EAST-WEST DIALOGUE 2010:  
Gender Equality and Development

When: 25th, 26th and 27th October 2010

Where: Casa Àsia’s Headquarters (25th, 26th in the morning and 27th)
Saló de Cent. Barcelona’s Town Hall (26th in the afternoon)

Round Tables:
Gender Equality and Development
- Gender-based Violence and Health
- Political Participation and Economic Development
- Education and Culture for Development

Partner Institutions:
UNESCO, United Nations Association of Spain (ANUE), with the support of the Barcelona City Council and with the financial support of the Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation (AECID).

THE ROLE OF UNA-SPAIN – Due to the successful participation obtained by UNA-Spain in the last fourth editions of the Casa Asia East-West dialogue, and because of the link that the UNA-Spain creates between their young C’MUN participants and the Dialogue; it is an honour to participate in this year’s edition. So, about 40 university students selected by UNA-Spain from their solid youth network, the majority of them participants of C’MUN 2010 (from the 21st until the 24th April), coming from all over the world, mentioning specially the ones coming from Asian countries, will take part in the Dialogue. The students will debate the previous days and at the same time that the event is taking place about the same themes of the Dialogue. Then, they will contribute, having a representative on each one of the three round tables of debate, ending up their conclusions that will be presented in the Casa Asia Dialogue.

UNA-Spain Site (C’MUN 2010) web page: http://www.anue.org/ca/cmun
East-West Dialogue web page: http://www.casaasia.es/dialogo
TOPICS OF DEBATE

Gender-based Violence and Health

In the last few years, gender-based violence has been more and more considered as one of the prevalent abuses to human rights and a crucial problem in public health.

Do you think that we should consider gender-based violence as an international public health issue? Should awareness be raised at all levels in the health sector of the importance of gender-based violence?

If so, what could be the best way to address the issue? Monitoring the implementation of policies? Creating programmes and protocols within the health sector could be a solution? Do you think that it is necessary to create a special department in hospitals with specialized health staff to deal with cases of gender-based violence?

Moreover, gender discrimination is evident in low access of women to health care. For instance, in Pakistan and India girls between the ages of 1 and 5 are 30%–50% more likely to die than boys. Could it be possible to change those data? If so, how it could be changed? Should international measures be taken? Or would it be better that decisions are taken nationally or even locally?

There are some countries where gender-based violence is accepted and permitted and is up to each family’s privacy. Do the effects of gender violence involve the welfare of families, communities and societies? If so, do you think that international institutions should act against gender-based violence in those countries where is not condemned? What could be the best strategy to face this delicate issue internationally? How institutions should work when women who suffer gender-based violence do not admit it? Are normally women, above all in developing countries, aware of their rights? What about those women that are frustrated as they use the legal way to alleviate their situation without any results? Do you think that the actual measures are enough to stop the problem? What would be your suggestions to improve the legislation that regulates gender-based violence palliation? Do you think that an international legislation on the question could be possible?

What about men? How they could participate in the prevention of gender-based violence? If they were more involved in, for example, associations against this violence, do you think that the cases of gender-based violence could be reduced?

Political Participation and Economic Development

Do you agree with the affirmation that “inequality brings with it significant social and economic costs”?

It is clear that an important factor that hinders overcoming inequalities is women’s lack of voice in all aspects of decision making, the participation of women in the economic and political issues of countries is normally much lower than the participation of men. Is tackling inequalities important for the growth the economy of countries?
If we don’t act soon to address these severe disparities, are we threatening the future long-run growth of the poorest regions, where gender-based discrimination is so strong?

The World Bank estimates that eliminating the wage and employment differences between men and women could lead to a 6% increase in gross domestic product. And not only women benefit from tackling gender inequality; it is widely recognized that women use additional income to feed, clothe, and educate their families.

Is growing inequality between men and women a divisive factor in politics?

Are countries where inequality is lower able to translate growth into lifting people out of poverty more quickly than countries where inequality is higher?

On the side of the measures already taken, there’s a quite common one: positive discrimination towards women in some labour areas or politics. What do you think about it? It is justified? Should be encouraged or promoted? Regardless of your answer, what should it be, in your opinion, the policies to promote women’s participation in politics?

Aside from economical, development matters, do you think access to work opportunities and political participation of women, could be raised as human rights issues?

As a general question, how do you see, as youth, the access to the labour market? And young women access to it?

Do you think the political image of women in society is the same of men? Why?

**Education and Culture for Development**

Many people –especially girls- are still excluded from education, and many more are enrolled in school but learning too little to prepare them for 21st-century job markets. In some countries, access to the secondary and higher education that helps create a skilled and knowledgeable labour force continues to be limited; even where access is not a problem, the quality of the education provided is often low.

Improving the quality of education, providing more vocational training, developing job-creating programs, and removing obstacles to women’s entrepreneurship can help alleviate the high rates of female unemployment.

Besides improving the quality of education, there’s also a crucial issue. We know that advertisement and media portrays a very particular image of women –a topic that should be analysed and discussed-. But do you think education is perpetuating some specific gender roles in society? If so, do you think is acceptable that education is still different in some countries depending on your gender? It is also acceptable to have different concepts of gender equality that are translated into education depending on the country?

Is culture, tradition, religion an obstacle sometimes to achieve gender equality?