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**MANAGEMENT OF INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
KAZAKHSTAN: PROBLEMS AND PREREQUISITES OF GENDER POLICY**

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The role of gender equality is recognized by the international community as determining the political agenda of countries. The issue of gender equality is integrated into the key Development Indices, which are currently an effective tool for assessing progress in the world: Human Development Index, Gender Development Index, Gender Inequality Index, SDG Gender Index, Index of Social Institutions and Gender Issues, Gender Gap Index, etc. This is evidenced by the status of structures that declare the importance of gender equality, including the UN, OECD, WEF, World Bank, etc.

Over the years of independence, Kazakhstan has made some progress in the implementation of gender policy. The country has ratified fundamental international acts – the Beijing Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women (1995), the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1998), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (2000), the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (2000), the ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and women for work of equal value (2000), etc. Kazakhstan closely cooperates with a number of international organizations in the implementation of gender policy: with UNIFEM, OSCE, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), USAID, the British Council and UNDP. Kazakhstan's achievements in reducing gender inequality are noted by OECD experts led by Pinar Guven, a political analyst at the OECD Directorate for Public Administration and Territorial Development.

The country has created an institutional and regulatory framework for the effective implementation of gender policy. To ensure gender equality in all spheres of life of the Kazakh society at the highest state level, the Institute of Gender Policy – the National Commission on

Women's Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan has been established and is successfully functioning. Regional offices of the Commission are working on the ground. The Parliament has adopted laws corresponding to international standards "On the prevention of domestic violence", "On State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women". The operation of these laws is mainly aimed at regulating public relations in the field of ensuring State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, establishing basic principles and norms concerning the creation of conditions for gender equality in all spheres of State and public life.

Women's participation institutions – women's non-governmental organizations - have played a significant role in promoting gender equality issues, the number of which has increased significantly over the years of independence. This is largely due to measures of state support for civil initiatives and the state's interest in promoting the interests of women.

To date, the basic principles, priorities and objectives of gender policy in Kazakhstan are defined in the Concept of Family and Gender Policy until 2030 (hereinafter – the Concept). In 2019, the first stage of the implementation of the Concept was completed, according to the results of which it is possible to state the purposeful implementation of a systematic and popular gender policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan, comprehensively taking into account national and international experience in achieving gender equality, religious and cultural characteristics of Kazakh society.

Kazakhstan maintains a steady level of women's employment and is not inferior in this respect to many countries, including countries with highly developed economies. In Kazakhstan, the participation rate of women in the economically active population in 2018 was 64.8%. Taking into account the recommendations of the ILO, Kazakhstan has taken measures to update the list of jobs where the use of women's labor is prohibited. This measure is aimed at protecting women's reproductive health. Currently, with the development of technology, automation of production processes, the list of professions where the use of women's labor is prohibited is being reduced. So, in 2018, the list of professions was reduced from 287 to 187.

The activity of women in small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) has increased significantly in recent years. Among the registered active entrepreneurs, the share of women is 43.2%. About 28% of the heads of small, medium and large enterprises in Kazakhstan are represented by women. Every fourth (23.1%) peasant and farm household is headed by women. This is the highest figure recorded since 2011.

A network of non-governmental women's organizations is developing dynamically. To date, about 300 non-governmental organizations are actively involved in solving issues of protecting the rights and interests of women. 32.4% of leadership positions in trade unions and NGOs are held by women.

The State pays special attention to the role of women in politics at the decision-making level. The share of women in the total composition of deputies of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the current convocation has reached 18.4%. The share of women in the lower house of Parliament is gradually increasing: 11.76% of women among the deputies of the Mazhilis of the first convocation (1996-1999) and 27.8% among the deputies of the seventh convocation (from 2021 to the present). It should be noted that according to the UN, the average representation of women in the "lower" chambers in the world reaches 23.4 %.

