



National Commission for Women Affairs
and Family-Demographic Policy under
the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan



Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference: a Gender Aspect

(International conference proceedings)

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The cover features Leyla Makhat's painting.

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The conference was organized by the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the UN Development Programme in Kazakhstan and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The goal of the conference was to inform the general public and representatives of the diplomatic corps of the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on gender policies pursued by Kazakhstan, and to discuss the agenda of the forthcoming chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Organization of the Islamic Conference taking into account the gender perspective.

At the moment, the Organization of the Islamic Conference is the largest and most influential official international intergovernmental Muslim organization bringing together 57 countries with a combined population of over 1.4 billion. In terms of membership, the OIC is the world's second largest institutional organization after the United Nations. The Organization aims to promote Islamic solidarity among its member states, strengthen cooperation in political, economic, social, cultural and scientific domains and to set the stage for promoting cooperation and understanding between its member states and other countries.

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**WELCOME ADDRESS**

by the Minister of Labour and Social Protection
of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
Chairperson of the National Commission for
Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy
under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Ms. GULSHARA ABDYKALIKOVA

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim!
Dear Conference participants!

I am pleased to welcome you to the National Commission's first event held within the framework of Kazakhstan's forthcoming chairmanship of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Since gaining independence, our country has been pursuing balanced foreign policies aimed at strengthening multilateralism and the principle of countries' collective responsibility for addressing global problems.

Since joining the OIC in 1995, Kazakhstan has been actively involved in its multifaceted activities. We advocate the strengthening of the OIC as an effective and influential forum of the Muslim world and support ongoing efforts to reform and upgrade the OIC based on humanistic principles of Islam as a religion of peace and progress.

In one and a half month's time, Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship will end. Our country is making the most of its OSCE chairmanship to establish cooperation with the OIC and the Islamic world.

We do have much to share in the promotion of gender policies. This has become an integral component of domestic policies, was on the agenda of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship and was successfully presented on 6-7 May this year in Vienna.

According to the World Bank, bridging the gender gap in socio-economic opportunities promotes improved living conditions and prosperity for families, communities and even more successful economic development of countries.

Kazakhstan has all the prerequisites for gender development of its society. The gender equality strategy has been adopted and is being implemented in the Republic of Kazakhstan; National Commission for Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan is operating successfully.

To date, we have implemented many provisions of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and intend to achieve the Millennium Development Goals to empower women and secure *de facto* equality between men and women in all areas of life and activity.

Late last year, two fundamental draft laws on gender equality and prevention of domestic violence were passed, with respective tools being currently developed to enforce them.

All this will undoubtedly contribute to Kazakhstan's fast-paced development and fulfilment of its goal to be among the world's 50 most developed countries.

Today, the Conference attendants will hear about gender policy efforts being taken in Kazakhstan and learn about the experience of individual OIC member countries in the political empowerment of women, economic empowerment of women in the context of globalisation and protection of women against violence.

We would like to expand OIC cooperation in the achievement of gender equality and strengthening of the family institution and to contribute to the Organisation's noble cause. In this context, we plan to arrange an international conference in 2012 inviting leaders of family and women's institutions.

I would like to conclude my speech by quoting the great Al-Farabi, who said, 'A virtuous world is one in which all nations collaborate to achieve universal happiness. Intelligence will show the pointlessness of strife between nations'.

Thank you for your attention!



WELCOME ADDRESS

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Mr. KAIRAT UMAROV

**Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to sincerely welcome all of you here on the occasion of the conference, which is yet further proof of the increasing importance of the principle of equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the modern world and the Islamic Ummah in particular.

In anticipation of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Ministerial Segment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, we consider today's forum to be an important stage of elaboration of the content of our agenda as the Chair.

It is quite symbolic that the conference is being held here, on the ancient Kazakh soil, which has long been famous for particular veneration of women in the society. It is not for nothing that the Kazakhs say: 'With one hand the mother rocks the cradle, with the other one she rocks the world'.

Dear conference participants,

During the years of its independence Kazakhstan has made much headway on this matter. Impressive progress in socio-political and socio-economic development of Kazakhstan under the outstanding leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev was based on strong foundations of social harmony, inter-ethnic and inter-religious peace and harmony. This area is the one where it is hard to overestimate the role of women, who acted as a reliable stronghold of policies of the Head of the State.

This emphasizes the focus of the first President of Kazakhstan on women's role, achievement of true equality and equal opportunities in the modern Kazakh society.

The National Commission for Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy is functioning successfully under the Head of the State. The 2006-2016 Gender Development Strategy of Kazakhstan aimed at enhancing women's involvement into political life is under way. At present, women account for 58% of government staff and 10% of policy makers. An objective was set to achieve 30% women's representation at the policy-making level by 2016.

The legal framework is consistently improving. In 2009, Kazakhstan adopted the Laws 'On Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women', 'Prevention

of Domestic Violence', which confirm the firmness of Kazakhstan's policies aimed at achieving full gender equality and overcoming gender discrimination.

Kazakhstan's success in development is the key to its achievements in the international arena.

Kazakhstan was the first Asian and predominantly Muslim nation to head a high-profile international security organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In about two weeks' time, on 1-2 December this year, Astana will host the historically significant Summit of this Organization.

It is significant that promotion of the gender balance was one of priorities of OSCE human dimension activities during Kazakhstan's chairmanship. Stressing the urgency of this issue, Kazakhstan appointed Ms. Wendy Patten (USA) as OSCE Chairmanship's Personal Representative on Gender Issues for the first time in the history of OSCE.

Under the auspices of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship, the first extra OSCE Human Dimension meeting 'Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Social Life' was held on 6-7 May in Vienna. The gender perspective was also included into the agenda of the Warsaw part of the OSCE Human Dimension Review Conference held this October. Next year, Kazakhstan will chair an important political body of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. By committing to promotion of common values of the Muslim world, we intend to offer our vision and contribute to the achievement of outstanding targets elaborated under the OIC.

In the OIC's 10-year Action Programme, gender equality serves as a baseline for upgrade of the Islamic Ummah and its adaptation to contemporary challenges.

Under this ten-year Action Plan, the OIC plans to strengthen the legislation aimed at enhancing women's participation in economic, cultural, social and political domains in the Muslim society, at protecting women against all forms of violence and discrimination and compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination in line with Islamic values of justice and equality. Future plans include establishment of a special OIC body, which will deal with women's status in the Muslim world.

A strategically significant upgrade of the Islamic community is a key priority of Kazakhstan's chairmanship. In this context, the agenda of Kazakhstan's OIC chairmanship will pay much attention to women's role in the Muslim world and gender equality. In this context, an international OIC Conference on Issues of Women in the Muslim world, which we plan to arrange in 2012 in Astana, should become Kazakhstan's practical input. In our opinion, progress in achieving gender equality in the Islamic world will also contribute to protection of 'the true image of Islam' and the revival of true Ummah values that are often misunderstood by western society.

Dear conference participants,

I hope that this conference will become an important platform for generating relevant ideas and recommendations, which will significantly contribute to advancement of noble values of gender equality in our countries.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you all successful and fruitful work.

Thank you for your attention!

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

by the Representative of the Chairman of the
Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization
of the Islamic Conference, Counsellor of the Embassy
of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Republic of Kazakhstan
Mr. ZAFAR YERMADOV

Dear Madam Minister!
Dear Participants!

Allow me to welcome all participants of the conference and wish you fruitful work for the benefit of women, society and the state. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of this conference for the invitation and creation of a favourable working environment.

Dear friends!

Being a member of several international organizations including the Organization of the Islamic Conference since 1992, Tajikistan has taken an active part in the latter's diverse activities and aims to contribute to the strengthening of the role and authority of this Organization.

In September 2005, the heads of the OIC member states had an extraordinary summit in Mecca, which elaborated recommendations on cooperation between the Islamic states and the rest of the world and issued a policy document, the OIC's Ten-Year Action Plan, which became a 'road map' for the Muslim Ummah.

The recommendations addressed most important issues such as combating terrorism, extremism, violence and Islamophobia, as well as protection of the rights of women, children and families in the Muslim world.

Subsequent OIC conferences discussed the role of women in social and state development.

This May's 37th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Dushanbe adopted a resolution establishing a special organization for the development of women in OIC member states.

Tajikistan's state gender policies are in line with international legal norms and international principles. Tajikistan is taking consistent and active steps to support social, employment and political activities of women.

To affirm its commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and being a member state, Tajikistan has implemented respective rules and provisions in the national legislation including the Constitution, Labour Code, Civil Code, Criminal

Code, Family Code, the Code of Administrative Offences and the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On State Guarantees of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities'.

In this context, Presidential Decree 'On Measures to Enhance the Role of Women in the Society' No. 5 dated 3 December, 1999, aiming to increase women's involvement into all domains of public and social life was a political milestone.

In this regard, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has adopted a number of Resolutions and State Programmes enhancing women's role in the society, and equality.

It should be noted that the 2011-2020 National Strategy for Enhancing Women's Role in the Republic of Tajikistan was approved in May 2010.

This strategy aims to facilitate the training of gender equality experts, who would be able to develop national policies taking into account the gender balance perspective. Dear participants!

Tajikistan has completed its gender policy-making stage. Basic conceptual approaches were developed and a legislative framework for promoting gender equality has been put into place. Tajikistan has now embarked on the most critical stage, the stage of implementation of adopted policies, laws and programmes, which calls for selection of most effective implementation mechanisms and the need for a differentiated approach at the modern stage.

