



# The 4th World Conference of Women's Shelters

Impact • Solidarity

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## President Tsai: Taiwan Making Great Strides in Gender Equality 4WCWS Opening Ceremony Attended by Advocates from 100+ Nations

The fourth World Conference of Women's Shelters (4WCWS) kicked off at the Kaohsiung Exhibition Center in southern Taiwan on Nov. 5. The four-day event has gathered around 1,400 government and NGO representatives from over 100 countries to share ideas on how to strengthen women's shelters and end violence against women. President Tsai Ing-Wen and Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-Chung both attended the opening ceremony to show their support.

Co-organized by The Garden of Hope Foundation (GOH) and the Global Network of Women's Shelters (GNWS), the conference is the world's largest international meeting on the protection of women's rights and the prevention of violence against women. This is the first time that the conference has ever been held in Asia.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, President Tsai expressed her gratitude to GOH and noted that through the combined efforts of activists in the women's



Speaking at the opening ceremony, President Tsai thanked GOH and noted that Taiwan has made great strides in gender equality through the combined efforts of activists in the women's movement and the government.



Around 1,500 participants from over 100 countries across the globe have gathered at the Kaohsiung Exhibition Center for 4WCWS, which runs from Nov. 5 to 8.

movement and the government, Taiwan has made great strides in gender equality in recent years.

She stated that, "in 1998, we enacted the Domestic Violence Protection Act. In 2002, we passed the Act of Gender Equality in Employment to foster equality in the workplace. In 2004, we passed the Gender Equity Education Act to ensure gender equality in schools, and began instilling gender equality concepts from a young age."

She stressed that as a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan is working to achieve true gender equality. Moreover, after a long and difficult process, Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage this May, she added.

Citing statistics released by the Gender Equality Committee of the Executive

Yuan, the president pointed out that Taiwan ranks highest in gender equality in Asia in accordance to standards stipulated by the United Nations Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index. In the World Bank's "2019 Women, Business, and the Law" report, Taiwan also topped the list in Asia, she said.

President Tsai ended her speech on a hopeful note, saying she believes that global conferences such as the 4WCWS will help free more women and children from the threat of violence, and help them to finally enjoy life with dignity and equality.

The theme of this year's conference is "Impact and Solidarity." Foundation CEO Chi Hui-Jung, who was named Chair of the Global Network of Women's Shelters in March 2018, explained how the conference aims to use the sharing

of knowledge, exchange of ideas, and mutual support to bring forth impactful change.

Emerging issues such as the protection of women with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and migrant women, as well as the weaponization of sexual violence by the Hong Kong police cracking down on protesters, all highlight the importance of global solidarity, stated Chi.

Five key issues will be discussed over 7 plenary sessions, 63 workshops, and 13 side events. Renowned advocates from around the world in attendance include Mexican actress and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Yalitza Aparicio, "The Vagina Monologues" playwright Eve Ensler, Congolese shelter City of Joy co-founder Christine Schuler Deschryver and many other distinguished guests.

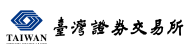
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## Indian Activist Kamla Bhasin Calls for Women's Solidarity

"Thank you, The Garden of Hope Foundation in Taiwan, for bringing this conference to Asia for the first time," declared Kamla Bhasin, a striking figure at the forefront of feminist causes who speaks candidly about gender issues, equality, and peace.

Standing in front of an audience of over 1,500 from around the world, the 70-year-old feminist praised members of the audience who are "survivors, supporters of survivors, drivers, and transformers" for gathering together, adding that female solidarity will make an impact by making feminine voices heard.

As part of the 4WCWS opening ceremony held in Kaohsiung, the Indian activist delivered a keynote speech themed on impact and solidarity to underscore priority issues facing women's shelters.

During the 20-minute speech, she talked about how the patriarchy impacts our lives. The patriarchy is making lives difficult for also men and children, she added, because this prideful philosophy seeks to dehumanize others.

Bhasin noted that every home should make human beings feel loved and protected. Unfortunately, she said, we are currently living in a patriarchal world where people are violated and insulted, where millions of women have spoken out about their dehumanizing experiences through the #MeToo movement.

"Without solidarity, we will be defeated, as women who are united, we will not be defeated," she stated. Therefore, she urged all audience members to join in solidarity with women, and to



4WCWS host Aldith Hunkar (left) interacts with Indian activist Kamla Bhasin, who delivered a keynote speech titled "Impact and Solidarity: Priority Issues for Women's Shelters" at the opening event on Tuesday.

stand up for female workers, domestic workers, homemakers, sex workers, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Bhasin, who is associated with the Sangat-A Feminist Network, Jagori Resource and Training Centre, New Delhi,

and Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, is the global co-chair of the Bern-based network PeaceWomen Across the Globe. Her main area of work has been networking and campaigning on the behalf of feminist activists.

## 4WCWS Speaker Calls Attention to Police Brutality in HK

Speaking at 4WCWS in Kaohsiung today, Linda S.Y. Wong, executive director of the Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women (ACSVAW), denounced politically motivated sexual violence and demanded for an independent investigative committee to look into cases of police brutality in Hong Kong.

