

## Tzu Chi Takes Part in International Women's Day at U.N.

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This year, for the first time, the foundation took part in events to mark International Women's Day, which fell on March 8. The United Nations held a series of events from March 1 to 12, to celebrate the day, with the theme "Equal rights, equal opportunities: progress for all". It invited Tzu Chi to participate in a parallel event that focused on women's health at U.N. headquarters in New York.

It gave the foundation an opportunity to express its views on gender issues and to make friends with other NGOs. "It is a historic moment for us," said volunteer Chou Yuru. "We were never invited before to celebrate International Women's Day at the U.N. But this year, finally, we are here at a parallel event about women's health with other NGOs."



It used the event to spread the foundation's ideas. When participants arrived, they were given a re-usable cup, which illustrates its concern for the environment. A doctor was on hand to provide health information for women. The volunteers also took the opportunity to introduce the different missions. "We introduced our Haiti relief efforts and shared the situation of women and children in Haiti," said volunteer Zeng Cihui. "We also introduced our prayer video and how to bring relief to disasters with compassion and kindness in our heart."

The participants were impressed by Tzu Chi's ideas of charity, humanity and universal love. "I am hoping that we will be able to do more in the future," said Julie from Gray Panthers. "We have had experiences together in the past that revolved around environmental issues, when we had our grand green and you had your wonderful re-cycling effort." To be part of such a U.N. effort is recognition of Tzu Chi's international efforts. By sharing experiences and exchanging ideas, these women are helping to make the world a better place.