In our opinion, more focus should be made on the following areas in the course of development of gender equality:

- compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in line with Islamic values of justice and equality;
- women's education;
- work on the Agreement on the Rights of Women in Islam should be stepped up in accordance with Resolution No. 60/27-P and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam;

Tajikistan is making efforts to further implement recommendations of the mid-term review of the OIC's 10-Year Action Plan and the development of the Islamic Ummah.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is gratifying to see that in recent years Kazakhstan, a nation friendly to us, has achieved a significant success in its gender policies and in other domains, since we all witness the fact that Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian country in history to chair the OSCE. This proves that Kazakhstan is developing fast and becoming the centre of the region. In this respect, we are confident that the upcoming Astana Summit will play an historic role in further development of the OSCE.

Upon passing on the OSCE chairmanship at the end of this year, Kazakhstan will take up the torch, i.e. OIC CFM chairmanship, from Tajikistan in 2011. As the OIC chair-in-office, the Tajik party would like to welcome our Kazakh counterparts and express confidence that Kazakhstan will not only fulfil the delegated duties with honour, but will also propose breakthrough projects, particularly, on development of gender policies in the OIC countries.

Thank you for your attention!



WELCOME ADDRESS

Resident Representative a.i.

UNDP Kazakhstan

Ms. STELIANA NEDERA

**Dear Madam Minister, Moderator
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the United Nations Development Programme, I would like to welcome all participants of today's international conference representing the Parliament, Government and other state authorities, non-governmental organizations, political parties, international organizations and the diplomatic corps. The topic of this conference is of high priority and interest for the Kazakhstani public, with people increasingly coming to an understanding that the gender balance is an indicator of democracy and respect for basic civil rights and liberties. Kazakhstan's upgrade and adoption of advanced global social, economic and political standards require that the society should take into account natural laws of understanding of the peculiarities of human relationships.

We must realize that each and every nation has both male and female features. Gender equality is becoming part of the future of each country and Kazakhstan in particular, as the country is striving to build a democracy. Equal opportunities for women and men in family and work life, society and the state should become a normal practice. The search for a gender balance offers a huge resource for harmonization of all spheres of our lives. It is not only about men or women; this concerns everyone.

In this regard, Kazakhstan's forthcoming chairmanship of the 38th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011 is also crucial for promoting gender equality.

I am sure that the OIC chairmanship will successfully continue active efforts taken by Kazakhstan as the OSCE Chair in 2010. This fact reasserts Kazakhstan's important role in promoting inter-civilization, intercultural and interfaith dialogue. To date, the OIC is the largest official inter-governmental international Muslim organization currently uniting 57 countries with a total population of over 1.4 billion people. The OIC develops a consolidated political opinion reflected in the organization's resolutions on virtually all important issues on international agenda. In terms of the number of member countries, the OIC is the world's second largest institutional organization after the UN. Both of these international organizations cooperate in promoting joint peace-keeping efforts and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As we know, the world MDG summit was held in New York in September 2010,

where most countries reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the MDGs, including OIC countries.

During the years of its independence, Kazakhstan has made certain progress in protecting legitimate rights and interests of men and women. Gender Equality Goal 3 has been achieved in Kazakhstan to the extent of the target of eradicating gender disparities in primary and secondary education. Adoption and implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016, the Laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'On Prevention of Domestic Violence' and 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women' are good examples of such policy. I hope that the UNDP project, which is implemented jointly with the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and which provided technical support to the Secretariat in 2010, will continue in 2011 and will further promote gender equality in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's achievement of Goal 3 may be helpful in exchanging and sharing experience with OIC countries. It is gratifying to know that Kazakhstan did not rest on its laurels and committed to further Goal 3 targets. These include such priorities as adoption and implementation of measures to increase women's representation in the government; securing arrangements to prevent and eliminate violence against women and sustainable gender mainstreaming in national planning and budgeting including reduction of the wage gap between men and women. Interaction with the OIC Member States on gender equality issue will enable Kazakhstan to learn about experience of advanced OIC countries in this matter and facilitate the achievement of further Goal 3 targets.

Let me express my hope that recommendations that will be developed in the course of the conference will help form a gender-sensitive agenda and contribute to the success of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and personally Madam Minister for their commitment to advancing gender issues in Kazakhstan.

Let me wish all participants of the international conference a fruitful and constructive dialogue.

Thank you for your attention!



WELCOME ADDRESS

Deputy Head of the OSCE Centre in Astana

Ms. JEANNETTE KLOETZER

Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, on behalf of the OSCE Centre in Astana, let me express my appreciation to the National National Commission for Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme for an opportunity to speak at this representative conference.

I am honoured to welcome the participants of the conference on behalf of the OSCE Centre in Astana at the time when your country is going through a memorable experience, namely, the year of the OSCE chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the eve of the summit of OSCE member states, as well as in anticipation of Kazakhstan's upcoming chairmanship of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In this regard, we see it as particularly important that this conference is dedicated to gender equality, and offers an opportunity not only to assess the progress made by Kazakhstan in this domain, but also to outline further steps for Kazakhstan to advance political, social and economic equality of women and men as the Chair of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

In the context of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, full and equal enjoyment of rights by men and women is crucial for building peace, sustainable democracy and economic development. In order to achieve actual gender equality, several years ago the OSCE member countries adopted the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which, in particular, urges the countries to mainstream a gender perspective into all activities, projects and programmes of the Organization (OSCE) and its institutions, and those of its participating states.

It should be noted that despite some progress achieved in promoting gender equality throughout the world, including the OSCE region, many problems requiring further efforts are still there. Unfortunately, historical stereotypes pose various barriers and obstacles for many women and prevent them from full and effective participation in the life of the society. I would like to note that this problem exists not only in Kazakhstan or Central Asia, but in many, if not all, OSCE participating states and beyond.

In the political, economic and social life this leads to a situation when a relatively small number of women are found in senior positions in the executive and legislative branches, banks and corporations and generally at all levels making decisions important for the state and the society. Quite often, gender equality mainstreaming

is only declaratory and conditions created for true social and economic independence of women are inadequate. A prejudice that a professional career is not comparable to motherhood and family for a woman and contradicts prevailing historical traditions or religious laws is still common.

This is particularly gratifying and, I would even say, symbolic to see Kazakhstan naming promotion of gender equality amongst the priorities of its chairmanship of the Organization. At the initiative of Kazakhstan as the chair-in-office of the Organization, one of the landmark annual third (human) dimension conferences was devoted to discussing gender equality and promoting women's participation in the political and public life in the OSCE region. In anticipation of its chairmanship, Kazakhstan also passed two fundamental laws pertaining to gender policies, the Law 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men' and the Law 'On Prevention of Domestic Violence'.

It should be noted that we have successfully worked together with the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and UN institutions to promote these laws for several years. The OSCE Centre in Astana has provided active assistance in their development, promotion and legal review. The adoption of these laws set up a legal framework for protection and promotion of gender equality. The law *de jure* promotes the principles set forth by international instruments on women's rights. At the same time, we believe it is the right time for the Government and civil society to join their efforts and create an effective mechanism to ensure enforcement of these laws not only *de jure*, but also *de facto*.

Gender policy sustainability and progress are hard to achieve and require ongoing focus and attention and daily efforts. This is a process that calls for commitment, patience and international cooperation, taking into account experiences, practices and achievements of other countries and equally ensuring broad public involvement. Therefore, there is no doubt that Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE and, subsequently, the OIC provides a unique opportunity to use and promote best practices of states participating in these high-profile intergovernmental organizations in implementation of gender policies, promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination policies that will further strengthen security and expand all-round cooperation between different countries.

Let me assure you that the OSCE Centre in Astana will continue to provide full support to the Government of Kazakhstan and non-governmental organizations in promoting and implementing gender policies and protecting women's rights.

I wish you all an interesting and informative discussion. Thank you for your attention.



Ms. GULSHARA ABDYKALIKOVA

Minister of Labour and Social Protection
of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
Chairperson of the National Commission for Women
Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under
the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

GENDER POLICIES OF MODERN KAZAKHSTAN: REALITY AND PROSPECTS

**Dear conference participants!
Ladies and gentlemen!**

Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe this year and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference next year will offer a great opportunity for further strengthening of strategic policies aimed at promoting democratic and economic reforms in our country.

Our country is developing and prospering along with a rapidly changing world. We are proud to note that this is the first time that our country has achieved such a high status among CIS countries, Asian and Turkic-speaking countries in the gender policy domain.

The goal of the gender equality strategy is not only to ensure equal rights enshrined in the Constitution, but also to enable women and men to exercise equal opportunities and participate equally in all areas of life.

The country has adopted its first ever Gender Equality Strategy, with the government demonstrating its political will to improve women's status and turning a new page in the social policy of our state. To date, it is one of several countries to have adopted such strategic documents.

The results of the country's efforts to implement wide-scale gender policy measures are visible and Kazakhstan is widely known for its gender policies, both in the west and in the east, as well as in Central Asia, and has become a CIS leader.

As our wise folk saying has it, 'High is the price of solidarity'. Certainly, this is a result of wide-scale efforts taken by the National Commission in close collaboration with representatives of the parliament, government and civil society institutions.

I would like to start my speech by mentioning that as recently as in October this year the World Economic Forum released its Global Gender Gap 2010 Report. Measured against four indicators (economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, health and survival), the Republic of Kazakhstan ranked 41st out of 134 countries. As expected, Scandinavian countries (Iceland, Norway

and Finland) rank the highest, but, interestingly enough, our country was ahead of the 14 European Union states including Slovenia (42nd), Poland (43rd), France (46th), Italy (74th) and Hungary (79th).

If this is compared with Kazakhstan's first-time ranking, an obvious slip can be observed. For example, we ranked 32nd in 2006 and 2007, 45th in 2008 and 47th in 2009. Note, however, some progress made in 2010, i.e. movement by 6 places up. How can one explain this?

