

International Day of Family

Helsinki, Finland, 15. May 2014

Young Shik An



The Finnish chapters of UPF and WFP held a joint event on the theme: "The important role of a woman in the culturally diversifying Finland"

The first presenter was Mrs. Sirpa Asko-Seljavaara, a member of the City Assembly of Helsinki, a former MP, and a surgeon by profession. She told that women in the Finnish Parliament (one of highest percentages in the world) form a Women's Network, where they share fellowship and plan certain laws, i.e. in family related matters, together beyond party lines. In this way important laws supporting parenthood and child-care have been initiated. Through urbanization a very unfortunate decline of inter-generational connectedness has taken place. Many elderly people are living alone. Even though they are provided with basic physical care, their loneliness is often more agonizing than physical pain. Much of this problem could be solved by children caring more for their parents. Much of loneliness could be avoided also through voluntary work and fellowship among neighbours.

After having described some parliamentary measures taken to deal with those issues, she concluded by encouraging all to give more concern and care for each other.

The second presenter, Mrs. Melody Karvonen, an advisor in inter-cultural issues to public

administration and NGOs, talked on the role of family as the fundamental place for everyone to grow to humanity. She pointed out that parents are the primary educators of children esp. in character and morals, school is a partner with emphasis on education in knowledge and skills. Being a mother of four internationally married children and a grandmother of six, she lively confirmed the impact of a mother on the lives of many people.

Mrs. Karvonen, described that her family's Baha'i faith upholds the perspective of one world with humanity as its citizens.

In the following comments Mrs. Riitta Salin, a coordinator of a multicultural network, Moniheli, shared that in all cultures similar matters make people joyful, sad or happy. Good things can happen, if we don't destroy the sphere of goodness.

Mrs. Ogeh Eneh, a producer at an international culture center, said that everyone needs to set and claim the ground and space of her existence.

It is a matter of caring for our children and elderly citizen. The parental education cannot be outsourced.

The MC Mrs. Päivi Yoshizumi then invited the audience of about 50 persons to continue with sharing over refreshments.