

Report of the Mongolian Government on the Status of Implementation of the Outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

The Government of Mongolia welcomed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as an important milestone in advancing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and in putting new issues of relevance on a global agenda.

The years since the Beijing conference have been marked by a greater intensity in the activities of the Government and the non-governmental organizations concerned in regard to women's issues. An important distinction of those activities has been a conceptually different approach, which emphasized the need for comprehensiveness, interdependency and result-orientedness.

Soon after the Beijing Conference the National Preparatory Committee for the said Conference was reorganized into the National Committee for the Implementation of the Decisions of the Beijing Conference. The National Committee consists of representatives of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, scholars and researchers. The Committee worked out the draft National Programme for the Advancement of Women which was extensively discussed at the national meeting on "Women in Social Development" in March 1996 where over 700 delegates from central and provincial organizations took part. Following that meeting the National Programme for the Advancement of Women was approved by the Government in June of the same year.

The present Government which was appointed in July 1996 in its Programme of Action set itself as priority tasks women's poverty alleviation, improvement of social protection and social security net, betterment of family wellbeing, strengthening the bonds between elder and younger generations, ensuring human rights and freedom.

"The State Policy of Mongolia on Population", approved by the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia in April 1996, put forward specific objectives for the advancement of women, ensuring equal participation of women and men in development and encouraging social and political initiative of women.

✓ The National Programme for the Advancement of Women put forward 10 interrelated goals, including the issues of women and economy, poverty, health, education, living conditions of rural women, family, national traditions, women's participation in management and at the decision-making levels, violence against women, human rights, national structure, and women and mass media.

The implementation of the Programme was brought in line with the national social and economic development strategy and programmes on population and other social issues.

A distinctive feature of this Programme as compared to its forerunners lies in the fact that it, consistent with the concept of the Beijing Conference, emphasizes such notions as equal participation of women and men in the development process and instilling gender approach in social psychology.

The long-term mission of the Programme lies in creating equal opportunities for women to lead a peaceful life, to protect their health, to receive education, to make their own decisions and to participate equally in the entire process of political, social and economic life of the society.

The Programme, as is envisaged, will be carried out with an eye on four basic principles, i.e. its conformity with the nation's annual and future development plans, as well as other national programmes, decentralization, mobilization of resources for empowering local administration and strengthening their role, active community and public participation.

Governmental body in charge of women's issues is acting as coordinator of the Programme. The Programme describes the responsibilities of governmental bodies, Capital City and provincial governments, private sector and the non-governmental organizations. Monitoring and evaluation forms a separate chapter of the Programme.

In order to create conditions for practical realization of objectives and tasks embodied in the Programme, and ensure active and broad involvement of women, each aimag (province) designed its own sub-programme. As of today practically all aimags set up structures for monitoring the implementation process of sub-programmes on the improvement of the situation of women.

Provisions of the National Programme regarding environmental protection were further classified and a new chapter on "Environment and Women", approved by the Government in January 1999, was incorporated into the Programme.

One. Improving the guarantees of economic and labour rights of women

The new Labour Law that came into effect in July 1999 contains specific provisions prohibiting acts of discrimination, exclusion or preference in labour relations. The Law has a separate chapter on Women's Labour. The Chapter consists of 8 Articles and 14 paragraphs dealing with women's labour rights.

Women's equal rights for inheritance, land use, ownership of livestock and other properties were formalized in the Civil and Family Laws.

Newly amended laws on Social Insurance and Social Security guarantee pensions and benefits for pregnant women, mothers after childbirth, child caring mothers and mothers with many children, and defines the size, conditions, as well as time period for benefits and pensions. For instance, benefits for pregnancy and childbirth of employed mothers with social insurance policy from the Social Insurance Fund increased 2 to 5 times, and the time for eligibility for benefits was extended by 1 month.

The following measures are being taken with a view to increase the employment level of women and decrease the unemployment level so as not to exceed 5.8% of the economically active population by the year 2000:

- Granting Government micro credits, promoting ancillary economic units and small size enterprises through the Green Revolution and White Revolution Programmes;

- Providing financial and monetary assistance to individuals capable but lacking sufficient funds, interested in establishing businesses and creating job places through the establishment of savings and credit cooperatives;
- Number of people employed in informal sector increased 50% of that increase falls on women.

Two. Women and Poverty

The National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP) gives a special attention to gender equality.

Since 1996 6.2 thousand poor people of working age and working capability received 2.4 billion tugrugs out of whom 65.1% are women.

As a result of mobilization of required funding from international and domestic donors \$15.3 million were raised, the share of the Government being 11.4% and that of the UNDP being 4.5%.

Starting from 1997 the Women's Development Fund was in operation with the purpose of meeting the objectives of the National Programme for the Advancement of Women. The main goal of the project is to ensure that 100% of all beneficiaries are women. At present, 582 projects are underway and the majority of beneficiaries are generating income through household production and services. In order to strengthen NGO participation starting from 1997 training courses are being organized and projects are being implemented through the NGO's. 208.7 million tugrugs were allocated so far for 458 projects involving 8,189 people. Altogether 14,234 people benefited from those projects.

