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# **Information on the Implementation of the Agreed Conclusions on ‘Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development’ (Republic of Korea)**

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## **1. What measures have been taken to strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

The Korean government has introduced the gender impact analysis scheme to assess the impact of the government's major policies on gender equality. Under the Gender Impact Analysis and Assessment Act, the gender impact analysis is applied to laws and regulations (enacted and amended), mid- to long-term plans under laws and regulations, and other major policies and projects implemented by the central government and local governments (metropolitan city/province, city/county/district, education offices in metropolitan city and province). In 2019, a total of 29,395 analyses were conducted, yielding 8,561 policy-improvement tasks.

Previously, sexual violence, domestic violence, and sex trafficking, punishment and victim protection and support were set out in respective acts. However, with the emergence of diverse forms of violence against women, such as stalking and dating violence, the Framework Act on the Prevention of Violence against Women was enacted and was enforced in December 2019 in an effort to provide comprehensive support for victims.

Under the act, the government is seeking to form a committee on the prevention of violence against women as a private-public consultation group, and has laid out the Basic Plan for Preventing Violence against Women (2020-2024), in accordance with which government agencies have put in place their implementation plans for 2020.

As part of efforts to strengthen the groundwork to implement policies designed to eradicate violence against women, the government provides police officers and staff members of other investigation agencies with preventive training on secondary victimization and conducts fact-finding investigations on violence against women.

In addition, a Gender Equality Policy Officer was placed in each of the eight major ministries\* as of May 7, 2019. The officers held 10 consultative meetings while the chairs of each ministry’s Gender Equality Council also organized meetings (in April 2019 and May 2020) to respond to issues in each sector across society in a systematic and specialized manner.

*\* Ministry of Education; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of National Defense; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism; Ministry of Health and Welfare; Ministry of Employment and Labor; Supreme Prosecutors' Office; Korean National Police Agency*

## **2. What actions and investments have been made for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women?**

The Korean government has strengthened the gender mainstreaming initiative by incorporating the findings of the gender impact analysis into gender responsive budgeting. For instance, if the findings suggest a task for policy improvement, a gender responsive budget proposal needs to be drawn up for this task. The gender responsive budgeting is intended to analyze the impact of a budget on both men and women and then allocate and execute the budget to promote gender equality. A total of 31,796 billion won (35 agencies, 284 programs) was allocated for the gender responsive budget for 2020.

In addition, the Gender Inequality Fund has been established to realize gender equality, increase participation in gender equality, promote a gender-equal culture, protect women's rights and welfare, carry out projects to support families, including multicultural families, assist non-profit corporations and civic groups, and implement international development and cooperation projects.

*※ The scale of the Gender Equality Fund (operation expenses) : ('18) 225.5 billion won → ('19) 370.9 billion won → ('20) 426.4 billion won*

## **3. What steps have been taken to bolster women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development?**

The government has put in place the Plan to Enhance Women's Representation (2018-2022) in the Public Sector to take the lead in supporting women to advance into decision-making positions in the public sector. This plan has already seen women's participation rates hitting a record high in key public sectors, contributing to gradually cracking the glass ceiling.

*\* (Women Directors in central agencies) (Dec. 2016) 13.5% → (Dec. 2017)14.8%→(Dec. 2018)17.5%→(Dec. 2019) 20.8%*  
*(Women Executives in public organizations) (Dec. 2016) 12.6% → (Dec. 2017) 11.8% →(Dec. 2018) 17.9% → (Dec. 2019) 21.1%*  
*(Female government committee members) (Dec. 2016) 37.8% → (Dec. 2017) 40.2%→(Dec. 2018) 41.9%→(Dec. 2019) 43.0%*

In addition, a database of competent and professional women in all sectors has been

created (an accumulated total of 120,072 women as of 2019) so that it can be used to recommend suitable candidates to positions such as government committee members and executives of public organizations in order to strengthen the foundation for improving women's representation in senior positions.

To spread such efforts to the private sector, the government has launched an awareness-raising campaign and signed the Partnership for Gender Balance and Inclusive Growth with ten business associations in March 2018. The government also signed a voluntary agreement with businesses to encourage them to set their own goals to increase women's representation and work to achieve their goals. As of July 2020, 19 agreements have been signed with 71 businesses (as of the date of signing), and consulting services have been extended to companies to promote gender balance.

To help women advance as leaders in organizations, the government provides capacity-building programs designed to nurture women leaders, such as capacity-building programs tailored for different career stages. Also, special regional women leaders programs have been developed and operated with regional base organizations. Through these programs, education opportunities were provided to a total of 46,660 women as of 2019.

Also, KOICA, Korea's grant aid agency, has set up the gender equality strategy under its Mid-Term Sectoral Strategy (2016-2020), aiming to establish 'Society with gender equality and women's dignity'. As part of the strategy, in community development projects targeting the ASEAN countries, women are appointed as chairpersons of the steering committees of income-generation sub-projects and they are provided with leadership training courses and education on financial literacy.

