

Anti-domestic violence workshop focuses on peripheral women

Disadvantaged women need to receive more attention and protection through the implementation of the country's first anti-domestic violence law ratified over a year ago, according to a workshop held on Aug. 9 in Beijing.

The workshop, jointly organized by UN Women, Equality NGO (Weiping) and Women's Network against AIDS (WNAC), allowed dozens of participants from UN agencies, governments, academic centers and grass-root organizations to exchange views about how to protect marginalized women suffering from AIDS, disabilities, abuse and violence.

According to Yuan Wenli, Secretary-General of WNAC, in China, almost half of the women living with HIV have undergone at least one form of domestic violence, the rate being about 23 percent higher than the number of ordinary women so affected.

"Disadvantaged women, such as, women living with HIV, are often more susceptible to violence and harm, and are more easily ignored," said, Julie Broussard, country program manager of UN Women China.

"To achieve the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment, stakeholders must pay close attention to disadvantaged groups, and speed up action."

Feng Yuan, co-founder of the charity organization Equality and Coordinator of the project funded by United Nations Trust Fund, said her research indicated that concerns over domestic violence have been showing signs of abating.

Pertinent reports and micro-blogs concerning domestic violence reached 1,454 during the first half this year, while, last year it was 4,186. The figure also fell from 615 to 376 in March year-on-year, when China's legislative and political advisory bodies held their annual meetings, known as the "two sessions."

China's anti-domestic violence law has empowered those threatened by domestic violence to file for court restraining orders within 48 hours. Once the order is mandated, it is effective for six months. Any violators of the order will face a fine of 1,000 yuan (US\$152.6) or detention of up to 15 days.

According to the Supreme People's Court, courts at all levels in the country had issued 1,284 orders by June, this year.

However, while briefing on the research, Feng revealed that the problems, such as, insufficient promulgation of gender equality in remote and underdeveloped regions, problems with victim privacy, unfriendly service attitudes and twisted views of domestic violence, still discourage women falling prey to domestic violence to seek legal protection.

WNAC representative Ming Mei said, research samples among women living near

the border between China's Yunnan Province and Myanmar have shown that those who found to be HIV positive probably undergo more domestic violence, which, to a certain extent, may result in severe and enduring depression.

According to Yuan, some victims of domestic violence have to put up with the bullying, abuse and stigma because they are not economically independent while the continuous insults and assaults have led to loss of personal dignity. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure they receive support, encouragement and hope.

Zhou Kai, National Program Officer of UNAIDS, said relevant authorities and organizations should form a concerted frontline to help disadvantaged women escape the shackle of domestic violence and prevent further bullying and abuse when they resort to public assistances. One of the services she exemplified is the buttressing of healthcare institutions.

"Doctors should ask more than simply prescribing medicines to people suspected of encountering domestic violence," Zhou explained.

Guo Ruixiang, Program Coordinator of UN Women in China, called for the Chinese government to accept major accountability by involving the entire society in enforcing the anti-domestic violence law to prevent the victims from being further hurt while speaking out to call for help.

[Military's public face hangs up flack jacket](#)

Senior Colonel Yang Yujun, who officially retired as a spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense on Wednesday, often peppered his briefings with humor and internet buzzwords.

Yang, 47, who joined the ministry's information office in 2010 and was appointed its director in 2015, stepped down due to the health issues of close family members.

Hailed by his colleagues as an independent and deep thinker, he also is regarded as someone who managed to connect with younger generations.

In 2013, during a news conference on the possibility of China's first aircraft carrier, the CNS Liaoning, taking part in a far-sea operation, Yang said the vessel was not a zhainan, a word commonly used by netizens that translates as "indoorsy man".

He also suggested in September that Ash Carter, then the US defense secretary, should not shuaiguo – a buzzword meaning to throw unwanted responsibility onto others – after the United States criticized China

following a nuclear missile test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"I love my uniform, and my job at the information office, and I have given my heart and soul throughout my military career," Yang told Global Times.

He received a thundering ovation from the journalists in attendance at his final news conference in April.

Over the years, Yang has answered countless questions from reporters on urgent and sensitive issues.

In addition to a monthly news conference, the information office is tasked with public relations, crisis management, media exchanges, helping to draft the national security white paper, and interacting with netizens through social media.

"My family has been very supportive for my work, but I have owed my family too much, and now they need me more than ever," Yang said. He said he has no other plans for the future, and would first spend his summer with his family.

Typically, senior government spokesmen and women go into business or teaching after retirement.

Senior Colonel Wu Qian, 44, has been appointed as the new director of the ministry's information office. He was previously deputy director and has been a spokesman since 2015.

He graduated from the People's Liberation Army Institute of International Relations in 1995 and has also been a counselor at the ministry's foreign affairs office before joining the information office.