The answer is to be found in the following facts. Being a market state deeply integrated into the global economy, Kazakhstan has been affected by the global financial crisis. Whereas the country's economy used to grow at 8-10% per year during the pre-crisis period, it did so at only 1.2% last year. Mere extrapolation of these figures to the country's World Economic Forum ranking gives a clear and simple answer, which does not require further explanations. We can further point out that over the first eight months of this year the economy grew at about 8%.

It should be noted that Kazakhstan will only celebrate the 19th anniversary of its independence this December, which is an age of 'majority' according to average world statistical standards. However, during this historically negligible period of time Kazakhstan has evolved from an unknown country to a recognised and respected nation. There is no doubt that this has happened due to internationally recognised well-thought and effective policies of the President, Leader of the Nation Nursultan Nazarbayev. They resulted in the emergence of a new strong regional player, the Republic of Kazakhstan, with a stable democratic political system, liberal market economy and a developing civil society on the geopolitical map of the world. Evidence for this is provided by Kazakhstan's rapid leap to an entirely new orbit: the level of chairmanship of European and Asian international organisations, CICMA and OSCE, and the OIC next year.

Ensuring equality between men and women is the most important component of state policies of a democratic Kazakhstan aimed at promoting peace and concord, stable democracy, sustainable economic development, hence, security and stability regionally and globally. It should be noted that gender policies cannot be regarded as an element of modern political design, a symbolic gesture of the Kazakh government to the world community. Promotion of gender mainstreaming in the country should be viewed as a sincere desire to deepen and develop the process of achievement of equality between men and women for further democratisation of the society and the state. For this purpose, the country is taking deliberate and systematic efforts.

Gender policies are coordinated by the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan established in 1998. Its main goal is to implement comprehensive national policies with regards to family and gender equality in the context of the Kazakhstan's Development Strategy until 2030, 2006-2016 Gender Equality Strategy of Kazakhstan and international treaties on family and gender equality, to which Kazakhstan is a party.

State gender policies are being implemented in accordance with the strategy approved by President's Decree in 2005, which includes a total of 60 indicators.

The 2006-2008 Strategy Action Plan, which was approved by the Government and contained 45 activities, was completed, and the next 2009-2011 medium-term action plan was initiated. The state budget allocated KZT 68.4 million to implement the said 2009-2011 Action Plan.

The Gender Equality Strategy seeks to achieve 30% women's representation at the decision-making level. It also provides for the introduction of quotas of not less than 30% of representatives of one gender in political institutions, whenever lists of candidates for any elective offices are made, including political parties, employment relations and other areas. In December 2009, President Nazarbayev signed the Law

'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women' developed upon the Majilis initiative and supported by the OSCE, UNIFEM and UNDP.

As part of implementation of the Strategy, a republican network of women's leadership schools including 69 NGOs from all over the country was set up. Some progress has been achieved in political empowerment at the national level. Thus, if in 2000 the Majilis of the Republic of Kazakhstan had eight women (10.4%), in 2009 it included as many as 19 women (18%), with the number of female ministers tripling compared to the last year. The number of women in the Senate of the Parliament remained the same, two deputies only.

Currently, the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan has 21 women accounting for 14%. There are no women oblast akims, only five women are deputy oblast akims, three women are in charge of rayons. Women only account for 17% of deputy akims of rayons and 11% of akims of rural and village districts. The highest echelon of power, the national government, has three women ministers, one Agency Chairperson, one Deputy Director of the Prime Minister Office, four Executive Secretaries and four Vice-Ministers. In general, women account for 58% of civil servants and 9.5% of decision-makers.

It is gratifying to note that a lot of work on women's political empowerment has been done together with non-governmental organisations. For example, a project on launching women's politician clubs in oblasts is being implemented in conjunction with the Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan. At present, such clubs are operational in six regions.

Systematic and thorough work is also being done with political parties, in particular, making of political party lists taking into account the gender balance in case of nomination of women and men in senior positions and elected bodies. So, for example, the National Commission has signed a memorandum on promotion of gender mainstreaming in the country with the ruling party 'Nur Otan'. One outcome of this work is creation of a human resources pool for nominating the most highly-qualified women for central policy-making positions.

In addition, the Gender Equality Strategy provides for gender analysis of the national legislation and all new draft laws. For these purposes, the Guidelines for Gender Analysis of Draft Regulatory Acts have been approved. Possible introduction of a legislative provision mandating gender analysis of regulatory acts is being explored at the moment.

Pursuant to the Gender Equality Strategy gender mainstreaming in development budgets of all levels and state socio-economic development programmes was launched. The project 'Social (Gender) Budgets in Kazakhstan' is being implemented together with UNIFEM. Within its framework, gender analysis of individual budget programmes and regulations at the republican and local levels was made, and a mechanism of participation in budget processes of the civil society has been developed.

The Strategy pays much attention to gender equality in the economy, further development of entrepreneurship among women and increasing their competitiveness in the labour market.

To promote economic advancement of women, in 2003 the National Commission signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the national Small Business Development Fund. From 2002 to 2008, the National Commission initiated financing of women's business projects totalling over USD 16 million.

Late last year a new 2009-2015 women's entrepreneurship development programme was approved. In 2009-2010 alone about USD 9 million was allocated for the implementation of the aforesaid programme. To improve competitiveness in the labour market, professional training is provided to women. Last year, nearly 26,000 women were trained, with 64% of them now having permanent employment. Special mention should be made of the ongoing Rural Population Microcredit Programme. In

2009, villagers, of whom 36% are women, received 5,097 microloans totalling USD 12 million.

As a result of measures taken to promote female entrepreneurship, in Kazakhstan women accounted for about 34% of small business employees and about 47% of large and medium business employees in 2010. In 2008, women's economic activity rate increased by 2.5 percentage points compared to 2005.

Currently, the National Commission is working on introduction of distance employment. In this regard, a pilot project is under way in Aktobe Oblast. Best practices of CIS countries and Europe, in particular Italy, have been studied.

Under special control is compliance with the instructions of the Head of the State given at the V Forum of Women of Kazakhstan on 5 March 2009. For these purposes, the 2009-2015 Programme of Conditional Placement of Funds with STBs for on-lending to women entrepreneurs as microloans was approved. KZT 450 million is to be allocated this year, with 2010-2015 funding to be determined by the Budget Programme.

Overall, as of 2010, out of the 8.5 million economically active population, about 4.2 million are women. I would also like to inform you that women's contribution to GDP has reached about 39%, whereas their salaries account for 66.2% of men's.

The Address to the People of Kazakhstan 'A New Decade, a New Economic Growth and New Opportunities for Kazakhstan' President Nursultan Nazarbayev has declared better quality and standard of living of all citizens and promotion of social stability and security as the most important goal of the coming decade. To this end, the state is taking required measures to support mothers and families, to maintain the birth rate providing for expanded reproduction of the population, reducing mortality, increasing life expectancy and, on this basis, increasing the country's population.

In order to improve the marriage and family legislation, the Marriage and Family Code, which includes provisions on rights and responsibilities protecting surrogate motherhood, encouraging adoptions within the country, and provisions aimed at strengthening the family institution has been prepared and is now being discussed.

State maternal and child welfare policies aim at better living standards, social support for families, mothers and children and women's labour rights. The country has introduced a one-time childbirth allowances since 2003. In 2006, the Law of Kazakhstan 'On State Aid to Families with Children' became effective, which provides for payment of one-time childbirth allowances, childcare allowances payable until the child reaches the age of one year and benefits for children from low-income families under 18 years.

The state pays particular attention to families with many children. Without supporting them, we cannot set the stage for increasing the population by 10% by 2020 as outlined in this year's Address of the President.

For these purposes, to further enhance the prestige of marriage and family, the National Commission held the second contest for married women, 'Mrs. Kazakhstan', all over the country. The first contest held in 2008 aroused much interest among the public, demonstrating the pressing need for such events. The contest is relevant since true female beauty, patience and wisdom are as eternal as life itself.

The National Commission has decided to support the great undertaking of the contest initiator, *Season* magazine. And it is no coincidence since the goals of the project are in line with the main activities of the National Commission and are to increase the value of marriage and family, strengthen the role of parents in the upbringing of children and real empowerment of women in the society.

Another important area of work is preservation and strengthening of the reproductive health of women and men to ensure adequate reproduction of population and to improve the quality of life. Centres will be open for early detection (screening) of breast cancer in women, efforts are being made for family planning and reducing the

number of abortions. The National Research Centre of Maternity and Childhood and the Republican Children's Rehabilitation Centre have already been commissioned.

As is known, in his Address the President has set a task to halve maternal and infant mortality by 2020 while increasing life expectancy to 72 years.

For these purposes, the 2008-2010 Maternal and Infant Mortality Reduction Programme has been on-going since 1 January 2008. State budget costs exceed KZT 24 billion.

Given the negative impact of micronutrient deficiencies (iodine, iron) on women's reproductive health, in 2009 all pregnant women continued to receive, free of charge, iron and iodine-containing drugs.

Comprehensive measures have resulted in reduced maternal and infant mortality and elimination of one of the most threatening childhood diseases, polio. Kazakhstan was the first CIS country to have introduced vaccination of all newborns against hepatitis B.

