

Human Rights in a Multicultural Society

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July 7, 2012



Session VI(A), Human Rights in a Multicultural Society, was chaired by Mr Jonathan Fryer, writer, lecturer and politician.

Madi Sharma, the UK Representative for the European Economic and Social Council, spoke on the topic of domestic violence, a problem that affects one in three women in the world. She opened with the thought provoking statement, “a woman is like a teabag, you don't know her value until you put her in hot water”. She then recalled the domestic violence she endured, for which during the course of the abuse, she felt personally responsible. She emphasised the need to fight for education and awareness building of this societal problem that transcends all races, religions and communities. She felt that domestic violence is psychological at first. Madi then gave an account of how she turned her situation around from the lowest point where she almost gave up. She began entrepreneurship by cooking a few somosas in her kitchen and selling them in order to buy more materials. Now she has grown her capacity and confidence to run six companies. “Entrepreneurs turn ideas into actions and build financial independence. Accountability and responsibility are extremely important. Be the change...and no excuses!”

Dr. Amiira Neff, Director of Terre des Femmes, Switzerland spoke about the human rights of migrants, who are excluded from decision making. She urged us to speak out against injustice and educate all of those within our sphere of influence as communication is fundamental to initiating change. Skills and knowledge are needed to make any sort of progress, and our socio-pedagogical understanding is terribly underdeveloped. Dr Neff also spoke about migration policy and the need to develop the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and a Charter for EU Citizens and Residents that will be of benefit to the 214 million international migrants numbered in 2010.

“Communities need to actively be inspired ... all stakeholders should be included, we need to review our present approaches”.