued every five years) focuses on the themes of gender equality and sustainable development by examining a select range of issues that are fundamental to women's lives and are considered the pillars for achieving gender equality and sustainability. These include:

Patterns of growth;

Employment generation and the role of public goods;

Population dynamics and women's bodily integrity;

Access to water, sanitation and energy.

On 1 March 2011, the Commission on the Status of Women convened an interactive expert panel to address the emerging issues "Gender equality and sustainable development".

While the relevance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development has long been established and recommended by governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and many conferences, such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, and the Beijing Declaration, Fourth World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. It has therefore become increasingly evident that women's contributions to sustainable development are both undervalued and underutilized.

To illustrate, around 1.6 billion people worldwide continue to live without access to electricity. I call it energy poverty, particularly in rural areas and it is a major challenge in every dimension of people's lives. For example, more than 3 billion people heavily rely on open fires and traditional cooking stoves utilizing bio fuels and therefore we must highlight that advocating for equality and justice is not only essential for the benefit of future generations but also for our current ones too.

In most of the undeveloped world, the burden of securing food, water and fuel still largely falls on women and girls so this begs the question; how can economies be truly sustainable if the work that goes into it falls only on the shoulders of women?

To conclude, all of us women have to join forces and work harder to promote the United Nations principles and sustainable development goals (SDGs). This is a historic moment in which we have a unique opportunity to pave the way forward for our future generations by focusing particularly on UN SDG 4. This particular goal ensures inclusive and quality education for all and promotes lifelong learning. This is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development.

In a similar vein, we have to make sure that to achieve gender equality and allow all women and girls to exercise their equal rights as per the UN SDG goal number 5, we must enforce their right by ending all forms of discrimination and violence and stopping the traditional practices of child marriages and female genital mutilation with the hope to include more women in peace building and security decision-making process. Furthermore, we need to make certain reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the International Conference on Population and Development and Beijing platform for Action and the national law are in place and last but not least to adopt sound policies and provide safe, peaceful, inclusive surroundings for all by enforcing legislations designed to promote gender equality around the world.

We are looking forward to making a significant impact in the coming years with the hope to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.