

How can the changing status of women help improve the human condition?

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The status of women depends on economic and social development of the countries and the creation of new jobs, unemployment reduction and hence, facilitates the improvement of people's living standards.

We need to explore changing status of women and how it can address the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century.

It should be mentioned that economic development is closely connected with the wide involvement of women in the social and economic life. A focus on poor women who are the most vulnerable strata of population is central to reducing poverty.

It is not possible to achieve the development of the economy without the provision of women's participation in the social, economic and cultural life of the society. Therefore, it is necessary in these terms to provide potential entrepreneur women's participation in economic development processes. The development of women entrepreneurship will help to facilitate poverty reduction, increase women's social and economic significance, and in many cases eliminate gender discrimination. Improvement of women status is an important mechanism to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through integration of the member countries to the world economy and strengthening of their cooperation in economy and environment. Women's participation in labor market is important for several reasons. Being active from economic point of view, women could benefit equally from social provision, pension and healthcare systems. In this case they will have opportunities for personal development while keeping doing household chores.

Capacity-building for women's empowerment is linked across sectors, and progress in one area cannot be sustained without progress in others. Likewise, reproductive health can be more successfully promoted when women have greater control over resources that can facilitate choices in other spheres of life. Economic empowerment requires women to have a voice in shaping economic choices.

Recognizing that the present generation of women and girls remains subject to discrimination and disadvantage, the framework also addresses the need for positive actions and remedial measures of support and empowerment. It also takes into consideration the importance of the full participation of all relevant actors. A major challenge is to reconcile these latter empowerment strategies to benefit victims of discrimination, with mainstreaming efforts that involve longer-term incremental and process-oriented change.

The achievement of gender equality is the responsibility of society as a whole, since gender relations are determined by the socially constructed roles of women and men that are ascribed to them on the basis of their sex, in public and in private life. This goal is premised on the recognition that greater equality has individual as well as societal benefits.

Capacity-building and competence development are multifaceted and ongoing processes. They require the development of tools and techniques to detect and recognize the gender dimensions of particular issues and to enable people to take these dimensions into account in their work, on the assumption that inequality, discrimination, disadvantage and bias encountered by women could be better dealt with if actors had the necessary tools and skills.

Several types of actions can be identified under the functional category of capacity-building. They are interdependent and mutually reinforcing and could be the focus of further actions and initiatives:

- **Capacity-building specifically for women and girls.**

Actions of this type include those that target women and girls. We should emphasize the need to empower women and girls through building their capacity to pursue the strategic objectives identified in the 12 critical areas of concern and through increasing their life choices, their decision-making abilities, and their access to resources and services. This includes provision of information, education and training, and equal access to public goods and services;

- **Capacity-building for all actors responsible for achieving gender equality.**

This type covers actions aimed at structural and systematic change at all policy- and decision-making levels to take into account equality considerations. These are essentially gender mainstreaming actions and include the development of knowledge, insights and skills to empower people to act in a more gender-sensitive and gender-informed way. These actions aim at empowering people to recognize gender inequalities, or factors that cause and perpetuate gender inequalities, and at providing the skills to take appropriate action in all sectors and at all levels. As such, they include training and staff development for public officials, curriculum change and research and data collection on the situation of women and men in various sectors;

- **Awareness-raising and changing of attitudes.**

This type of action is addressed to individuals, specific groups and society at large. It aims at creating a climate that is supportive of gender equality and of the elimination of obstacles to its achievement, such as gender stereotypes, and of attitudes and practices that perpetuate women's inequality. It includes public information campaigns and advocacy, information dissemination through a variety of channels and support for gender-sensitive media activities;

- **Institutional dimensions of capacity-building.** This type of action addresses the institutional infrastructure that supports other capacity-building efforts. It covers the capacity of specialist institutions at the governmental and non-governmental levels (such as national machineries for the advancement of women, women's non-governmental organizations, women and gender research institutions) and of mainstream institutions (such as cabinets, inter-ministerial committees, gender networks and task forces). It also covers the management dimension of capacity-building, including institutional change and knowledge management.