Wong, who has worked in the field of women's rights for more than two decades, has a wealth of experience in advocacy work for addressing issues related to women. She presented her keynote speech titled "Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Hong Kong" in the plenary

session of the conference this afternoon.

Speaking about the Hong Kong crisis, she cited a prominent example of politically motivated sexual violence, which is defined as "the commission of violent acts motivated by a desire, conscious or unconscious, to obtain or maintain political power."



Citing factors behind politically motivated sexual violence, Wong explained that the main purpose of such acts is to shame victims and the whole community, as well as to sway the public and protesters with the consequences of being politically active and uncompliant. The overarching objective, however, is to intimidate, as sexual violence itself is already a showcase of power to belittle the weaknesses of the victims, she added.

Though the police are denying accusations and discrediting the victims by pointing out how the protestors are hiding behind their masks, they have yet

to make a formal complaint via existing channels, Wong stated.

ACSVAW is calling for an independent investigation into the abuse, and urged the participants of 4WCWS to sign a global petition to push the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to examine gender-based violence committed by the Hong Kong Police Force in the Anti-Extradition Legislative Amendment Bill Movement. The petition is initiated by ACSVAV, Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor, and Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities.

## GNWS Announces Global Helplines Project

An international helplines project was launched at the opening of the fourth World Conference of Women's Shelters (4WCWS) on Nov. 5 in Kaohsiung, with the aim of garnering support for a database of accurate helplines and creating a website that could contribute to women's safety around the globe.

The Global Network of Women's

Shelters (GNWS) is the largest and most diverse global coalition of women's protection services and resources on the prevention of violence against women.

As the organizer of the conference, GNWS stated that the first priority is to create a complete, accurate, and reliable listing of every helpline in every country, so a website can be launched to offer

digital resources that can be accessible to anti-violence movements around the world.

After information on the helplines has been collected, GNWS will work with all of the vetted and respected continental and national networks to gather and share regional listings. The next step will then begin with gathering data on local

shelters and rape crisis centers.

This is an ambitious endeavor, but the GNWS noted that the network has representatives from all over the world, including regional, national, and continental experts who can verify which local services are equipped with appropriate skills and resources.



▲ President Tsai Ing-Wen (center) poses for photos with Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-Chung (center left) and The Garden of Hope Foundation CEO Chi Hui-Jung (center right) at the opening of 4WCWS.

◀ "SHI DI," a performance comprising 22 unique vagina monologues shared by Taiwanese women, was staged at 4WCWS on Tuesday.

▼ Lin Wei-Yen, deputy director of the Ministry of Health and Welfare's Department of Protective Services, said at an international press conference promoting 4WCWS that the government will give every ounce of support to help NGOs like The Garden of Hope Foundation continue carrying out their good work. The Ministry of Health and Welfare is the government body responsible for drafting and monitoring policies regarding the prevention of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual harassment, as well as the implementation of other protection services in Taiwan.





## A Splendid Gala Dinner



The Garden of Hope Foundation CEO Chi Hui-Jung (eighth from the left) offers a toast to all the distinguished guests at the 4WCWS gala dinner. Chi encouraged all the guests to not only attend 4WCW events but also go sightseeing in Kaohsiung.

## 11/06 Upcoming Events

No.	Session	Organization	Time	Room
1	Men's Role in Ending Violence Against Women	Taiwan Men's Association	2019/11/6 09:30	304A
2	End early/child and forced Marriages in emergencies, disasters and humanitarian sittings	Youth Association for Development (YAD) Pakistan	2019/11/6 09:30	303D
3	Walk In Her Stride - Experiential Tour of Star Shelter	Singapore Council of Women's Organisations	2019/11/6 09:30	303A
4	'Sisters in siege' - The documentary of the shelter	The Ministry of Health and Welfare	2019/11/6 09:30	304B
5	Locker room talk: Supporting athletes and sports cultures to be arenas of gender-based violence prevention	Alberta Council of Women's Shelters	2019/11/6 09:30	304A
6	Count it to end it: Applying the NSVRC Taxonomy around the World	National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Urban Institute, and Uber Technologies	2019/11/6 11:15	301
7	Housing Innovations for Domestic Abuse Survivors	Peabody	2019/11/6 11:15	303D
8	Female Boxing meets Women's Rights - Gender empowerment and Social Movement Practice	BTSS Sports Stadium	2019/11/6 11:15	304B
9	Safe Connections: Smartphones for Survivors, Technology Safety Training for Shelter workers	WESNET Inc	2019/11/6 13:45	301
10	Using art to create dialogue and change the mainstream attitudes towards men's violence against women	Kvinnojouren Jamtland Sweden	2019/11/6 13:45	304A

## Meet the Authors

Today 15:15-15:30 @ Booth B14-15 (The Garden of Hope Foundation)



### Nina Smart

Based on her own experiences as a Romanian girl in Africa, Nina Smart's novel addresses the horrors of female genital mutilation. Today, Smart continues to work to eradicate FGM through non-violent methods.



### Choi Young-Mi

Meet Choi Young-Mi, the woman whose poem sparked the #MeToo movement in Korea. Despite continuing to receive backlash for speaking out, Choi continues to inspire through her poetry, having released What Will Not Come Again this year.