**4. What macroeconomic, labour and social policies have been put in place that promote full and productive employment and decent work for women, in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's employment and economic rights and independence?**

The government has continued to strive to accurately assess the status of women's employment by gathering opinions on-site and holding relay discussions. The Women's Re-employment Centers provide career-interruption prevention services for women in the workforce and temporarily eased criteria for applying for the centers' internship projects after the outbreak of COVID-19. The centers are also offering new vocational training programs in the areas that are expected to grow and lead to job creation following the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the everyday life disinfection sector, for those who are seeking reemployment.

As many young people don't even have employment opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Employment and Labor has launched the youth work experience initiative in many sectors, including women-led sectors.

In addition, recognizing the importance of promoting gender equality in the labor market, the government has been discussing a range of measures to boost women's economic participation with relevant ministries via an inter-ministerial consultation group and other platforms in a bid to respond to women's unemployment preemptively.

**5. What response and recovery measures to the COVID-19 pandemic have been taken to improve and expand social protection for women (e.g., healthcare coverage, unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, paid parental leave, maternity benefits, pensions, income support such as cash transfers)?**

In Korea, 60% of small-scale businesses are run by women, and the Government has established a Job Stabilization Fund in order to support their personnel expenses and increase job security in the response to the COVID-19 crises.

Also given that postnatal care centers\* are highly vulnerable to infectious diseases, Korea has created COVID-19 Response Guidelines that can be applied to these centers and promoted the guidelines to postnatal care centers around the nation.

*\* Care facilities for pregnant women, infants, and children, who all have a significantly weak immune system*

**6. What actions have been taken to expand the availability and affordability of care services to address the increase in unpaid care and domestic work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., care subsidies, paid leave)?**

As schools and daycare centers are closed and schools delayed the spring semester due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Korean government is providing increased care services for working parents and vulnerable families.

It also streamlined the application procedures for the public childcare services designed to reduce care burden on parents, to enhance user convenience. The government has also increased support for public childcare services by increasing the hours supported by the government (January 2020 - ) while lowering the out-of-pocket payments (March 2020 - ) as part of efforts to ease the financial burden on service users.

*\*(Application process) Submit documents and obtain approval first, and use service → Use service first, and submit documents*

*\*\* (Gov't support rate) 0~85%→40~90%, (Service hours supported by the Gov't) These newly increased hours will not be counted as the government-supported 720-hour cap.*

In addition, the government is providing emergency care to children through community-based childcare centers and Youth After-school Academies\* (March 2020 - ). **As students have** been learning from home due to COVID-19, the government is offering

online academic support\*\* for students who need assistance (April 2020 - ).

*\* Community-based childcare centers have been converted to care facilities, and Youth After-school Academies are operating for longer hours (4→8 hours).*

*\*\* Home-visit instructors, learning instructors, public child carers, and staff members of the Healthy Multicultural Family Support Centers are dispatched / As of May 2020, services were provided to a total of 58,000 children.*

Emergency care in kindergartens and elementary schools provided from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and there is no additional cost for care. Lunches and online educational contents are provided to children during the care so that mothers' social and economic activities are not reduced.

The government is also providing daily necessities to low-income families, while offering interpretation and translation services to multicultural families to ensure that they can have access to counseling support and self-isolation guidelines (February 2020 - ) part of efforts to provide support for families in vulnerable situations following the outbreak of COVID-19.

*\* The items include rice, toilet paper, face masks, and diapers and are provided based on the needs of families who earn no more than 72% of the median income*

**7. What steps have been taken to improve gender-responsive data collection in the context of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to track and monitor the gender-specific impacts and response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family co-hosted two relay forums on COVID-19 and women's employment crisis (on June 11 and 18 respectively?) with the Korean Women's Development Institute. During the forums participants shared views on and discussed the status of women's employment in the wake of COVID-19 based on macroscopic data, on-site cases and the results of fact-finding surveys of public child carers, domestic workers, after-school instructors and others left in employment blind spots. The forum participants suggested diverse policy task ideas, such as increasing support and legislation for those left out in the employment safety net, and proposed ways to enhance the use of government support programs. These suggestions and ideas were also shared and discussed with relevant ministries.

In addition, gender-disaggregated data by policy area has been used to lay the foundation for the implementation of gender-equality policies, while gender-responsive data has been compiled to effectively carry out the gender impact analysis and the gender responsive budgeting. The 2015 amendment to the Statistics Act mandated the production of gender-disaggregated data, and the official data has been monitored on a yearly basis thereafter. The government also collects gender-responsive data and

publishes "Women's Life in Statistics."

The government has also established the legal basis for collecting and publishing data on violence against women by enforcing the Framework Act on the Prevention of Violence against Women in December 2019 to further strengthen the groundwork for gender responsive data policies.

In addition, as part of KOICA's policy mechanism for collecting, analyzing, and reviewing gender sensitive data in ODA projects, the OECD gender policy markers are tagged to each project and reported to the OECD every year in accordance with the relevant guidelines and standards. Also, KOICA has launched the SDG5 Fill the GAP Initiative (2020-2026) to contribute to the global effort for achieving SDG5, and 'Evidence and Implementation' was set as one of its focus areas. To that end, a newly developed project in Mongolia, 'Promoting Gender Equality in Public Decision-Making', includes gender sensitive data collection as one of the elements in the project. /End/