



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

REPORT

BY

Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

on behalf of

The Ministry of Women's Affairs

National Report

**on the implementation of the agreed conclusions on 'Women's empowerment and
the link to sustainable development'**

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NEW YORK

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan prioritizes women's empowerment and sustainable development throughout its work to serve the Afghan people. The Government has taken a number of concrete steps to implement the agreed conclusions on 'Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development'. The following report elaborates on the efforts by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other parts of the Government to implement the agreed conclusions, especially during the period from March 2019 to the present. The report elaborates on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's empowerment and sustainable development and the prospects for a gender-responsive recovery.

To strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has drafted and approved a policy for the protection of women in war and emergency situations, and a policy for women's access to the right to inheritance and property, with its implementation plans and memoranda.

A number of important steps have been taken to bolster women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making. Noteworthy actions include:

1. Symposiums on women's empowerment have been organized in the zones of the country, women's problems have been identified and received, a symposium resolution, a report, and an implementation plan has been prepared;
2. Gender-related materials have been presented and included in the agendas of the Cabinet, the Council of Ministers, the High Economic Council and the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers;
3. In order to coordinate, prevent duplication and bring women's economic activities under one umbrella, cooperation has been established with the Executive Committee for Women's Economic Empowerment, and policies have been prepared and the groundwork has been laid for its implementation;
4. Women's empowerment has increased through priority programs for women's economic empowerment;

To empower the next generation of women leaders, the Government has promoted the following education initiatives:

1. 20-50 percent of poor girls and women have been introduced to existing discounts to attend private universities;
2. Advertising campaigns in Kabul districts have been organized in cooperation with UNDP to raise awareness in the field of literacy;

3. A campaign to increase girls' enrollment in schools and to continue their education in remote villages and towns in the provinces was organized in cooperation with the National Commission for UNESCO;
4. Workshops for capacity building of female school teachers were organized in cooperation with the Justice Sector Support Program;
5. Workshops and publicity campaigns on narcotics and breast cancer in 18 provinces have been organized for students and teachers in schools in the provinces and districts in cooperation with the Health Department of the Empowerment Department;
6. More than 6,000 forms about management and leadership development has been distributed to students of grades 12, 14 and university students to stimulate job creation;
7. The curriculum of schools and higher education has been revised to include gender;
8. Literacy workshops have been organized to attract students to literacy courses;
9. There have been proposals for girls who have dropped out of school to resume their education at the advice of their families.

The Government has further put in place macroeconomic, labour and social policies place that promote full and productive employment and decent work for women, including through the response to COVID-19. The use of economic opportunities to increase women's income has, for example, been paved through the development of women's businesses and exhibitions of women's economic products to introduce, sell and find market for their economic products. The fight against coronavirus is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Departments within the Ministry are helping the poor to coordinate and focus on food distribution to normalize economic activities. Mask made by women tailors have been purchased and distributed by the government. The Ministry is also working with other economic agencies to combat the negative effects of the pandemic on women's economic activities. Further actions are being taken to collect and analyze sex disaggregated data.

Overall, COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the lives of many Afghan women and the Government is taking direct action to minimize adverse effects. The outbreak of coronavirus has, for example, limited women's access to maternity health services. There has, however, been no reduction in the provision of legal services in the public sector. To address challenges faced by civil servants, the Government has instituted a policy in which the majority of civil servants have worked in two shifts and service workers between the ages of 58 and 64 have worked from home. The Government has also increased the salaries of health workers. Lastly, a proposal to encourage women and girls to exercise has been prepared and arranged so that women and girls can be protected from infectious diseases while engaging in sports.

To support women's and civil society organizations, the Government is working within the framework of the priority programs of the Citizenship Pact, in which 50% of the beneficiaries are women, as well as the councils that have been established at the local and city level. Their activities have been carried out normally by maintaining health measures.