It should be noted that compared to the same period in 2009, maternal and infant mortality rates have dropped from 25.3 per 100,000 live births (9 months of 2009 - 32.7) and 17.1 per 1,000 live births (9 months of 2009 - 18.4) respectively. However, the women's health index remains low and averages about 20-30%. Men also have health problems. They often suffer from tuberculosis and mental disorders and account for a higher share of the HIV-infected. Men suffer more from drinking- and smoking-related diseases and are more prone to occupational injuries. High mortality is observed in working-age men. As a result, there is a pronounced gender inequality in life expectancy of women (73.6 years) and men, which is 10 years less (63.6 years). It should be noted that men's life expectancy has recently increased by almost one and a half years primarily due to the introduction of traffic safety measures.

To combat anaemia and thyroid disease widespread in Central Asia, the National Commission raised a grant from the Asian Development Bank amounting to USD 1.2 million. These proceeds were used to purchase equipment and introduce flour fortification with iron and salt iodization. Kazakhstan has adopted the iodization law, which provides for iodization of all salt in the country, and the Health and Healthcare Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which provides for mandatory fortification of premium- and first-grade wheat flour with iron, vitamins, minerals and other substances.

There is no doubt that gender education facilitates gender equality policies in all social domains. To this end, a gender education campaign has been launched. Gender analysis of school textbooks has been performed. Comprehensive Educational Programme 'Gender' has been developed for school and preschool education. The gender component has been included into mandatory state standards of secondary 12-year education in Kazakhstan.

State policies for prevention of violence in the society are aimed at creating conditions for decent living. Kazakhstan pays much attention to this area. Back in 1999, following the President's initiative, special units were set up within the internal affairs authorities, down to the rayon level, to protect women from violence. At the moment, there are 16 such units employing 126 staff. It should be noted that Kazakhstan is the only country in the former Soviet Union, which has set up such units.

In December 2010, President Nazarbayev signed the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, which made it possible to integrate domestic violence into criminal, administrative and civil law.

Currently, 21 crisis centres for victims of domestic violence provide real help to women in protecting their right to life free of violence and received 20,096 requests for various types of assistance in 2009 alone. These included 5,080 cases of physical violence, 5,618 case of psychological violence and 608 sexual abuse and other forms of violence.

Amendments were made to all articles of the Criminal Code and the Law on Tourist Activities with regards to human trafficking crimes. Qualifying elements of crimes of this category have been expanded and respective penalties have been toughened. Trafficking of people from Kazakhstan and their illegal transit are now deemed to be a crime punishable by imprisonment for 3 to 8 years and forfeiture of property.

In order to form gender-sensitive public consciousness, efforts are being made to introduce gender education and gender awareness-raising. *Otbasy* magazine published under the auspices of the National Commission promotes gender policies and arranges contests of billboards promoting family values and gender equality in the family.

NGOs play a significant role in promoting gender equality. At present, Kazakhstan has about 9,000 non-governmental organisations including 250 those dedicated to gender issues. For example, close and effective partnership has been established with the Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan and the Union of Women Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan. In 2003, our country started provision of state support for NGOs. Funding for socially significant projects implemented by non-governmental organisations in the area of gender, family and demographic policies has been increasing year in, year out. Thus, in 2009 about KZT 40 million was allocated towards this purpose compared to KZT 1.5 million in 2005.

In 2008, the number of TV/radio programmes and publications has increased by 2.5 and 1.5 times respectively from 2005. As part of the state information policies, KZT 18 and 37.5 million were allocated to electronic and print media respectively in 2008.

As mentioned earlier, two gender laws passed in December 2009 are the main outcome of the gender policy promotion. Work has been started to develop respective enforcement mechanisms. Commentary to the Law 'On Prevention of Domestic Violence' has been developed and released. The country's legislation was reviewed to analyse its compliance with provisions of the Law 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women'; the Guidelines for State Authorities on Functioning of National Gender Equality Mechanism and Recommendations on Formation of the National Gender Equality Mechanism in the Republic Kazakhstan have been developed. Commentary to the Law 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women' is being prepared.

Special mention should be made of the first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting 'Promotion of Gender Balance and Participation of Women in Political and Public Life', which was conducted on 6-7 May 2010, in Vienna as part of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship, arranged with the participation of the National Commission and attended by 257 participants from 53 countries. This was the largest human dimension meeting in the history of the OSCE.

The agenda contained issues of gender equality in the OSCE region including promotion of gender equality in the OSCE region: progress and future challenges; empowerment of women as members of political parties and elected officials; ensuring gender balance and women's effective participation in social life.

The National Commission places particular emphasis on cooperation with international organisations. Evidence for this is provided by the project 'Support to the National Commission in Improvement of Measures to Ensure Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan' implemented jointly with UNDP since 2009 and population projects implemented together with UNFPA for the third year running. It should be noted that the share of people over 65 years of age has been growing in Kazakhstan (2008 – 7.7%) and the UN classifies Kazakhstan as a country with an aging population (i.e. more than 7% of population over 65 years of age). Domestic scientists expect the share of elderly people to increase to 11.5% in 2030. Therefore,

the National Commission has initiated the drafting of the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Older People.

I would also like to inform you that we are currently contemplating the signing of the gender equality cooperation memorandum with USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development). A memorandum with 'Dialogue Eurasia' International Foundation aimed at cooperation in the area of gender, family and demographic policies is also being drafted.

At present, the main objective of the National Commission is to prepare and perform activities to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Independence of Kazakhstan. The keynote idea of these activities was prompted by the founder of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, who once said that independence is the most sacred value to all Kazakhstanis. We will also promote inclusion of the gender perspective as one of priorities of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. In his recent interview to *Euronews*, President Nursultan Nazarbayev said, 'We are facing two major challenges. The first one is to learn how to combat religious fundamentalism as a political ideology without demonizing Islam as a religion. The second is to establish an open and honest dialogue between the West and the Muslim world. Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference would serve both of these noble objectives'.

Over the years of sovereign development we have accumulated some valuable capital in promoting gender mainstreaming and development of family and demographic policies. Therefore, Kazakhstan, as a successful global policy manager, could continue to promote the modernisation spirit of Astana aimed at reinforcing a solid bridge between Eastern and Western civilizations, religions and cultures taking into account the gender perspective.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the state gender, family and population policies are based on full and through consideration of national and international gender equality experience. It is based on the principles of continuity, pragmatism and balance, is an important component of responsible domestic policies and is aimed at strengthening the national harmony and unity. The OSCE chairmanship and the forthcoming OIC chairmanship provide us with a unique opportunity for mutual enrichment using theoretical and practical gender policy achievements of the member states of the organisations that, without a doubt, will further strengthen security and enhance comprehensive cooperation globally.



Mr. ALEXANDER SUDIN

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LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL GENDER POLICIES

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues!

Madame Minister has elaborated on major the efforts being taken to advance gender policies. I would like to focus on one particular area of these efforts, namely, the relevant legislative framework.

The urgency of the topic proposed for discussion to our audience is also **clearly prescribed by the Millennium Agenda proclaimed in the UN Declaration** and aiming to ensure equal rights and opportunities and inclusion into the planet's sustainable development processes.

The international community is addressing the problem of **gender asymmetries** in the global context and links resolution of this issue to **future prospects for human civilization**.

This is easy to understand since the implementation of gender equality, harmony and mutual understanding is an essential condition and a prerequisite for the development of a civilized society. Therefore, two major social policies, sustainable development and gender policy, are seen in the **socio-cultural context** of the modern world.

It should be stressed that gender issues are not something new to our society.

However, in the XXI century, more than ever, focus should be made on these aspects of public administration and public relations. The success of national socio-economic development plans and programmes hinges on the efficiency of gender policies.

This is the reason why since the very outset of the country's independence these issues have been actively promoted in the society and enjoyed the direct support of the Head of the State Nursultan Nazarbayev. Indeed, much has already been done. Kazakhstan's **ranking 41 out of 134 countries in terms of gender movement** is evidence of recognition of these achievements by the global community.

However, given that gender policies and, in general, social policies are growing in significance along with the improvement of the political system, development of

democratic institutions and building of the civil society, further improvement of the national gender strategy becomes particularly important.

I believe that the national gender policy model is designed not only to reflect and state, but also to **project, so to speak**, prospects of its further development. First and foremost, there is a need for a thorough analysis of the current status of affairs, identification of emerging patterns and trends and most urgent **areas of gender efforts**.

This will not only allow the current gender policy **paradigm to be revisited**, but will also significantly reduce the gap between theoretical gender studies and actual practice underpinning the national model in this area.

Designing implementation tools is of high priority for improving the **institutional mechanisms of gender policies**. There is no doubt that the **gender legislation** plays **first fiddle** here and is bound to be based on the state of gender statistics, budget, gender studies and national traditions.

The constitutional principle of equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for men and women found its way through broad **gender mainstreaming** in the national legislation. Thus, the gender equality legal framework includes the Laws 'On Prevention of Domestic Violence', 'On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Prevention of Domestic Violence', 'On State Guarantees of Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men', etc.

I believe there is no need to dwell on the provisions of the aforesaid documents, but the importance of these acts constituting the legal framework for **promotion of gender equality** should be emphasized. One should also mention the importance of efforts to identify inconsistencies between the current laws and principles of equality and to adopt appropriate amendments in a timely manner.

As an example, one could use the findings of the analysis of compliance of current laws with the provisions of the Law 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women'. In this regard, **some proposals** were made **to amend** the Laws 'On Civil Service', 'On Internal Affairs Authorities', 'On Marriage and Family', 'On Children's Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan', as well as the Labour and Health Codes.

I believe that a further **gender review** of the national legislation would identify other issues to be **adjusted** for the legal framework to comply with the provisions of the gender laws.

Turning to the legislative gender aspects, one should point out the importance of legal support for measures to eliminate the professional segregation of women and create conditions for their professional career, promotion, better representation in senior positions and at the political decision-making level, **all the more so as we** have already set the target of achieving **30%** representation of women at the decision-making level by 2016.