To date 5.3 billion tugrugs were spent for the purposes of the NPAP.

Three. Condition of Rural Women

Creation of a favorable environment for improving the living conditions of rural women, raising their educational and cultural level on the basis of developing urban areas with new social and cultural forms, combining features of nomadic and settled way of life is a priority concern of the Government. Much is being done in that respect.

- Financial assistance project for manufacturers of electricity generators, TV sets and radios implemented through a bidding process resulted in 2.3 times increase in the number of families with electricity generators during the last 3 years, 4.8 times with radios.
- A UNESCO-funded project on "Non-formal Education of Gobi Women" was successfully implemented. 15,000 women from 5 Gobi aimags were covered by the project.
- Over 200 million tugrugs were spent for the implementation of over 40 projects designed to create a wholesale network and revive public services in soums (administrative unit within aimag).
- Within the framework of activities dedicated to the Year of the Youth, a cultural tour was organized in 5 Western aimags with cultural programmes, health and public services which was highly appreciated by the rural population.

- The pre-delivery maternity houses of 151 soums were furnished, or renovated, 107 ambulances were provided to the soums within the Poverty Alleviation Programme with the assistance from the World Health Organization.

The activities of NGO's are directed towards improving the economic viability of rural women. In particular, the Women's Federation of Mongolia established micro-credit funds in 21 aimags the total size of which reached 120.6 million tugrugs. 18 projects were implemented on information supply, training, micro-credit and employment. A total of 586 new jobs were created.

Measures are taken to provide poor rural families, especially women-headed households, with livestock. The Poverty Alleviation Programme is carrying out a project on providing livestock in over 20 soums of Arkhangai and Khovsgol aimags. These projects cover over 1,000 families and create 2,500 additional jobs.

Four. Improvement of Education and Qualifications of Women

An objective is set to put a stop on the increasing level of school drop-outs, to increase the level of school attendance by children of school age to 95% by the year 2000 and the level of attendance of secondary schools to 90%.

The Ministry of Education is implementing a non-formal education programme amongst dropouts and as a result 883 children were able to get primary education. Within the framework of the above Programme over 100 education centres were established in provincial areas and 3,000 children learnt to read and write.

Measures are being taken to enhance the opportunities for women to raise their qualifications. The "Oulen Eej" training centre was established to meet specific needs of women. As of 1998 42% of the research workers constitute women. There are 95 women with a Ph.D. who are working on 279 projects related to science and technology.

Mongolian, Korean and Chinese women scholars are successfully working together at UNDP-funded project on "The Use of Scientific and Technological Achievements for the Balanced Development of Populations of Southeast Asian Countries".

Since 1995, scientific conferences and exhibitions, 3 in all, were organized.

Within the projects on "Non-formal Education" and "Let's Learn and Live" business training was organized for unemployed young people, women and households, series of radio lessons were conducted and guidelines and materials were provided. 2700 people were covered by the project.

Since 1998 the subject on health education was included into the curriculum of Secondary schools. This helps young people gain knowledge about reproductive health, social, scientific and legal issues involved.

The decision taken by the Government in 1998 makes it possible for students to apply for grants or soft loans for studying in colleges or universities. Currently, there are 57,640 students studying at public vocational training schools, 19,276 in the private professional institutions.

60% studying at the public professional school and 10% of the students at the private schools were provided with soft loans or grants. At the professional institutions, female students make up 63.5%.

Five. Women's Reproductive Health

With a view to improving the quality and expanding the coverage of the reproductive health services, a goal was set to reduce the maternal mortality rate by 50% and infant mortality by one third by the year 2000.

The infant mortality rate decreased from 59.8 per 1,000 live births in 1992 to 35.4 in 1998.

A movement for creating the "Baby Friendly Hospital" was initiated and promoted throughout the country. As a result of this action, by the end of 1998, 93 hospitals (24.6% of the total number of hospitals) received certificates to this effect.

Maternity rest homes in 100 soums were renovated; around 30 health facilities, including maternity houses in aimag centres were provided with the full set of obstetrical and abdominal surgery equipment, medicaments and contraception; Public Health Centres at aimag levels were provided with the ultra sound diagnosis equipment. Rural health organizations also received vehicles to be used for providing urgent medical assistance.

There is a wider access to family planning methodology and the relevant information due to special training of the medical personnel for family planning and introducing family planning practices through establishing family planning cabinets and units at maternity homes and public health centres in the capital city and provincial centres.

Advocacy campaigns and consultancy services on public health are reported to have better results.

All soum midwives, medical assistants at "bag" level, soum doctors and general practitioners were covered by training on family planning, safe motherhood and primary medical assistance to mothers and their babies. Moreover, doctors of 100 soums experiencing the most maternal mortality rates are being trained on a special training course.

Advocacy programmes on public health are being broadcast through TV and radio programmes, and families and women's non-governmental organizations are taking an active part in conducting these programmes.

Training and consultancy activities are being carried out at family training cabinets at city and aimag health centres and maternity homes. Women's NGO's' participation is observed to be strong and active.

