

Synergetic efforts work to end domestic violence in China

A one-and-half-day workshop was held in late June to evaluate the enforcement of programs to end domestic violence in China, after the launch of the country's first anti-domestic violence law ratified on March 1, 2016.

Jointly hosted by the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), UN Women and UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the forum attracted a number of representatives from China's judiciary, police, civil affairs and health departments at both central and grassroots levels.

The discussions focused mostly on the practice, experience and problems during the enforcement of the new law to eliminate violence, especially that generated by the old concept of gender inequality. According to a survey issued by ACWF, in 2010, 24.7 percent of married women in China had been subjected to spouse violence.

"Traditional thinking that domestic violence is a household affair has made it difficult for the victims to stand up for themselves," said Asa Torkelsson, policy advisor from the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of UN Women. "The anti-domestic violence law is a big step towards elimination of [such] violence."

Chen Xianming, deputy director of the Jingyuan Health and Family Planning Administration in the landlocked Gansu Province of western China, told the story of a local woman who had suffered maltreatment in family for not being able to conceive a boy.

The victim surnamed Zhang was found with bruises and injuries to her back and the inner parts of her thighs when she visited the local hospital, making the doctor suspect she was a victim of domestic violence. However, in trepidation, the woman was unwilling to disclose the cause of her injuries.

After reassurance and a bit of conversation, especially after explanation of the protection and the rights guaranteed to women offered by the law, Zhang started to reveal her misery. Due to having twice borne baby girls, her husband became dissatisfied and sought every opportunity to bully her.

By helping her to reveal her trauma, the local civil-affair professionals started to work on her husband, persuading him to change his stereotyped view of masculine superiority.

Her husband gradually accepted this view. In 2015, the family was recognized as the impoverished household receiving support and compensation in efforts to improve their livelihood. This year, they eventually shook off their poverty.

"Protecting women and girls from violence is not only a moral and human rights imperative, it is also critical to the economic and social progress of

nations,” said Dr. Babatunde Ahonsi, UNFPA China Representative. “As long as the dignity and well-being of half of humanity is at risk, then peace, security and sustainable development will remain out of reach.”

The yearlong implementation of the anti-domestic violence law has seen the issuance of some 680 protection orders based on concerns for the safety of victims, a preventive measure for sufferers to avoid reprisal attacks or continuous abuse.

“Our country, which is against domestic violence in any forms, is always calling for the equal, harmonious and polite relations among family members,” said Han Mei, the initiator of the protection order approach and judge of the Supreme People’s Court of China.

However, according to Han, as the evidence of domestic violence is hard to spot, some judges are reluctant to issue such an order, which should be handed out no later than 72 hours after the victims are subjected to violence. To better protect victims by means of the orders, Han advised people not to question the judgments unscrupulously, thus allowing judges to make a judgment with rational and independent thinking.

Huang Lei, the head of ACWF’s branch in Ningxiang, Hunan Province, said that domestic violence used to be prevalent in her town, which is home to around 34,000 people. “Even some officials in the teamwork for anti-domestic violence campaigns were found to be engaging in violence at home,” she said.

That is why training is being provided for professionals and the law explained to common people, especially the children, through mini-movies and social media, such as WeChat and QQ, to inculcate a sense of gender equality.

The unfair difference in status between men and women is often considered a root cause for domestic violence.

[The EU presses for higher and more EU taxes](#)

I was pleased to see in the latest Commission Paper on the future of EU Finances the EU has set out a number of options to pay for a more ambitious Union government. As they say, the level of political ambition must be aligned with the financial means to act. They look at both increasing the contributions from member states, and seeking new direct sources of tax revenue. If they just decide to carry on around the current level of commitment and integration they identify the need for more sources of revenue and the end to rebates. It is in line with many continental wishes for a full Union, and with what some of us predicted prior to the referendum. It is good the UK will not now be trying to stop them and will not be in line for

paying.

They also state that “The withdrawal of the UK will signify the loss of an important partner and contributor to the financing of EU policies and programmes. However, it also presents an opportunity for a vital discussion about the modernisation of the EU budget” – as the UK of course stood in the way of getting rid of rebates to own resource contributions.