And we do have good **prospects at the middle level of the** public administration.

It suffices to say that the 'weaker sex' accounts for 46% of all directors of ministerial departments and divisions and for 54% of equivalent positions in Government agencies.

It is also gratifying to note that over the past two years 2,519 students were sent to study in the world's best universities under the Presidential Bolashak Programme, with almost half of them being young girls. Thus, we can certainly manage to achieve the set target.

One more thing. Gender policies, being an important component of the country's social strategy, call for addressing deep gender topics. **Not least of all**, this calls for transformation of the mindset, gender attitudes and emergence of advanced gender models. It is also important to eliminate prejudice, bias, stereotypes and standards that are deeply rooted in the human mind. No less important are efforts to create new

models of **consciousness** and behaviour in line with the principles of equal partnership and cooperation between men and women. This approach, of course, changes the correlation between gender policy goals and priorities in the human psychology domain.

The global **consciousness** transformation campaign should widely involve such areas as culture, education, media, while strengthening the legislative framework.

This is what will make it possible to change the focus of the consciousness and move away from **outdated cultural codes and gender metaphors**.

There is no doubt that this will allow feminine potential to be actively involved in fulfilment of tasks facing the state and society and will provide new impetus to successful implementation of gender policies.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues!

In conclusion, I would like to thank the organizers of this conference and express my confidence that discussion of urgent issues pertaining to today's topic will be helpful in making and improving the legislation related to gender issues.

Thank you for your attention!



Ms. MADINA JARBUSSYNOVA
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KAZAKHSTAN'S PRIORITIES IN LIGHT OF ITS OIC CHAIRMANSHIP

It is quite symbolic and, in my opinion, timely to conduct this Forum on possible gender priorities during Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 2011 given the experience that has been gained. As early as during the first month of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the OSCE Centre in Astana, with the support of UNDP, hosted a conference, whose participants provided strong arguments to substantiate the need to promote gender balance as one of the priorities of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship. This resulted in the Supplementary OSCE Meeting devoted to the gender balance at the decision-making level in the OSCE member countries and held in May 2010 in Vienna. Heated debates that unfolded during the three sessions reaffirmed the correct selection of the priority, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, showed the need for more focused efforts to implement the relevant action plan since the status of implementation of the Beijing treaties and the Platform for Action in women's interests even 25 years following their adoption is far from being desired, with the exception of few countries.

Recommendations of the Supplementary Meeting formed the basis of a number of projects pursued by the OSCE Secretariat and ODIHR and underpinned the member countries' agreement on the mandate and terms of reference of the Personal Representative on Gender Issues, an office introduced by the Chairman-in-the-Office. U.S. representative Wendy Patten was appointed as the Personal Representative on Gender Issues, a position initiated by Kazakhstan, and has already participated in two parts of the Review Conference (Warsaw and Vienna), where she met with representatives of Kazakh NGOs and stated her vision of implementation of the mandate at the OSCE Permanent Council. Our 'know how' was supported by the next OSCE Chairman, Lithuania, which gives ground for strong confidence in further focused advancement of the gender balance in all domains in the OSCE region.

In general, we have gained some positive and valuable experience in managing the largest regional Eurasian organisation. Initially, the OSCE chairmanship was identified by the President of Kazakhstan as a strategic national project. Preparations that were made well in advance to elaborate and agree on priorities, cross-dimensional balance, pragmatism, honesty, impartiality and loyalty to commitments adopted as the motto (four Ts) that were demonstrated subsequently, all these contributed to an overall

success. The set bar requires that Kazakhstan should assume similar approaches in its forthcoming chairmanship of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

While working on Kazakhstan's priorities in the OIC chairmanship, we certainly admit that there is a lot to be done. It is impossible to mechanically transplant the goals and objectives from the OSCE region to the OIC region. We should take into account peculiarities of the organisations, both structural and, specifically, semantic ones, which define the role and objectives of their chairman. However, we should proceed not from contradictions and differences, but search for reasonable common grounds for cooperation in the interests of the community. To elaborate mutually acceptable standings in the dialogue of the East-West civilizations, in October 2008, Kazakhstan convened the ministerial conference 'Common World: Progress through Diversity', which was attended by countries participating in both organisations.

I believe that the gender aspect is one of the areas where convergence of positions is not only possible, but is also already underway. In this case, we must proceed from common principles recognised as universal international standards and then move towards other mutually acceptable goals. It is also important to clearly realise what Kazakhstan intends to achieve when implementing chairman's priorities as a member country. During the OSCE chairmanship gender priorities contributed to further deepening and expansion of the implementation of the provisions of the Gender Equality Strategy. This should be the focus of the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the coming year, especially since 2016 (the year of completion of the strategy) is not far away. One should also bear in mind Kazakhstan's report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to be submitted to the UN Committee in 2011. In other words, all available international levers should be used reasonably to enable prompt achievement of the intentions. The other day, there was an election to the Executive Board of the new UN structure, UN Women, which will start operating in January 2011. Nominated by the Asian Group, Kazakhstan has gained the required support of the majority of the UN members and was elected to the Board for three years. This election acknowledges our achievements in women's empowerment and offers more opportunities for coordinated activities with relevant institutions in the community of Member States of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

At the turn of the second and third millenniums, a number of the Muslim world states and the OIC General Secretariat initiated a process to strengthen women's role and enhance their participation in the progress of the member states. Of course, the World Conference on Women, in particular, the Beijing Conference and the documents adopted acted as a catalyst. The tenth and eleventh OIC Summits, as well as all subsequent OIC CFMs urged the member states to take appropriate steps to arrange for women's activities at the national and international levels in various areas of political and social life. The OIC General Secretariat was requested to coordinate cooperation between member countries and their women's associations.

The Third Extraordinary OIC Summit held in 2005 in Mecca resolved to step up efforts to improve women's education and eliminate female illiteracy. Furthermore, the participants instructed to set up a special OIC body in charge of family issues and gender policies. The Summit adopted the core policy document of the Muslim world, the 10-year OIC Action Plan, which provides for maximum political and social empowerment of women in Islamic countries. As a result, according to UN statistics a number of OIC member countries have achieved great progress towards the Millennium Development Goals related to women's empowerment. The 32nd session of the Conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC member states (Sana'a, Yemen) held after the Summit in the same year, 2005, instructed the Secretariat to hold a ministerial conference to discuss the role of women in

the contemporary Muslim world and opportunities for advancement in this area. Turkey took an initiative to host the first conference of the OIC member countries in 2006. The Conference was crucial because for the first time the attention of the Organisation and the entire Islamic community was focused on the need to ensure equal development opportunities for men and women and integration of countries' efforts to empower women. When opening the conference, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Erdogan emphasised the need to eliminate misconceptions about women in various Muslim countries. He also stressed that Islam does not interfere with the active participation of women in economic and social life and that the problem lies in traditions and habits. Speaking of challenges that women in several countries face in more active participation in the socio-economic life, he also noted that this problem has no geographical or regional affiliation. In his opinion, women's issues should be discussed within the framework of universal fundamental rights and freedoms. As stressed by the Prime Minister, this approach is being pursued in Turkey, which aspires to empowerment of women at all levels and in all areas, in particular, politics, gender equality, sustainable development, as well as the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

This message, along with a task to create a road map for women's agenda for the OIC member states set by the OIC Secretary General Professor Ihsanoglu, contributed to the consent of all states participating in the first Conference, i.e. about forty OIC members:

- 1) development of national policies and programmes to strengthen women's participation in all areas of life and eradicate poverty among women;
- 2) ensuring women's participation at the decision-making level, from local to national authorities. The latter can be seen as rather revolutionary recognition that in the Islamic world a woman should also be an active decision-maker at the state level. This resolution facilitated the adoption and introduction of special arrangements including the introduction of temporary quotas to ensure women's participation at the decision-making level and in legislative bodies. As a consequence, we should admit that a number of Islamic states are ahead of Kazakhstan in terms of women's participation at the decision-making level. Therefore, when men sometimes say that Kazakhstan is not a Scandinavian country to strive for gender equality and try to say that Islamic traditions should be followed, we can counter this argument by saying that unfortunately we are not leaders in all areas even in the Islamic world. But we must become a leader not only because of our upcoming chairmanship of the Organisation at the ministerial level, but also because of the potential and strategic objectives that we have assumed and our President has set by approving the Gender Equality Strategy;
- 3) a better future for women through access to education. Conference participants recognised the critical role of education in the advancement of women in general and poverty alleviation in particular. This requires an open and full access of women and girls to education. In this case, more focus needs to be placed on qualitative rather than quantitative aspects of women's education. It was also stressed that traditions and habits often become a source of discrimination of men and women in education;
- 4) elimination of all forms of violence against women. While acknowledging that violence is a global phenomenon interfering with fundamental human rights and freedoms, the conference participants emphasised that violence is also alien to Islamic dogmas and traditions, and, therefore, concrete measures need to be taken to prevent and eliminate it.

In accordance with the Resolution of the 32nd Session of the Conference of the Council of Ministers, participants of this conference also decided to hold such high-level conferences every two years and elaborate a plan of action for the advancement

of women by the next conference. To this end, during the conference in Turkey the first working group of international experts was set up and first chaired by Malaysia and then, since it was decided to hold the second OIC conference on women's issues in Egypt, the working group chairmanship was transferred to Egypt.

The second OIC conference was attended by high-level representatives of the 46 OIC member countries as well as international organisations. The conference was held under the patronage of Egypt's First Lady Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, who opened the conference and stressed that Islamic canons provide for a more educated and advanced role of women in the society and family. She pointed out that the evolutionary concept of human resources development demonstrated the importance of investing in human resources, in general, and in building and strengthening women's capacity, in particular, through their empowerment.

