

UN Women Progress Report – First Progress Report on the commitments made at the Global Leader's Meeting

Sri Lanka continues to make progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in social, economic and political fields through progressive law reforms, formulating gender responsive policies and action plans by addressing the needs of the communities. The Government is presently in the process of drafting a new Constitution and inclusion of women's rights in the Fundamental Rights Chapter is being considered. The Chapter on Women's Rights in the Human Rights action Plan (2017-2021) includes many provisions to address many issues such as law reforms, war affected women, employment and enhancing institutional mechanisms for achieving the objectives.

During the period more emphasis has been paid on developing and obtaining Cabinet approval for the policies on priority areas that include violence against women, female headed households and women's entrepreneurship development, institutionalizing gender mainstreaming. Developing the Policy Framework and National Plan of Action on Sex and Gender Based Violence (2016-2020), introducing a referral system with a multi pectoral approach, capacity development of the Police and the Judiciary are some of the initiatives conducted for eradicating gender based violence. Protection for victims of violence is provided through six shelters established in different locations and guidelines have been introduced for managing the shelters. A digital data base system is developed for collection of GBV data with the support of the stakeholders specially the Police.

Gender mainstreaming committees have been set up in Line Ministries for collection of gender disaggregated data, introducing gender budgeting and adopting equity and equality principles in policy formulation and awareness building. Combatting sexual harassment at work place is also a function coming under the purview of the Committee.

The National Framework for Women Headed Households (2017- 2019) has been introduced specially to improve the socio economic situation of women affected by the conflict. The government as well as the Banks have provided credit facilities for enhancing livelihood development activities for galvanizing the national policy for eradication of poverty. A recent initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs is the directive obtained from the Treasury to allocate a minimum of 25% investment for economic development of rural women. Programs are in place to encourage girls to enter into technological fields which provide opportunities in accessing the labour market.

For promoting women's political participation a 25% quota for women has been allocated for women in the Local Government bodies while Cabinet approval is sought to provide 30% nominations for females at the Provincial Council elections. Memorandums have been submitted to the Constitutional Reforms Committee requesting for a quota for women in the Parliament.