

Tzu Chi Attends U.N. Conference in Australia

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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For the first time, Tzu Chi foundation attended the 63rd U.N. Annual Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations Conference as a [NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC](#). The conference was held in Melbourne, Australia from August 30 to September 1. It was an excellent opportunity to share the experience of the foundation to the 1,400 representatives from 70 countries.

The main theme of the conference was “Advance Global Health: Achieve the Millennium Development Goals”. The foundation was represented by volunteers from many countries, who made their principal theme environmental conservation and treasuring water resources. They set up a stall to illustrate the foundation’s international relief work. They gave each visitor an ‘environment bag’, with information about the work of the volunteers, and explained to them the installation of water cisterns in Gansu, western China and the Angke river project in Jakarta, Indonesia. One participant said that he was especially moved by the Angke project: “you are doing a wonderful job, in providing practical help. You have cleaned the river and build new homes where the residents could be resettled,” he said. An Australian monk, a follower of Tibetan Buddhism named Freeman, said that what Tzu Chi was practicing in Asia and the world was what the Buddha wanted his followers to do: “Today I have seen with my own eyes that Tzu Chi is doing what we have always wanted to do.” A man named Greg Smith, who practices Yoga and often visits the Ganges river in India, said that it was as polluted as the Angke: “I hope that an efficient Buddhist charity can do the same with the Ganges and clean it up in the same way.”



On the afternoon of the last day, the foundation hosted a workshop entitled ‘Integrated Approach in Achieving Global Health and Environmental Sustainability’. In his address to the workshop, Dr. Lin Junlong, the head of the foundation’s medical mission, moved the delegates. They saw footage of him planting rice, children doing recycling and doctors riding bicycles on their way to attend meetings. He explained to them the foundation’s technology in turning plastic bottles into blankets for international relief – this sparked warm applause.



He used many photographs to show the efforts taken by the foundation’s hospitals to saving

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energy and water resources. He replied to a questioner that the cost of creating such a 'green hospital' was higher than of a conventional one but that this was part of a commitment to the environment and the world. After the workshop, the volunteers gave the participants an 'environmental bag', with reusable cup and chopsticks. Dr. Lin also gave one of the recycled blankets to a doctor from Imamia Medics International who gave a presentation on the Pakistan flood disaster; he promised to give it to one of the flood survivors.

Next year's conference will be held in Germany. The event this year was an excellent opportunity for the volunteers to present the work of the foundation.