They look forward to cancelling all rebates on contributions. They float the idea of directly acting common environmental and energy taxes. They look at taking a percentage of each country’s Corporation Tax and at a Financial Transactions Tax.

They consider auctions under the Emissions Trading System, emission premia for cars, and entry fees for travellers. They could tax electricity and motor fuel. They also expect to make more from seignorage on the Euro.

It will be interesting to see which of the five scenarios the EU signs up, ranging from doing less to doing much more together. It appears from the statements of Mrs Merkel and Mr Macron that the move will be towards doing more and towards greater political union. This will obviously entail accepting higher payments under the current system, allied to new sources of Union revenue from the list above.

Reflection Paper on the future of EU finances EU Commission June 28th 2017

[Xi arrives in HK for 20th return anniversary](#)

President Xi Jinping set foot on Hong Kong Thursday.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, is here to attend celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the motherland, and the inauguration of the fifth-term government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

He will also inspect the special administrative region.

This is Xi’s first trip to Hong Kong as Chinese president.

Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan were greeted by a group of high-ranking officials at the airport, including HKSAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and Chief Executive-elect Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor.

'One country, two systems' enriched by Xi

On his first trip outside Beijing after becoming general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee in late 2012, Xi Jinping laid flowers before a statue of late leader Deng Xiaoping on a hillside in Shenzhen, which neighbors Hong Kong.

Coming down the hill, a journalist from Hong Kong asked Xi, "General Secretary, do you have anything to say to your Hong Kong compatriots?"

Xi's answer was short but powerful, "Hong Kong will prosper."

Five years on, Xi's confidence has been translated into solid reality.

Two decades after Hong Kong was handed back to China under the "one country, two systems" formula, the region is doing better than ever.

Despite various prophets of doom, the Special Administrative Region (SAR) has remained a center of international finance, shipping and trade, and has been recognized as one of the world's freest and most competitive economies.

Strong support from central gov't

Aside from a business-friendly environment that encourages openness and productivity, the modern metropolis of over seven million people owes much of its economic success to closer links with the mainland.

Since 1997, the central government has made every effort to ensure Hong Kong's stability and prosperity as a special administrative region.

Basic necessities, including about 95 percent of live swine, 100 percent of live cattle, 90 percent of vegetables and 70 percent of flour on the Hong Kong market are supplied by the mainland.

The Guangdong-based Daya Bay Nuclear Power Plant provides a quarter of Hong Kong's annual electricity consumption, and some 70 to 80 percent of Hong Kong's fresh water comes from the mainland.

The central government also rendered timely and strong support to Hong Kong during the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the international financial crisis in 2008 and the SARS outbreak.

Hong Kong has been the largest source of overseas investment for the mainland, which has approved nearly 400,000 projects from Hong Kong investors worth over 900 billion U.S. dollars. Hong Kong is also the largest recipient of the mainland's overseas investment and its largest overseas financing platform.

"Hong Kong understands that its future and the mainland's are symbiotic and intertwined," 88-year-old Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing told Xinhua in a recent interview.

"'One country, two systems' epitomizes the creativity and the flexibility of Chinese leaders," Li said, adding that Xi's unwavering commitment to the principle is "strong and comforting."

Firm commitment

Indeed, on many occasions Xi has reaffirmed the principle of "one country, two systems."

"Twenty years of practice shows 'one country, two systems' is not only the best solution to the Hong Kong question left over from history, but also the best institutional arrangement for its long-term prosperity and stability since its return," Xi said on Monday this week when visiting an exhibition in Beijing profiling Hong Kong's achievements over the past two decades.

"We will continue to comprehensively and precisely implement the 'one country, two systems' principle, handle affairs strictly in line with the Constitution and the Basic Law of the HKSAR, and further promote the overall development of Hong Kong," Xi said.

The top Chinese leader's commitment to "one country, two systems" has been firm and consistent.