The most debated topic of this conference was OIC's draft plan of action for advancement of women adopted by the conference participants. It was also called 'Cairo Action Plan' and, if carefully analysed, it is obvious that it is very similar to core main international instruments on women. It is noteworthy that even those OIC states, which are not parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, agreed on the terms of the Cairo Plan of Action. Undoubtedly, substantial input was made by the working group and the chairman country, which, moreover, proposed hosting the headquarters of the OIC structure on the status of women.

The Plan adopted in Egypt has moved beyond areas identified during the first conference in Turkey. It included all main areas including economic ones. In addition to the above-mentioned challenges pointed out at the Istanbul conference, much focused was made on mechanisms of economic strengthening of women's status, development of entrepreneurship structures, employment and equal access to labour markets, as well as ways to ensure women's access to healthcare.

This plan is being actively used by the OIC countries, and the first experiences of its implementation are to be discussed in a month's time at the Third Conference announced by Iran back in Egypt. The OIC General Secretariat believes that more effective implementation of the plan requires that the member states adopt relevant legislation. Being the Chairman of the OIC Council of Ministers, Kazakhstan could contribute to this as we have a positive experience in elaborating the relevant law.

Speaking about the priorities of our chairmanship, I think we now need to base our priorities on the Cairo Action Plan and, against this background, focus on core areas. Without losing sight of all aspects of this plan, it would be more appropriate to focus on areas more important for the Islamic world. These are, of course, education and better access for women and girls to education. I proceed from the fact that Kazakhstan belongs to the 'MDG +' group as far as Millennium Development Goals are concerned, and we have some experience we can share. Focus should also be made on women's economic development potential and forms of entrepreneurship. And, of course, an important topic that Kazakhstan could initiate is women's participation in ensuring security. Security has a broad meaning as we could provide evidence while chairing the OSCE. In addition, one should take into account, on the one hand, the need to ensure women's safety and, on the other hand, women's potential in achieving universal security as far as their possible involvement in preventive actions and subsequent peace-building is concerned. Within this broad understanding of security, we could start working with the OIC General Secretariat structures and partner countries based on, among others, the fact that all of the OIC member countries, being UN members, adopted Resolution No. 1325 of the UN Security Council 'Women, Peace and Security'. While implementing the concept of the Eurasian security and providing assistance to Afghanistan, Kazakhstan can single out women's aspect as a sub-programme.

Thank you for your attention!



Ms. ZAREMA SHAUKENOVA

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GENDER DISCOURSE IN OPERATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

The global information space and, along with it, consciousness do not keep up with the pace of development of the Islamic thought. Let's take the Declaration on Human Rights adopted within the OIC framework as an example. In fact, this is a new legal phenomenon aligning demands of the growing Islamic Ummah and modern social trends. The world and, specifically, western consciousness remain captives of old thinking clichés. The Islamic world is experiencing a feminine revolution and even the emergence of 'Islamic feminism'. Islamic world leaders, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Libya's Muammar Gaddafi nicknamed Lion of the Desert, raise women's issues in Islamic societies.

For example, at a meeting with an audience of women during his official visit in mid-June 2009 to Italy, Muammar Gaddafi addressed the Islamic world with a sensational call for 'feminine revolution'. He stressed that the men of Arab and Muslim world treat women 'like a piece of furniture'. 'Women are like a piece of furniture you can change when you want and nobody will ever question why you did so. The world needs a feminine revolution based on a cultural revolution'.

The Libyan leader described himself as a champion of women's equality. In support of his words, he recalled that back in 2003 Libya ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Women. Furthermore, Libyans insist that women in Libya have more rights than in any other country of the Islamic world. Back in 1975, Gaddafi himself issued a statement declaring full equality between women and men and calling discrimination of the weaker sex a flagrant violation.

In March 2010, the Iranian president proposed to appoint a woman representing an OIC member country as Deputy Chair of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stated that 'This will be a step to support the OIC in advancement of women'.

Thus, within the Islamic world including the OIC countries the women's issue is raised increasingly. The Islamic Declaration of Human Rights adopted at the 1990 OIC Summit reads as follows. Article 1: 'All men are equal, without any discrimination on the basis of sex'. Article 6 reads, 'Woman is equal to man in human dignity, and has

her own rights to enjoy as well as duties to perform, and has her own civil entity and financial independence'.

Of course, quite often fine statements are not always supported with real content. Thus, in Libya M. Gaddafi himself repeatedly called a family as women's primary mission. Also, female citizens of Libya are prohibited from using contraceptives and working in areas dominated by men.

The first International Congress on Islamic Feminism in Barcelona in October 2009 pointed out two key issues affecting women's liberation in the Islamic world. On the one hand, it is distorted interpretation of the Quran in Islamic countries resulting in a degraded role of women. An ex-employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Asma Barlas stated at the Congress that 'the sacred texts say nothing that would suggest a lower status of women. But we suffer from an unfair tradition established by and for men'.

One of the Congress organisers Abdennur Prado said that 'we are talking about the cultural revolution in Islam, which is not covered adequately ... In the 1920's there were powerful feminine surges in Egypt and in the 1990's the rise of Muslim feminists started almost everywhere in response to Wahhabism and ultra-Orthodox dogmas. Although progress achieved since then has been quite modest, these movements have gained momentum today. They establish contacts with each other and develop a common strategy.

There is yet another problem. It has to do with scepticism of the West towards Muslim countries. Iranian sociologist Valentina Moghadam working at UNESCO said that Muslim feminists owe 'a huge moral debt to western feminists. However, they feel uncomfortable next to secular feminists. We found ourselves between two fires, Islamic fundamentalists and Western feminists, who see religion as a synonym of oppression. But even we return to Quranic roots, we can still fight for our rights'.

That is, we can observe steady growth of gender discourses in what seems to be the most conservative area of the world, Islamic societies. At present, the world is in need of alignment of the western and eastern agendas. In this regard, Kazakhstan has become one of leaders advocating a combination of discourses. In preparation for its OSCE Chairmanship, Kazakhstan has urged Islamic countries to engage actively in preparation of the agenda for the OSCE. This was done taking into account the prospects of Kazakhstan's OIC chairmanship. Tolerance has become an important component of Kazakhstan's slogan in the year of its OSCE chairmanship. In this context, in his interview for *Euronews* the Head of the State President Nursultan Nazarbayev stressed the importance of tolerance as a global trend to strengthen inter-civilization and intercultural dialogue. The President has also highlighted two important aspects. The first is that Kazakhstan is actively promoting convergence of East and West in understanding of key issues in the modern world order and prospects for its further evolution. Clearly, this major issue includes the gender theme. Europe is suffering from racism and xenophobia. For example, the French law prohibits wearing hijabs, tightens measures and introduces fines. Was it an attempt to protect democracy or a new form of racism and sexism?

Tolerance and intercultural and interfaith harmony are among Kazakhstan's national strengths and advantages. In this context, the second aspect pointed out by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in the aforesaid interview is that tolerance would be in the spotlight during Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011. Moreover, tolerance will be considered in a broader context as emphasized by the Head of the State.

Thus, we can say that an important time has come to implement yet another advantage of Kazakhstan's development model, which is its gender policies, namely, gender tolerance. At present, Kazakhstan has a National Commission responsible for gender issues as part of its power system and holds regular women's forums. The

Government includes three women in charge of leading social sectors and economic development prospects. We are proud to have Gulshara Abdykalikova as Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Zhanar Aitzhanova as Minister of Economic Development and Trade and Salidat Kayirbekova as Minister of Healthcare. These women are among 50 best-known state and public figures of Kazakhstan.

I think that within the OIC framework Kazakhstan could promote its experience of harmonious integration of women into the development process. Kazakhstan is a part of the Islamic world. This is a generally known fact. Polls show that more than 50% of respondents classified Kazakhstan as a country of the Islamic world. More than 90% of respondents called relations between people of different faiths friendly and calm.

In his interview to *Euronews*, President Nursultan Nazarbayev has put forward a very important point about Kazakhstan's willingness to show the world that 'Islam, progress and democracy are compatible'. The country has a predominantly Muslim population, which does not prevent it, however, from successful implementation of socioeconomic and political reforms and gradual integration into the democratic international community.

Kazakhstan is implementing a dialectical consciousness model, which implies that the society tends to add and multiply rather than divide and deduct. This is a simple, yet a very important feature of tolerance. This formula incorporates gender policies. It has been recognised that Kazakhstan is successfully developing against the background of Central Asian and other Muslim countries due to skilful integration of women's human capital. We believe that if the Muslim world does the same, the entire global civilization will develop faster.

It is no accident that much is said today about the miracle of Muslim nations. Let's take Malaysia with its high economic development rates as an example. In July 2010, the Sharia court of this country considered to be one of the world's most 'islamized' ones first appointed female judges. Former women employees of Islamic Judicial Department were appointed Sharia judges in important administrative centres, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya as announced by the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Attention to Islam and Islamic societies will be increasing. According to experts Islam will become the largest religion in the world and outstrip currently prevailing Christianity in the next 20-30 years. In western societies, women have reached a certain point close to equality of the sexes, which even starts penetrating the religious domain. For example, in Sweden, women were elected as bishops, which is the highest rank in the Christian church. In 1994, the Anglican Church allowed women to become priests.

The status of women in Islamic societies was one of highlights of President Barack Obama's speech at Cairo University in June 2009. The experts called this speech an attempt of reconciliation between the U.S. and the Islamic world.