UNDP project against HIV/AIDS in cooperation with 6 women's NGO's is carrying out training on prevention against HIV/AIDS for the general public and the segment of the population most vulnerable to STD's as well as conducting training of trainers for the same purpose.

Six. Women, Families and Traditions

The Government pays a special attention to gender equality, further development of legislation and social security, expansion of information and studies on family life. Family Law was newly introduced and adopted in June 1999.

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Youth Family Planning Agency and Mongolian Association of Social workers have established a Family Planning Information and Studies Network in order to provide better links and coordination between governmental and non-governmental organizations, academia and the relevant specialists involved in family planning.

The state laws, regulations and decisions aim to improve the role of women in the population reproduction as well as to raise the housework value done by women. This can be seen from the following: according to the additions made to the Law on Pensions and Benefits paid by the Social Insurance Fund, maternity benefits for prior and post delivery period shall be paid by the Social Insurance Fund provided the insurance premium is regularly paid for not less than 12 months before the maternity leave; mothers who after carrying for not less than 196 days had underweight babies and those had abortions as well as mothers who did not carry for 196 days but gave a live-child birth are legally paid maternity benefits.

In order to provide a better combination opportunities for maintaining both housework and a formal job, 162 sub-projects accounted for 20,230 million tugrugs were carried out to strengthen the capacity of kindergartens by organizing a special training apart from the day training, retraining of teachers and the managerial staff as well as establishing a supplementary economic units.

In order to increase the role and responsibilities of a male partner in family life, including up-bringing of children and all the other family duties, it is introduced in the new Family Law that the responsibilities and duties of a married couple in up-bringing children and any other aspects of family life are equal. The Social Assistance Law also indicates that the father of a family is entitled to take care of a young child and paid benefits for this activity.

Seven. Women's Participation in Decision-making

With a view to expanding opportunities for women to take part in decision-making, the objective has been set to reach not less than 20% of women's representation in the central and local government for the elected and appointed high positions by the year 2000.

By 1999, there are 4,466 officials working in the governmental organizations and ministries, state budget and self-financed institutions under the government. Of this, 37.8% are women. Women make up 38.3% in the governmental implementation agencies, and 38.2% in NGO's.

Eight. Women and Environment

The Mongolian Biodiversity Project and other environmental protection projects are being implemented in parallel with a purpose of improving the living standard of poor rural women who are heading households.

As a result of Burgas project, which was implemented in Davst soum, Uvs aimag in 1997 demand for ger woods has been satisfied to a certain extent. In the same year a hot bath house was put into operation within the framework of Hot Bath project in Bugat soum, Govi-Altai aimag. The bath house has been successfully serving the local community. Within Enerel-2 project which started its operation in 1997 in Hovd soum, Uvs aimag a mobile hospital has been delivering medical services to local people during summer time. In 1998 "Pressed Fuel" project was implemented in Altai soum, Govi-Altai aimag. The project has resulted in preservation of saksaul trees in the region and provided employment opportunities for some poor women. In the same year Tsetseg Lake project has made the communication services available between bag centre and soum centre. Subsequent measures are being taken to improve drinking water supply for rural population and mechanization of manual wells. In 1997 hand-pumped wells were built in 8 soums in Hentii and Sukhbaatar aimags and in 12 soums in Dornogovi and Dundgovi aimags and Ulaanbaatar area. Similar wells are expected to be built in 15 soums in Dornogovi, Dundgovi, Umnugovi, Govi-Altai and Bayanhongor aimags in 1999.

Nine. Violence against women and human rights

Numerous legal acts, such as laws on Labour, Health, Social Insurance, Social Protection and Family have been enriched with new content and ideas to reflect changes in the socio-economic life of the country. The aim is to improve legal regulations in the field of protecting human rights of women and combating violence.

Ten. National mechanism on women's issues

A goal is set forth towards improving the national and local institutional structures dealing with women's issues and strengthening their capabilities. The NSO published statistical bulletins on Mongolian women in 1995 and 1999 in order to contribute to the compilation of gender sensitive information and its research. The MoHSW in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies organized a seminar on the subject.

Women's NGO's are supported by the Government Agencies through the conclusion of contracts on various proposed projects. In addition women's NGO's are being extensively involved in the activities of NGO Capacity Building Project, which is being implemented by PAPO with the UNDP funding.

Eleven. Women and mass media

Women's participation in media activities is regulated by the Law on Press Freedom, which stipulates the principle of gender equality in Mongolia. By 1997 over 100 newspapers, 20 magazines were regularly published in the country. Of this, 28 women hold positions of an editor, deputy editor and their secretaries; 30% of newspaper staff, 42% of the Mongol radio and 41% of the Mongol TV professional staff are women.

Despite consistent efforts and specific actions taken by the Government with the assistance and support of International organizations, such as UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, ILO and TACIS the outcome of activities in some areas is not as satisfactory as is expected.

This concerns, first and foremost, the programmes on poverty alleviation and unemployment where women were hit hardest. As a consequence, an increasing number of street children, family violence, alcoholism and prostitution.

The challenges that we are faced with are manifold and immensely complex. It is only with visionary and coherent policies that the country will be able to stand up to them.