In his first meeting with Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying in December 2012 after taking the helm of the CPC, Xi promised "unchanged support" for the chief executives and governments of Hong Kong and Macao SARs in carrying out their legal duties.

The central government's adherence to the "one country, two systems" principle and the basic laws of the two SARs will not change, he said.

When meeting with incoming Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor in April this year, Xi stressed that the practice of the "one country, two systems" principle in Hong Kong is an unprecedented cause and needs to be advanced through fresh explorations.

The central government is determined to stick to the principles of "one country, two systems," "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy, he said.

That determination would not change or waver, said Xi, adding that full support would be given to Lam and the HKSAR government to carry out their duties in accordance with the law.

The Chinese president has backed up his words with action.

In 2015, the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong reached a Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) on service trade, to allow professionals from the SAR to enjoy greater access to the mainland's growing service market.

The Shanghai-Hong Kong and Shenzhen-Hong Kong stock connects allow international investors to trade stocks listed in Shanghai and Shenzhen via the Hong Kong exchange while mainland investors can trade Hong Kong stocks via Shanghai and Shenzhen exchanges. Along with the Bond Connect, approved in May this year, these arrangements have strengthened Hong Kong's role as an international financial center.

Plans for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will bring the SARs closer to the Pearl River Delta's manufacturing and innovation heartland. The Belt and Road Initiative will also boost Hong Kong's financial clout.

Land of optimism

Both the Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area development plan are perceived as new impetus for Hong Kong's development.

According to the central government's annual work report in 2017, China is planning to develop a city cluster in the Greater Bay Area, playing to the distinctive strengths of Hong Kong and Macao, and elevating their positions and roles in the mainland's development and opening up.

The Greater Bay Area will include the two SARs and nine cities in Guangdong Province, namely Dongguan, Foshan, Guangzhou, Huizhou, Jiangmen, Shenzhen, Zhaoqing, Zhongshan and Zhuhai.

Stressing the importance of the Belt and Road Initiative to Hong Kong, Leung said Hong Kong's enterprises could "take the same boat" with the mainland partners in sailing into the countries and regions involved in the initiative.

Hong Kong "can be very proud of itself" for its achievements during the past 20 years, said Eric Berti, consul general of France in the Hong Kong and Macao SARs.

France has about 800 companies in Hong Kong. There is a growing French community, which has doubled to over 20,000 people since 2008.

"It shows the attraction of Hong Kong," Berti said. "For foreign companies, especially French companies, it is very important to be able to settle here for the wide Chinese market."