Thus, in our opinion, Kazakhstan's gender policy model is an important argument in favour of the success of our country's OSCE chairmanship and the forthcoming OIC chairmanship.

Gender is a guide to inter-sexual and, in a broader context, social harmony. Gender harmonization makes closer and more effective intercultural harmonization possible.

It is quite possible that due to gender Huntington's predictions about civilization clashes will not come true.

Kazakhstan and all of us have a unique opportunity to take part in these processes.



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KAZAKHSTAN'S INITIATIVE TO STRENGTHEN THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE WEST

The world has undergone significant changes over the past few years. Transformation has affected virtually each and every domain of socio-economic, socio-political and cultural development. In this context, Kazakhstan has put forward a number of proposals on security and cooperation in various regions of the world. These proposals were reflected in the initiatives of the Kazakh government, which urged all countries and regions to strengthen the dialogue between the Muslim world and the West. Motives underpinning Kazakhstan's initiatives are quite evident. Kazakhstan, which is part of Eurasia and the Muslim world, is vitally interested in strengthening international stability and security.

To achieve this goal, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has put forward initiatives to formulate and address issues of expansion of the dialogue of civilizations between the East and the West. This issue should become one of the most important ones on the agenda of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011. As practice shows, the dialogue of civilizations has long since moved beyond purely cultural and historical studies to become a separate and, moreover, a crucial issue of social, economic and political development. In this context, focus on broad understanding, examination and resolution of this issue by all countries, both in the east and the west, based on different religious and cultural traditions, should be fully supported by all OIC member countries.

Any unbiased observer understands that Kazakhstan's initiatives are not designed to be a sensation or propaganda, or put partners in a political disadvantage; they are businesslike, realistic and balanced. Acknowledging Kazakhstan's contribution to the development of a global dialogue among civilizations, the head of the Lutheran World Council Ishmael Noko said, 'I sincerely hope that this process will serve as an example for many governments and encourage them to respond more adequately to this crucial issue'. In essence, Kazakhstan's initiatives are an invitation for a joint search for mutually acceptable solutions to enhance trust between the Muslim world and the west. It is also clear that the Kazakhstani initiatives closely linked to political and economic policies and other interests of all countries of the East and West are intended for the international community and organisations including UN, OSCE and OIC. One should take into account the fact that Kazakhstan's initiatives to promote

dialogue and partnership between the Muslim world and the West have been put forward in the context of existing modern challenges.

Since the first days of the country's independence, the country's leader, President Nursultan Nazarbayev, started large-scale efforts in the area of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. On the one hand, we can say that this was due to its geographic and demographic situation, as well as the specific religious and ethnic situation in the country. Indeed, geographically Kazakhstan is uniquely situated in Eurasia as a meeting point between the East and the West. The religious and ethnic diversity in the country is striking as there are more than 120 ethnic groups and more than 40 faiths and denominations.

Along with Islam, the country has followers of Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Buddhism and other religions. Since early 1990s Kazakhstan has seen a dramatic increase in the number of religious buildings. At the moment, the country has over 3,200 places of worship for all religions. During the period of the country's independence the number of mosques has increased considerably (from 59 in 1989 to 2,135 in 2007), with the number of Orthodox and Catholic parishes increasing by four and two times respectively. There are over 1,000 protestant missions and prayer houses, 21 Jewish communities, Buddhist temples, etc.

However, irrespective of ethnic and religious peculiarities, real politics largely depends on leaders' specific actions. In this regard, Kazakhstan is also unique since its *real politique* in the area of interethnic and interfaith dialogue is inseparable from the personality of the President.

Much space would be required to enumerate various initiatives. I will name only few most important ones such as the Congress of World Religions (2003, 2006, 2009), International Conference on Peace and Accord (2006), International Forum: 'Common World: Progress through Diversity' (2008) organized by the RK MFA; Programme *The Muslim World and the West* and many others held in the form of international and regional initiatives, such as, e.g., Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). In 2010, Kazakhstan chaired the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and in 2011 it will chair the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). UN has supported Kazakhstan's initiative to declare 2010 as the Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The aforementioned activities form a solid platform used by Kazakhstan to declare and spread the idea of inter-religious cooperation on a broad international arena.

Kazakhstan's initiatives are shaped distinctly to achieve harmonious structural frameworks at the international level. Of course, this framework still needs support, further development and coordinated efforts of various participants of the international system. However, initial steps have already been made in this direction and they are obvious. The next step is to make this system work and enhance it. When looked at through this lens, Kazakhstan's initiatives are unprecedented and have far-reaching consequences for the entire community, global stability and peace.

Kazakhstan's initiatives and focus on improvement of the situation in the world give a reason for us to hope for transition from dialogue to partnership in the new context. This is particularly important because international relations in this century are clearly dominated by two major trends, globalisation and regionalisation, which imply that prosperity of the national economy will depend on its interaction with the global economy, on the one hand, and regional cooperation, on the other.

Expressing his satisfaction with Kazakhstan's accession to the OIC as a full member of this prestigious Islamic organisation, OIC Secretary General A. Laraki said that 'wonderful contacts and partnerships with a number of OIC member countries, good in their content and scale' have already been established. According to the Head of the OIC Research Department Dabur Nebil Muhammad Kazakhstan ranks 8th in the

world in terms of meat and dairy production, 10th in wheat production and 6th in the OIC in terms of direct investments. Currently, Kazakhstan is making great efforts to bring the country's relations with major Muslim powers to the level of strategic partnership and in line with our countries' real potential, while using all political, economic, and, most importantly, spiritual and humanitarian reserves. These countries include Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Malaysia, India, Egypt, Gulf countries and others, as evidenced by fruitful visits of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan into these countries.

Turkey is one of the most active participants in Kazakhstan's economic life. Until recently, Turkish firms have injected direct investments into Kazakhstan amounting to USD 500 million, with more than 600 Kazakh-Turkish joint ventures set up.

Kazakhstani-Iranian relations are among the most important parts of the country's foreign policy priorities. In the years to come, we will face the need to achieve a breakthrough in addressing crucial tasks such as earliest possible entry into world markets by sea, land, rail and pipelines at minimum costs as well as settlement of disputes on the Caspian Sea status.

Kazakhstan should use as much as possible a great potential for cooperation with Pakistan, which has 120 million people, plays a leading role in the Muslim community and is of strategic importance for Kazakhstan in terms of diversification of the Republic's entry into world markets.

There are great prospects for establishing multilateral relations with Malaysia and Indonesia. Cooperation with these countries has a great potential for integration of the Republic into South-East Asia and mobilisation of the Asian and Pacific economic and technological capacities in the country's interests. Furthermore, Malaysia has some experience in organisation of the economic planning process, which is very important for Kazakhstan in terms of improvement of its domestic economy.

Arab countries hold a special place in Kazakhstan's Muslim policies. This is primarily the Gulf States led by Saudi Arabia, which have a great political, economic and financial potential and enjoy a leading position in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Saudi Arabia, which has the closest military, political, trade and economic ties with the West among all Muslim countries, is pursuing a balanced international and regional policy, actively opposes manifestations of extremist trends in the region as well as proponents of global confrontation. In terms of its economy, Saudi Arabia producing a third of the world's entire oil consumption remains an essential component for maintaining stability of the existing system of global economic ties. Saudi Arabia, home to main shrines of Islam and a destination for dozens of millions of pilgrims, remains the centre of spiritual life of Muslims, who now account for about a third of the world's population.

Arab Gulf countries such as UAE, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar are important in their own way.

Several Gulf Arab countries once decided to provide \$80 million grant aid to Kazakhstan for construction of public facilities in the new capital of Kazakhstan. Financial aid offered to the Republic in the form of preferential loans from Arab funds (Saudi Development Fund, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, Abu Dhabi Development Fund) exceeds U.S. 100 million, with the total loan portfolio of additional US 200 million.

Kazakhstan has quite stable cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank, which in the early years of this century allocated numerous grants for preparation of feasibility studies for nationally significant projects totalling about USD 2.5 million, with USD 21 million worth preferential loans disbursed.

Financial aid from the IDB and Arab funds means very solid participation of Muslim countries in the national economy and is a very significant part of foreign financial aid to the country.

There is a great potential for establishing mutually beneficial cooperation with Egypt, which plays a key role not only in the Arab and Muslim world, but in the world politics in general. Work should also be launched to explore the unused potential of cooperation with other Muslim countries in North Africa (Morocco, Libya, Algeria) and Middle East (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon).

Active policies pursued by Kazakhstan within the framework of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference as an integral part of the country's activities in international organisations, primarily UN and OSCE are important for development of relations between Kazakhstan and the Islamic world. Issues to be discussed at the OIC forums are, in fact, the same as those addressed by other major international organisations and, in general, are of geopolitical interest for Kazakhstan.

The country's interests in the Muslim domain are at this stage catered for on a bilateral basis with leading countries. However, Kazakhstan's full participation in the OIC and its positive image in the Muslim community are, in turn, an important precondition for further strengthening of bilateral relations with leading Islamic countries.

