Living in Hiroshima

Director of UNITAR Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific: Nassrine Azimi (48)

Born in Iran, Swiss citizen. Worked as the Deputy to the Executive Director of the UNITAR Head Office (Geneva), Secretary to the UNITAR Board of Trustees, and Director of the UNITAR New York office, following these positions, in July 2003, she became the first Director of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific.

The first thing said, with shining eyes, was “It is truly meaningful to have a UNITAR office in Hiroshima.” It has been four years since the UNITAR Hiroshima office was established. The Director expressed her desire that UNITAR’s participants from many countries should be able to appreciate the “Hiroshima Effect” emanating from this A-bombed city in order to renew their overall motivation towards peace. Established in 1965, UNITAR is a training organisation for diplomats and government officials of UN member states. The Hiroshima office covers 52 countries in the Asia-Pacific region and
is the 3rd UNITAR office after the head office in Geneva and another office in New York. Up until now there have been various workshops held at the Hiroshima office, including on Post-Conflict Resolution and the preservation of World Heritage Sites, with over 1100 participants from 40 countries. After explaining that UNITAR is perhaps “a small university”, the Director stated that Hiroshima is a city that has risen beautifully from the ashes of the atomic bombing and has many facilities such as the Peace Memorial Park and the Peace Boulevard that speak to the heart. Therefore during training in Hiroshima participants are able to gain not only knowledge but also learn with their hearts. Amongst the participants, many come from developing countries which have many problems. They are hopefully returning to their home countries with a belief that “We can do it too.” The results so far have been encouraging.

Born in Iran, the Director speaks several languages. She wanted to “…perform work that would be beneficial to the people of the world”, and using these abilities, she became a program coordinator for UNITAR’s Environmental Training Programme in 1991.

Until now the Director has visited 50 countries and Japan (in Hiroshima) is the ninth country in which she has resided. Laughingly, she states that “I am as comfortable in Hiroshima as a fish in water. The past, present and future are blended into a beautiful cityscape, I am moved by the atmosphere. In addition, I would like to express continuing gratitude to Hiroshima citizens, who lend support to us in such a friendly manner,” she says with a smile.

The office is located on the 5th floor of the Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry Building which has the Atomic Bomb Dome right before it. “The office is a precious space which makes me think.” Then, after looking at the scenery beyond the window, the Director emphasized “I want to make our programs more fruitful and I want the peace-aspiring voice of UNITAR to spread from the Hiroshima that I love.” In her spare time, she enjoys viewing architectural structures around Hiroshima Prefecture.

**Wendy Hiroshima, 1 December 2007 (N73)**