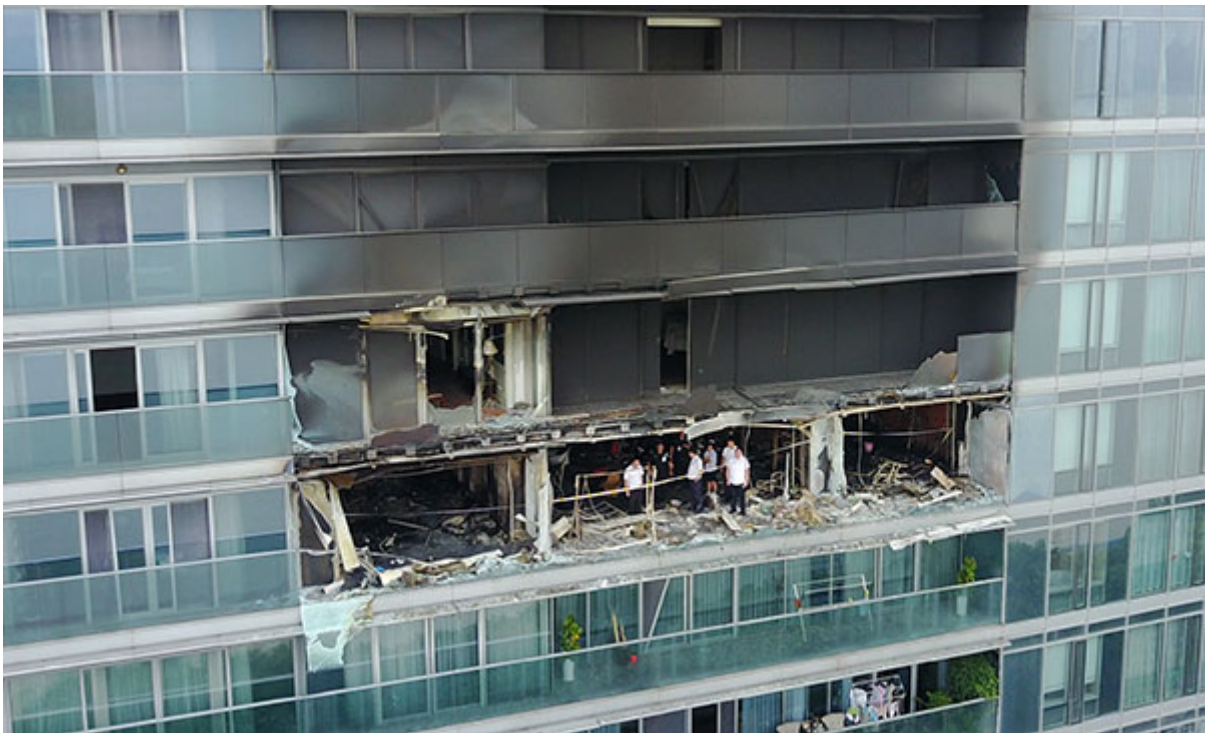
U.S. consul general to the Hong Kong and Macao SARs Kurt Tong, meanwhile, noted that the "one country, two systems" framework "allows Hong Kong to be special and different while still being part of China," adding that the people of Hong Kong are "prosperous" due to Hong Kong's "specialness."

"The unique form of governance in the HKSAR has been largely successful," Tong said.

"The EU is a firm supporter of the implementation of the 'one country, two systems' principle," Carmen Cano de Lasala, head of EU Office to Hong Kong and Macao, told Xinhua.

“We think it has been key to the development of Hong Kong, and we are confident that it would continue to remain a key element in the future development of Hong Kong,” Cano de Lasala said, adding that the “one country, two systems” principle “has been beneficial not only for Hong Kong, but also for the Chinese mainland, the region, and the rest of the world.”

Police to arrest babysitter who started fire



The apartment after the fire.[Dong Xuming/For China Daily]

Hangzhou police have asked the local procuratorate for permission to arrest a nanny accused of starting an apartment fire that killed the three children she was employed to care for, as well as their mother.

Mo Huanjing, 34, was charged on Wednesday with arson and theft in connection with the blaze that swept through the family's apartment in a high-end residential building on June 22.

The oldest child was 11 and the youngest was 6.

The case has generated heated discussion among the public because the family had good relations with the babysitter and any motivation is still unknown.

The husband, Lin Shengbin, was on a business trip when the fire happened. He said the babysitter had borrowed money from his wife, Zhu Xiaozhen, a couple of days before.

Born in Dongguan, Guangdong province, Mo had been working for the family for about a year.

A few days before the fire, she borrowed 100,000 yuan (\$14,700) from Zhu, claiming that she wanted to buy a house.

However, Mo, who police said is addicted to online gambling, didn't use the money to buy any property.

A former friend of Mo's, who went by the alias Meng Qi, said to Chinese media that Mo used to work for her, but was fired when she was reported by some employers to have stolen things.

"She took the things to pawnshops and used the money for gambling," Meng said.

After being questioned, police said, Mo admitted to having stolen watches and children's bracelets from Lin's family.

The fire started at around 5 am in the 18th-floor apartment and spread over about 50 square meters.

The young mother reportedly tried twice to call for help, but her calls were unanswered.

Zhu and her three kids were rescued from the building, but died shortly after in hospital.

Zhu's brother tried to enter the premises, but was pushed back by firefighters at the scene.

The babysitter claimed at first that she was sent downstairs by her employer to call the police, but after further investigation she admitted that she started the fire on purpose, police said.

The case has caused concern among the public about hiring babysitters as well as loopholes in background information and qualification reviews of babysitters at domestic companies.