

WFWPI: DigitAll Innovation And Technology For Gender Equality

Moriko Hori
March 11, 2023



On March 11, 2023, Africa celebrated International Women's Day (IWD) under the theme, "DigitAll: Innovation and technology for gender equality." There were about 80 women leaders who participated in the regional virtual program. The event aimed to bring women together to raise awareness of the importance of empowering women through gaining skills and technical know-hows.

According to UNICEF in Africa, gender inequality profoundly impacts the lives of children. There is a direct correlation between a child's gender and the possibility of realizing their rights and enjoying their full potential, with social norms favoring boys over girls in most aspects of life. People across the region face the impact of gendered society.



Dr. Susan Kone, Vice President of WFP Africa, gave warm welcoming remarks saying, "Though, currently there are more and more women taking active roles in business, politics and education, we still have a long way to go. We have seen many cases of gender-based violence and many inequalities that we can point out. So we have to continue to advocate for gender equality. We thank the co-founders of WFWPI, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, for seeing the need to emphasize gender equality and empower women."

The guest speaker was Dr. Helen Ntonifor, a professor at the University of Dschang, Cameroon, and the President of the Management and National Transformation. She said that IWD is an opportunity to assess women's rights in Africa, especially in its patriarchal society. And to develop strategies for empowerment in order to correct inequalities between men in the areas where they persist. Of course, one of the areas where this inequality persists is in the digital world. Therefore, the theme of this year is digital innovation and technology for gender equality.



The content involved an explanation of how the world of information and communications technology (ICT) has generally been male-dominated. And despite efforts by government partners in development and civil society, the insertion of women and girls in the fields of ICT remains very low in most African countries and disparity persists. This situation needs to improve given that a woman is the heart of the home, where the man is the head, and both aspects need to be combined to work together to create a wholesome home. And women have to be empowered with digital or information and communication skills. Women are encouraged to learn how to use mobile phones and computers for various purposes. Literacy in ICT is not a luxury. It is for women of all ages.

"Poetry is a Next" was a touching poem about women by Mrs. Thulamsindo Rapotu. She said, "I am talking about the warrior queens of the world. The warrior queens who stood strong, despite hardships to end the poverty and misery of women. Fearless women, I'm saying: Rise up! Intensify your voice! You are our inspiration."

Mrs. Jacqueline Sou, a teacher at the International School of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, gave a presentation about women in the 21st century. She said, "Women play a crucial role to bring about true world peace. World peace needs to come from the family. When we have families that have peace and live peacefully, we will see world peace arising because the family is actually the cornerstone for world peace."

Mrs. Bernadette Fogue, the Education Director of WFWP Africa, gave the closing remarks with the words, "Today, we were reminded that globally, the number of women researching digitally using an internet connection and other advanced digital technologies that facilitate access to information and services remains low. We are glad to be here tonight in celebrating women and girls championing the advancement of transformative digital technology. Countries are more secure, more peaceful and more prosperous. We see stronger and more inclusive economic growth. Also, we see improvement everywhere in global peace and stability, when women are at the table where decisions are made."

Above all, the event was a program to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment. It was to inspire innovation and technological change in the digital age across the breadth and length of the African region.