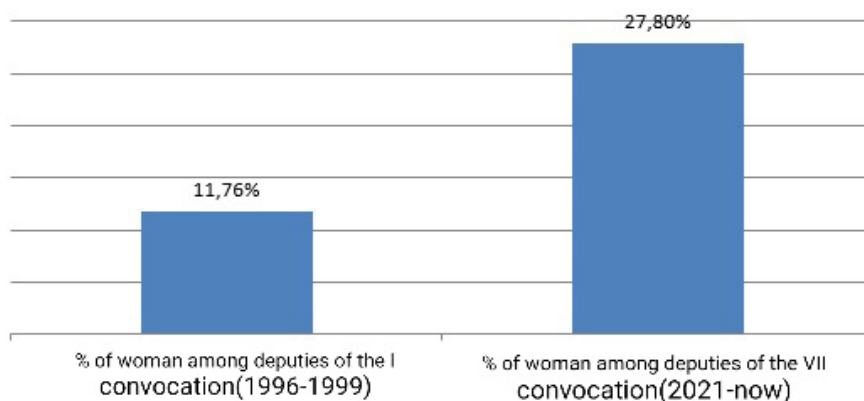


Illustration: Woman among deputies

In local representative bodies of the country, the proportion of women is 22.2%: in maslikhats of the regional level – 15.72%, city – 22.82%, district – 23.70%. In addition, there is a stable representation of women in the civil service: in 2013 – 49,527 or 54.9%, in 2017 – 50,491 or 55%.

Women are actively promoted through the system of political parties. Following the introduction of a quota of 30% for women and youth in the electoral party lists, the Head of State announced an initiative to legislate the norm on the mandatory accounting of this quota in the distribution of deputy mandates.

Based on the best practices of the OECD countries, the basics of gender planning of the state budget are being introduced. The National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, together with the Government, is discussing the issue of strengthening gender budgeting in order to comprehensively take into account the rights and interests of women and men, girls and boys when planning and using local budget funds. UNIFEM together with the National Commission are implementing the project "Social (gender) budgets in Kazakhstan".

Gender education plays an important role in the implementation of gender policy. In order to strengthen in the public consciousness, the importance of achieving genuine equality of men and women in all spheres of society's life through the leading print and television media of the country and social networks, information and explanatory, educational work is actively carried out. In 2018, more than 3.1 thousand information and analytical materials on the promotion of family values and gender equality were published in the republican and regional media.

Kazakhstan firmly adheres to a zero-tolerance policy towards torture and violence, especially against women and children. In this regard, most of the recommendations following the visit of the delegation of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture in September 2016 have been implemented into national legislation. In addition, Kazakhstan continues active cooperation on this issue with the UN treaty bodies. In 2019, at the 74th session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the 5th national report was defended, following which the obvious progress made by Kazakhstan was noted.

Meanwhile, despite the measures taken by the State in the field of ensuring gender equality, the implementation of gender policy in the country encounters a number of constraining factors. In particular, the issues of reducing the gender pay gap between men and women remain relevant. In 2018, women's wages were 65.8% of men's wages. Involvement in unpaid domestic and reproductive work remains higher among women. The average daily expenditure of women on domestic work in 2018 was 17.7 hours compared to 5.9 hours for men. The issues of increasing women's participation in decision-making also require further efforts.

In addition, a close relationship has been established between the level of innovation potential, the competitiveness of countries and the efforts undertaken by States to promote gender equality in all spheres of society. The dynamics of movement in the Gender Gap Index has the potential to influence the country's position in the Global Competitiveness Index. The realization that gender equality can affect the level of competitiveness of the state as a whole has led to the fact

that the countries of the world began to demonstrate higher rates of progress towards gender parity. This is evidenced by the decrease in Kazakhstan's indicators in the WEF Gender Gap Index against the background of the countries' activation in promoting gender equality. In this sense, the increasing involvement of the countries of the world in the promotion of gender equality is a new challenge for Kazakhstan, requiring the activation of gender policy in the country. From this point of view, the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.K. were timely. Tokayev's efforts to promote the interests and protect the rights of women, including the introduction of a 30% quota for women and youth in electoral party lists, tougher penalties for rape, pedophilia, domestic violence against women, the introduction of a new mechanism for the distribution of targeted social assistance.

Gender policy in Kazakhstan has always been based on the principles of continuity and balance. Strengthening gender equality in State and public policy, as a fundamental factor of competitiveness, can provide the country with guarantees of sustainable development.

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