[Pandas safe after latest earthquake to hit Sichuan](#)

When a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit Jiuzhaigou County, a popular tourist area in southwest China's Sichuan Province, on Tuesday night, the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda was quick to confirm that the staff and pandas at its base, 400 kilometers from epicenter, were safe.

However, the earthquake was near a panda migration corridor and might have an impact on the wild population in the area, said Gu Xiaodong, deputy director of a local wildlife protection station.

Giant pandas live mainly in the mountains of Sichuan and neighboring Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. Due to habitat loss and low birthrates, only about 1,800

still live in the wild, while some 400 live in captivity.

Panda reserves cover about 60 percent of their natural habitat and are home to 70 percent of the wild population. Most of the habitat is in Sichuan, where earthquakes and habitat fragmentation have affected breeding patterns.

Secondary disasters, such as screes and barrier lakes, also change the habitat, cut off food sources and increase risks for the wild population.

In May, 2008, an 8.0-magnitude earthquake damaged Sichuan's Wolong Panda Reserve. Most of its pandas and staff were transferred to another facility in Ya'an, 140 kilometers from provincial capital Chengdu.

That facility fell victim when a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit Lushan County on April 20, 2013. The center reported minimal damage and its 61 pandas were uninjured.

A new panda breeding and research center, sponsored by the Hong Kong government, has been built on less rugged terrain in the Wolong reserve, with the capacity to accommodate 80 captive pandas.

Last year, the provincial government put forward a plan for a 27,134 square kilometer national park that would unite the isolated habitats. It aims to restore migration corridors to link 67 panda reserves on six isolated mountain ranges. It will allow wild pandas to mate with those from other areas to enrich their gene pool.

[Former Tianjin mayor pleads guilty to bribery](#)

Former acting Party chief and mayor of Tianjin Huang Xingguo pleaded guilty at a court in Hebei province on Wednesday. He was charged with accepting bribes worth more than 40 million yuan (\$6 million), according to the Shijiazhuang intermediate people's court.

According to an indictment by the Shijiazhuang people's procuratorate, he used his position for the benefit of others through promotions and obtaining land for projects, then accepted bribes valued at more than 40 million yuan, either himself or through family members, from 1994 to 2016.

Over a 22-year period, he served as Party chief of Taizhou city, Zhejiang province; vice-governor of Zhejiang; Party chief of Ningbo in Zhejiang; and mayor and acting Party chief of Tianjin.

At the court hearing, Huang made a final statement and pleaded guilty.

In September, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the country's

top anti-graft watchdog, launched an investigation into Huang for “serious violations of Party discipline”.

The commission said he severely violated the Party’s rules and code of conduct, failed to follow major decisions made by central leaders and resisted an investigation by anti-graft inspectors.

In January, he was expelled from the Party and removed from his administrative post.

The court will issue a verdict at a later date.

Baidu Map vows to end sex business trick

Responding to media reports about the use of Baidu digital maps to facilitate prostitution, Baidu Map pledged to strictly examine and update its data.

Legal Daily on Wednesday generated wide public attention with a report about a loophole in the mapping service that was exploited by underground entertainment venues involved in prostitution. The venues registered “points of interest” on the maps using false information, the report said.

A POI, or point of interest, is a specific location that someone may find useful or interesting on a digital map. After approval, any entity may show their location on the map free of charge.

Organizing prostitution is illegal under China’s Criminal Law, and those who recruit, hire, lure or force people to provide sexual services are typically subject to five years to life in prison.

Anyone who hires a prostitute or who offers sex services can be punished under the Security Administration Punishment Law, up to a maximum of 15 days’ detention and a fine of up to 5,000 yuan (\$749).

According to the report, underground entertainment venues registered fake locations on Baidu Map to avoid the police. If police go to the mapped location, they will find nothing.

The venues leave valid mobile phone numbers for customers to make contact. When customers call, they are given another address where sex services are available.

“A thorough examination was carried out immediately after we learned of the media reports and we removed all the POIs in question,” said Baidu Map in a statement on Wednesday.

People usually search for a place on the map and use the navigation service to reach it. Baidu Map charges a fee to push an entity to the top of a long list of a search result.

The report by Legal Daily cited an unidentified pimp as saying that one search optimization costs between dozens of yuan and a few hundred based on where it falls in the list.

The venue the pimp worked for paid Baidu Map 20,000 yuan every month for the optimized search result, the report said.

The report was published one year after a national debate over another Baidu business promotion model. A 21-year-old computer science student with cancer died in April last year after undergoing an experimental therapy that was heavily promoted by Baidu, China's leading internet search engine. Baidu has about a 70-percent share of the Chinese search-engine market.

Although there is no suggestion that the student's death was caused or accelerated by the treatment he received, it was later revealed to be an experimental procedure that was not cleared for clinical use.

The Cyberspace Administration of China, the internet watchdog, investigated the student's death and released a statement in May last year demanding that Baidu restructure its listing services.