

## Soon-Young Yoon, USA

### Chair of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women

**On the importance of education:** “I was born in North Korea and we were refugees out of North Korea to the US and the only thing my family carried with them was their education. The entire family had really focused on their education their whole lives. I had been brought up to believe that education was a privilege and something I had to give back.”

**On attaining a PhD:** “I was fresh out of school and was advising government on one of the programmes for women. There was respect for me... and I think it has partly to do with my doctorate. It’s really helpful to have a doctorate degree as a woman. In any case, I’m a believer that you should get as many degrees as you want because that part of your life shapes your opportunity.”



**On facing challenges:** “I am one of these people who see challenges as problems. It is hard for me to differentiate between a challenge and a problem. I think about a way to respond or how to fix the problem. I like a challenge, particularly if I learn something from it.”

**On being confident:** “Confidence is not something that is given to you; you have to decide to have it. I do not believe in confident and unconfident. I believe in people who make decisions to be confident. So you make a decision and you say ‘I am going to face this situation in a confident way’, and that is how you gain confidence.”

**Lessons:** “When people ask me about working in the UN, or for the UN in any fashion, I always advise finding a skill to offer that the UN needs. Find something that they need and develop it and use your education to hone that skill. Nobody needs goodwill. They need people who can contribute something to them. If you want to prepare yourself to work for the UN, find a skill that they need. It is also about getting experience, so that you can actually contribute positively.”

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