The issue of globalization, including its employment effects and other economic implications, is a major recent trend in the world economy and represents a movement towards a globally integrated economy. In all parts of the world, the economic environment within which businesses, Governments and individuals make decisions increasingly includes the international dimension. In terms of its economic aspect, the term usually covers the closely related but distinct macroeconomic concepts of openness or liberalization, integration and interdependence. It entails a movement towards a world economy characterized by free trade, free mobility of capital and rapid dissemination of products, technologies, and information and consumption patterns. It has also contributed to increased international migration of workers, including a large number of women workers.

Much of the controversy about globalization stems not from disagreement about the objective of the changes under way, but about their social, political and economic impact. The gender impact of globalization and of macroeconomic policies more generally have also been getting increased attention. While some are persuaded of the generally progressive nature of globalization, others see the potential benefits dwarfed by harmful effects and thus give greater weight to the risks entailed.

Research carried out during the past decade explores the gender impact of economic integration, taking into account differences in women's and men's participation in the economy and the household. It has been argued that the use of a gender perspective in economic and poverty analysis is necessary to shape equitable policies that reduce women's vulnerability to poverty and unemployment and to address constraints faced by poor women and employed women under conditions of market liberalization.

The gender impact of globalization is complex, the effects are mixed and the question should be further examined with a view to identifying actions and initiatives for increasing positive gender impacts of this worldwide trend, especially for the poorest women.

One of the great divides in the world today between poor and rich is that poor countries and poor people not only lack capital but lack the knowledge and information required to move out of poverty.

In the past 30 years, developing countries have made enormous strides in expanding enrolments at all levels, particularly in primary schools, but the main beneficiaries are still boys, particularly in the field of science and technology. New communication technologies promise to reduce isolation and open access to knowledge in ways unimaginable not long ago. Countries can leapfrog to these new technologies, largely skipping such intermediate steps as copper wires and analog telephones. But access to even basic communications technology is still very limited and costs are high. Women have often been seen as a source of traditional knowledge, for which there was a high demand, but modern life's disruption of traditional communities is dissipating informal channels of information exchange and knowledge is flowing to those who are already privileged in other ways.

Further actions and initiatives need to be explored and implemented to ensure that women and girls have equal opportunities in science and technology and equitable and affordable access to new technologies, as well as training in their use and application.

There is a need for greater participation of women in decision-making and in leadership positions.

Women's leadership, politically and economically, has not kept pace with their entry into the workforce nor with their acquisition of voting rights. While democracy and the full participation of citizens are more prevalent than ever before, this has not been fully reflected in women's advancement into positions of leadership.

I would like to show the dependence of the changing woman status on the society taking an example my country, Azerbaijan.

After the transitional period of economy the majority of women in the country began to work in non-governmental sector. The numbers of women working in non-governmental sector have a great will to take credits to start or continue their business. The creation of small and medium entrepreneurship is supposed to be important factor while elaborating programs on economic development and employment.

Reforms of the last decade in the sphere of social-economic development, education, healthcare and institutionalization created opportunities to achieve macro-economic stability and economic development. In its turn, this leads to the improvement of population's, and particularly, women's living standards. In the result of macro-economic reforms in Azerbaijan women being highly educated, with professional awareness, useful knowledge and habits show willingness to start their business. Development of women entrepreneurship helps to reduce poverty, increase women's economic and social significance and in many cases helps to eliminate gender inequality in the society.

The equality of men and women is embedded in the legal and policy framework. Equality between men and women is assured in Azerbaijani Constitution and was affirmed by the relevant laws and legislative acts

Laws exist to ensure the equal rights of women in all areas of life such as the right to equal pay for work. Laws such as the Parental Leave and Employment Protection (Paid Parental Leave) also exist to address any inequality that might arise from the particular needs of women, such as the need to stop work or get some benefits to care for children:.

After the economical growth which followed the period of socio-economic drop women were widely involved in political life. But till today the political parties have not yet understood the full significance of the gender issue but mostly consider it as a women's issue. Women are still under-represented compared with men in parliament, local government, boards, and the judiciary. The Government has developed strategies to improve the participation and representation of women.

