

National and International Obligations of the Kyrgyz Republic in Achieving Gender Equality

Gender Equality is a priority obligation of the Kyrgyz Republic that is enshrined in the Universal Convention of Human Rights of the United Nations, confirmed in declarations and international obligations, and specifically highlighted in relation to the issues of peace and security in the resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations.

In the implementation of the adopted international and national commitments, Kyrgyzstan regularly submits periodic reports on CEDAW implementation to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In February 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic defended its 4th periodic report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

In order to advance the role of women in the promotion of peace and security, in 2013 the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the National Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325.

The National Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic 2013-2017, developed on the initiative of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, contains a separate section on family policy and gender development. The similar measures are also integrated into the Transition to Sustainable Development Programme 2013-2017.

The base of the legal mechanisms of gender policy is formed by such legal instruments as the Law of the KR “On State Guarantees of Equal Rights of Men and Women” and the Law of the KR “On the Social and Legal Protection Against Family Violence”.

In 2012 the Kyrgyz Republic adopted, for the first time, a long-term document – the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2020 – in which the following development priorities were defined among others: women in the economy; education for girls and women; access to justice and political equality.

The key priorities in gender policy implementation are set out in the KR National Strategy and remain relevant for implementation within the framework of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action beyond 2015, as well as for the strengthening of the gender agenda within the framework of the Goals of the Sustainable Development beyond 2015.

The following priorities in achieving gender equality are defined in the KR National Strategy:

1. Economic empowerment of women. This will be achieved through flexible work by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on gender initiatives aimed at the strengthening of the culture of equality. The Government will strive to become a model employer, and will pay more attention to gender aspects of the provision to the population of state and municipal services. One of the aspects of the economic empowerment of women will include remunerative work as well as acknowledgement by the Government of such issues such as housework and childcare, including childcare for children with disabilities, as socially significant. The combination of changes in credit policies and widening access for business-women to credit facilities will substantially increase the economic independence of women.

2. Establishment of a “Functional Education” system. This system based on the principles of “education through life” will lead to essential changes in education, improve students’ achievements, and, for the adult population, will increase access to new labour markets. Sharing of family responsibilities, including parenting, will become more equal, resulting in improvement of quality of life in all groups of the population. The state of public healthcare will also change with reduced maternal and infant mortality and improvements in men’s health. Implementation of the country’s obligations to provide education on the sexual and reproductive rights of women of all ages, especially teenage girls, is seen as a guarantee of women’s sexual, bodily and reproductive autonomy, free of stigma, violence, coercion and discrimination including the practice of early and forced marriages.

Through the implementation of the functional education system, amendments and optimization of the employment pattern shall be achieved. A significant part of the

population will be employed in positions connected with the advancement of new information and communications technologies.

3. Eradication of gender discrimination and increased access to justice for women. During this period, the implementation of system changes in the areas of management and public attitudes towards gender problems is proposed. A culture of intolerance towards gender discrimination will become a socially meaningful norm affecting all areas of life including work ethics and the media.

Gender discrimination and violence prevention measures should be extended not only to women and girls, as historically vulnerable groups compared to men and boys, but also to those groups which, due to their gender identity, age and/or disabilities do not fit into their socially prescribed gender roles.

4. Promotion of gender parity in decision-making and development of women's political participation. Women's right to participate in decision-making processes should become acceptable not only at the level of official institutions where it is also supported by special measures, but also in the sphere of private life. New degrees of freedom should widen women's access to politics and governance at all levels, which will make women's contribution to the development of the country really visible and tangible. And although implementation of these rights in practice will require longer work for the improvement of public conscience and governance system, the conditions themselves in the fight for these rights should change by 2020.

For the purposes of further implementation of the KR National Strategy for the achievement of gender equality by 2020, and due to the completion of the National Action Plan for 2012-2014, a draft **2015-2017** National Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality has now been developed.

One of the main priorities in this draft is the promotion of gender parity in decision-making and women's political participation; in this draft, the following major goals were defined:

1. Integration of gender-sensitive principles into human resources policy at the state and municipal levels;

2. Informational support for promoting women's political participation and leadership;
3. Implementation of a social order mechanism for supporting women's political leadership at all levels and promoting female leaders' potential.

Therefore, the joining of the Kyrgyz Republic to the initiative "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality" represents a unique opportunity for the promotion of gender equality, and improved rights and opportunities for women.