

## **WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Achieving gender equality, supporting girls and women at all levels, and increasing women's leadership continue to be major challenges in building a sustainable society and future.

While achieving gender rights and equality and increasing women's leadership are driving forces for development progress, women are unable to realize their full potential due to social, economic and political inequalities and gender-based violence and discrimination.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 emphasizes the vital role of women and the need for equal participation and leadership in all aspects of sustainable development. In order to make progress on the path to this goal, the conference is being organized by Stanford University, Eva Women's University, and representatives from Northeast, Central Asia, Southeast, and South Asia.

Increasing the participation and leadership of women in all spheres of social life and ensuring equal opportunities and equal participation of men and women at the decision-making level can be understood as not only the goal of development, but also an important means of achieving development.

Inadequate gender equality and under-representation and participation of women increase the cost of lost opportunities in economic terms. In other words, under-utilization of the resources that should be used increases losses. As a result, many deadlocked problems have negative effects and consequences, such as not finding a solution or solving them at too high a cost.

According to research conducted in Asia, access to quality education and health care for girls is scarce in several Asian countries, while opportunities for women to find decent work and earn decent wages are limited. Furthermore, women's participation in political and economic decision-making levels and representation in institutions is low.

Mongolia was the first country in Asia to declare equal rights and justice for men and women in its 1924 constitution. In the last century, the world emphasized women's right to choose and be elected, but this century is an era in which equal rights and equal opportunities for all, including the role of women in development, are important.

According to the World Development Report, the level of decision-making in Mongolia in 1990, the representation of women in the People's Congress was 25 percent, but over the past 30 years, this representation has decreased by more than 30 percent.

Considering the gender status of government and political officials in Mongolia today, 17.1 percent of the members of the State Great Khural of Mongolia, 13.6 percent of the Cabinet members, 6.2 percent of the Deputy Ministers, 4.7 percent of the Provincial

Governors, and 11.1 percent of the District Governors are women. This is very low compared to parliamentary democracies.

Globally, women's parliamentary representation has doubled between 1990 and 2020 in high-income countries, and more than 60 percent in low- and middle-income countries. In other words, women's economic and political participation has increased in upper middle-income economies.

Since Mongolia joined the United Nations in 1961, it has joined and ratified international conventions and agreements related to gender equality and women's rights. In 1996, the National Program for the Improvement of Women's Status was initiated, and In 2000, the National Council for Gender Equality was established, and until 2005, the Council organized the implementation of the "National Program for Gender Equality". In 2005, the National Committee for Gender Equality was established and its activities expanded.

The Government of Mongolia implemented the Gender Equality Program in 2003-2015 to ensure gender equality and protect human rights, especially the rights of women and girls. During this period, "Law on Combating Domestic Violence (2004)", "Law on Ensuring Gender Equality (2011)", "Law on Elections to the Great Khural of Mongolia (2011)", "Law on Combating Human Trafficking (2012)" A number of laws have been approved by the Parliament, and a legal and policy environment has been created to ensure gender equality.

In our country, there are more than 10 laws and 5 policy documents that provide basic regulations for ensuring gender equality and non-discrimination based on gender, but the implementation of those laws and policy documents is insufficient, which is evidenced by the high level of gender-based inequality.

On the global average, a woman with an advanced degree who is 10 years out of college earns 23 percent less than a man with the same level of education. In Mongolia, women's wages are 17 percent lower than men's. This is due to the higher level of education of women compared to men.

According to statistical data, more than 80% of our country's health sector workers, more than 70% of education sector workers, 70% of banking and insurance sector workers, 60% of retail trade and maintenance workers, and more than 50% of light industry workers are women. By the end of 2022, there are more than 140,000 enterprises registered in our country, 64% of which are managed by men and 36% by women.

Also, considering the state of ownership of property and assets, Mongolian women are 2 times less than men and women in property ownership, 3-6 times less in terms of land ownership, and 1.5 times less in terms of ownership of other real estate.

Although the number of women with higher education in our country is high, their participation in the labor market is decreasing. In particular, the labor force participation rate of women aged 25 to 34 is relatively low. The level of participation of women in the

labor force in our country has been decreasing since 2006, and it reached the lowest level, less than 50 percent, during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end of 2022, the labor force participation rate in Mongolia's labor market was 52 percent for women and 68 percent for men. Nationally, the labor force participation rate is over 60% on average, which means that only 60 out of 100 people are interested in working, while women's interest in working is about 17 points lower than men's. It should be noted.

If Mongolia wants to intensify its economic development, it is necessary to increase the economic, social and political participation and leadership of women, and to support them. For example, if the level of female labor force participation in Mongolia can be increased to 65%, on the one hand, it will improve gender equality in the household, business, and workplace, and on the other hand, it is estimated that GDP per capita can increase.

In 2022, the Government of Mongolia approved and implemented the "Interdisciplinary Strategic Plan for Gender Equality (2022-2031)", and within this framework, the following 5 goals are being worked on. These include: (1) Creating equal opportunities for girls, boys, men and women to live healthy, safe, and learn; (2) Promoting equal gender opportunities and gender participation in the economy; (3) Develop a framework for gender equality; (4) Increase women's participation and leadership at decision-making levels; (5) Ensuring gender equality in climate change mitigation and adaptation. It is necessary to successfully and consistently implement the above objectives of the cross-sectoral strategy for gender equality, and to make efforts to increase women's leadership.

Gender equality is not only an issue of gender, it is an issue of development and progress of the country.

Men and women differ in the way they approach and solve problems. With the support of women, they can solve many problems that men cannot solve. Men try to solve problems by force in the majority, which sometimes leads to deadlocks, while women emphasize solving problems by finding harmony, negotiation and consensus. Even when women negotiate on their own behalf, they are for the common good and society.

Studies conducted in many countries around the world show that when women work at the national and local government levels of the country, the level of corruption is the lowest and integrity is increased. In the past 30 years, it has been said that women are successfully working in the social infrastructure sectors such as human development, education, health, and social security, but in the last 10 years, many new sectors led by women have emerged. Women are also working in large numbers in new financial products, information technology, and new management fields.

McKinsey, the world's largest research organization, says that men are promoted based on their skills, while women are promoted based on their achievements and experience. Finding success and impressing others is directly related to men and inversely related to women. In addition, women's economic opportunities and financial capabilities are poor compared to men. Therefore, a woman has to put in at least twice

as much effort to compete with men, and she goes through a tougher road. Therefore, in order to increase women's leadership, it is necessary to take into account the traditional, cultural, customary and economic barriers of society and work to find ways to reduce them.

The developed countries of the world today use representative democracy, which is a classic form of democracy, in the principle of elections. A key characteristic of representative democracy is the ability to represent the population. More than 50 percent of Mongolia's population and voters are women. Therefore, maintaining a proper and balanced representation of the population is a major development challenge.

Almost 40 years before Eduge, Norway's Prime Minister and former leader of the Labor Party, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, said: *"Women's representation at the decision-making level should be one-third or 33 percent. This is a necessary condition for influencing policy and doing politics. However, it is not a sufficient condition. Women's participation is less than 30 percent, which destroys the opportunity to influence policy and do politics."*

Increasing the representation and leadership of women in the economic, social and political life of the country is valuable, important and vital.