The State Committee on Women's Issues established by Presidential Decree which later was transferred into State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs aimed at extending women's participation in the decision-making process. Non-governmental organizations in the cooperation of the International organizations and State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs have set up various centres to involve women in the life of society and services are operating to give women moral and social support by providing them with legal, medical and other counselling.

I consider that promoting and protecting the human rights of women, create suitable conditions for women to utilize their ability and to achieve substantive equality between women and men are the main term of preventing violence against women. I would like to state that the

adoption of Law on Gender Equality is the next input to the activity towards to achieve gender equality in our Republic.

Gender issues mainstreamed to the State Program for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development for 2006-2015. Gender Policy sector include measures like establishment of monitoring mechanism on gender-based violence, negative impact of early marriages to the future life of girls, preparation and implementation of social rehabilitation programs for the victims of violence, to create social rehabilitation centers for the victims of violence in deferent regions of Azerbaijan.

I have taken Azerbaijan not only because it is the country where I live but only because it is a bright example of the post soviet area which clearly shows what could reach this small country for short time in economy and consequently in the area of women rights.

Only a few years ago it was impossible for women imagine that she would be able to be a business lady and could earn money on her rights.

Gender roles are assigned at an early age. Parents pay closer attention to the achievements of their sons than to those of their daughters. But at the same time women prefer to provide their daughters with education. Whereas men prefer their sons to pursue their education over their daughters Women's preferences for girls' education can be also explained by the fact that women themselves want their daughters to overcome the dependency on men. The difference between the levels of education of men and women is the greatest in the less developed regions of the country.

In Azerbaijan history and culture, women have traditionally been considered as homemakers and keepers of community and social values. It is considered that a particularly respectful attitude towards women developed in Azerbaijan, which is reflected in historical works of literature created throughout Azerbaijan history. However, men have traditionally played the dominant role in Azerbaijan society and always were considered to be breadwinners. Women are supposed to take care of the home and the children. Men take the final decisions in the family.

In every society, even in the most developed; women remain a potential object of many forms of violence. Azerbaijan is not an exception. Moreover, as a result of the military conflict over the territory of Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), a large number of current citizens of Azerbaijan (including hundreds of thousands of women) became victims of violence and were forced to flee as refugees and IDPs. The survey showed that the level of family violence among refugees and IDPs higher than in other environments.

The law prohibits any form of violence or threat in the family and provides for sufficiently severe sanctions if they occur.

Creation of non-aggressive relations in society, morality enrichment, preferring good will to increase tolerance in interpersonal relations along with prevention of violence is very important. More resources are planned to be invested into the economy of the country in the next few years. The number of employed persons is also expected to be increased due to considered changes in the economic development. All these are part of the combat against domestic violence.

Labour policy towards women in Azerbaijan is based on the principle of facilitating their work by providing them with appropriate benefits, preferences and supplementary guarantees in connection with motherhood and fulfilment of family obligations.

Everyone may own movable and immovable property. The right to own property includes the right of the owner alone or jointly with others to possess, use and dispose of property. No one may be deprived of his or her property except by a court decision.

Social services and medical care are less developed in the rural regions than in the towns. Women sometimes have to travel significant distances to avail themselves of these services.

Special development programs are therefore being formulated and implemented to promote the development of mountain regions. Azerbaijan is also conducting research and developing programs in this area. The widest ranging of these is the Rural Development Program for Mountainous and Highland Areas. Under a loan agreement between the Government of Azerbaijan and the International Fund for Agricultural Development signed on November 27, 2000, Rural Development Program for Mountainous and Highland Areas was confirmed by both parties on January 16, 2001 by Presidential Decree and commenced activities under the direction of the Agency for Agricultural Private Sector Support and Development under the control of the Cabinet of Ministers. The long-term 12-year Program is designed to support the development of mountainous and highland areas. The main goal of the Program is to raise the standard of living of inhabitants of mountainous and highland areas through protection of the environment and mineral wealth as well as to increase the cash income of the beneficiaries.

Azerbaijan is a young independent republic building a new democratic society based on the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Furthermore, it must be emphasized that the changing status of women today is not unique to Azerbaijan. People of all nations are seeking alternative ways of coping with the new demands and contradictions of the globalizing world.