In the context of growing relevance of problems of rapprochement of cultures and dialogue of civilizations, a move of the OIC towards democratisation and liberalisation, both internally and externally, is important. Due to its geopolitical situation, Kazakhstan located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, North and South, East and West, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism could play a positive role in this process. Kazakhstan can play a key role in bringing together peoples, nations and ideologies, be a factor of peace and stability in the world, Asian continent and Muslim community. Active participation of the country in discussion of a number of issues at various international conferences provides evidence for Kazakhstan's potential to become a principal actor in this process, thereby greatly enhancing Kazakhstan's authority in the world. However, this would require much effort and time, and, above all, focused hard work of Kazakhstan as Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Experts believe that the following issues could be on the agenda of Kazakhstan's OIC chairmanship:

- 1) development of a plan to assist OIC countries with a low level of socio-economic development and existing social and political tensions (31 countries). This plan should be based on five key areas: a) security, i.e. measures to prevent and resolve conflict situations, b) development of education, c) upgrade of the healthcare system, and d) investment in these economies through microfinance;
- 2) resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- 3) establishment of a centre for monitoring and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, prevention and resolution of regional conflicts, gender policies and gender equality. There is no doubt that integration and cooperation of Kazakhstan and OIC member countries, especially their economic components, are important. At the moment, when the global financial and economic crisis is yet to subside, establishment of comprehensive cooperation becomes of particular significance. Their solution appears to be one of the priorities of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

Due to its active cooperation with the Islamic world occupying a vast area at the southern and south-western borders of our country and having a population of over one billion people, and its own population, more than 70 percent of which are Muslims, Kazakhstan, of course, cannot ignore the importance of the so-called 'Muslim aspect' in its foreign policies and rational use of the country's OIC membership. The Muslim community, Muslim countries and the so-called Muslim factor today must take its legitimate place in the country's foreign policy priorities.

In the context of Kazakhstan's current integration into the world economy, neighbouring Muslim countries of the Middle East will become more important for

the country as they will form a common economic area, common market of goods and services as well as general transport communications. First of all, these countries are of strategic importance for the country in terms of its access to global communications. Current realities and prospects of development of global international division of labour will certainly call for coordination of economic relations with these neighbouring countries, whose level of economic development and production relations is similar to that of Kazakhstan. In this context, development of comprehensive relations with the Muslim world, OIC and its institutions is fully in line with such objectives as development of additional trade and economic space and financial and economic support to reforms in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's active cooperation with the OIC countries will open access to new markets. This will provide an additional impetus for investments, which will enhance Kazakhstan's role in international economy and politics. Such modernisation, which most of Muslim countries are striving for, will increase their demand for imports. In general, the current structure of the world economy, globalisation and regionalisation, struggle for financial markets and natural resources make it necessary to enhance cooperation between Kazakhstan and OIC countries.

In political terms, further stepping up of relations with Muslim countries meets our country's strategic interests and is an additional factor strengthening independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kazakhstan. Such a policy helps to maintain the balance in Kazakhstan's foreign policies and strengthen a number of strategic areas of the Kazakhstani diplomacy such as Asia, Middle East, Muslim, oil and other domains.

However, we cannot ignore the view of some people, who are trying to prove that the formula of cooperation developed in Europe does not apply to the Muslim world. They argue that peculiarities of the East supposedly shut the door on opportunities for developing partnerships. Of course, one cannot ignore development peculiarities in the Muslim world, but it would be wrong to exaggerate them. Furthermore, it is not about automatic transfer of the European experience to the 'Muslim' soil, but about its creative use for implementing the principles elaborated by the eastern countries and establishing a theoretical and political framework for analysis of the dialogue to be established between the Muslim world and the West.

In general, as time has shown, confidence-building measures for deepening and expanding partnerships in the world are very important. Moreover, we are confident about the effectiveness of trust between the Muslim world and the West. Kazakhstan's specific proposals and initiatives help set the stage for dialogue. For the OIC, this area is of particular importance.

Lack of reliable information in this area is known to be a fertile ground for myths about various threats and challenges and stifles, if not paralyse, the activity of states and social forces in building true partnerships. This contrasts the approach proposed by President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev in his statement, when he invited to reflect on boosting of economic relations through the bilateral and multilateral political dialogue, movement towards the interests of each and everyone including those related to the Islamic world.

An overview of Kazakhstan's initiatives to strengthen the Muslim World-West dialogue not only throws us back to the problems of the recent past but, above all, reminds that they are even more relevant today and need to be addressed taking into account the experience gained by parties in elaboration of non-standard and unconventional approaches. In this regard, it is necessary to mention at least two lessons for the future that should be drawn from the inter-civilization interaction.

The first lesson is the need to continue the search for compromise and mutually acceptable ways of undoing knots existing in international relations. Kazakhstan's initiatives, one way or another, have embraced the principles of respective interests

of other countries. Therefore, the government of Kazakhstan directly compares and matches initiatives of different countries.

The second lesson not to be ignored in any case is the fact that not only a lack of adequate practical response, but often even a reaction to Kazakhstan's initiatives should not give rise to pessimism and, the more so, political fatalism. On the contrary, historical experience of development suggests that a breakthrough towards practically meaningful changes is possible if leaders of states belonging to different systems show good will.



Mr. ALIKHAN BAIMENOV,
Chairman of Ak Zhol Democratic Party of Kazakhstan

ISLAM AND GENDER POLICIES AS FACTORS OF THE COUNTRY'S MODERNIZATION

As is known, modernisation is one of key challenges and issues on the agenda of all OIC countries including Kazakhstan. We are pursuing the catching-up modernisation strategy, of which social capital building is an important component. In this regard, I believe that the focus on gender policies, which will be made by Kazakhstan during its chairmanship of the Council of Ministers, is justified given our societies' basic problems. There is no doubt that, if pursued correctly, gender policies facilitate social capital building and promote full utilisation of society's capacity in the interests of the whole country. Sound gender policies are in line with our national traditions and hundreds of examples of women being outstanding leaders in various areas of human activities can be provided based on our history.

A lot has already been said about the gender aspects today. I would like to highlight only three points.

Firstly, we must not allow modern gender policies to be used to replace our traditions. I believe that while facilitating women's empowerment in different domains of human activities and promoting our outstanding representatives of arts, politics, science and business, we, at the same time, need to advance women performing their natural functions by raising children. I believe that every woman raising children is actually a great cultural worker, performing direct cultural functions of the mankind.

Second. Someone has just mentioned certain attributes associated with Islam. I think we should separate Islamic values and traditions from folk traditions that came from the Arabian Peninsula or the Persian Gulf, some of which are of pre-Islamic origin. In particular, many people in our society believe that it is a requirement of Islam that a woman's face should be completely covered, although this is absolutely not true.

We should be able to separate true values of Islam from superficial ones, which were brought to our steppes by proponents of these ideas. To do this, we should study the history of Islam and the history of Islamic law.

Last year I read a very interesting publication, a 4-volume book *Al-Hidayah* and was surprised to find out that back in the 7th-8th centuries Islamic law enshrined many of women's rights. This applies not only to women and families, but also to business. I was surprised with the fact that back in the 7th century the Islamic law set out relationships between bank shareholders and managers in detail. Our population, however, does not know about all this and this is probably why one can sometimes hear

that Islam and modernisation are incompatible. In this country, only those, who do not know the history of Kazakhs, Kazakhstan's history and the history of Islam, can say so.

If we analyse the state we find ourselves in, the condition that our society emerged in from the previous system and values that we need, we may discover that Islam and modernisation are not only compatible, but Islam, being our religion, is essential for revival of moral values and building of social capital. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the most recent census 70% of the population identify themselves as Muslims. We should not be ashamed of being a part of the Islamic civilization.

Yes, we did feel a great pressure from the Tsarist regime, the Soviet regime and came to our independence as a society with eroded values. By the way, you can still meet people feeling nostalgic for and idealising the Soviet period, however, one only needs to provide a few examples to refute this. You may remember that in the Soviet time the phrase 'May you live only off your pay-cheques!' was considered as a curse, whereas petty employee pilferage and minor thefts were not condemned, but rather encouraged by our society. In this context, Arkadi Raikin said that 'We own whatever we guard'. This is the society we emerged from. Today, when we talk about problems of corruption and moral decay, we must understand that the present values are a product of the Soviet system, and the current generation of adults were brought up by the Soviet system. Many current problems are rooted in that system.

At the same time, we must join our efforts to ensure that the values of Islam that are universal human values should be properly communicated to the society. We know that hard work, knowledge, honesty, fairness, thriftiness and cleanliness are the values of Islam. But if one listens to sermons of the clergy, they talk primarily and only about obedience and faith, which is correct, but they should also provide examples from the Quran and the Sunnah of such values as hard work and knowledge, which are numerous.

Secondly, we must raise awareness about the tolerant nature of the Islamic society and quote examples from our past now when, in particular, the West and many regions of the world misunderstand the essence of Islam. It was in Middle Ages when representatives of different religions coexisted peacefully and people were very tolerant to other faiths. During an inquisition period in the West Islamic states sheltered many refugees. Why is there so little information about common values shared by Islam, Christianity and Judaism? I believe that people should also know this so that growing religiosity should serve the purpose of greater integration rather than clash of civilizations. Why is there so little information about a stage in the history of Islam when the Islamic world was the centre of world science? Why is there little information on the fact that due to Islam the West has rediscovered ancient Greek scholars? Indeed, at the Iberian Peninsula the science flourished during the Caliphates and Cordoba was the centre of European science. When a thousand years ago our ancestors called Al-Farabi the second teacher, it was implied that the first teacher was Aristotle, who was practically unknown in Europe at that time. I think it is essential to invite members of the clergy to future conferences so that we could discuss these issues together.

Modernisation calls for the establishment of a rule of law society. The rule of law in developed countries started after a significant share of the society became god-fearing. Piety was the forerunner of law. We should use revival of religiosity to establish the rule of law.

In general, correct interpretation and construction are critical. I think that there is a common field of activity for the National Commission, politicians, philosophers, scientists and clergy.

I think that we should use growing religiosity to develop our language. I believe that the more versions of Kazakh translations of the Quran there will be, the more developed the Kazakh language describing the world view will be.

For thousands of years, our world outlook and language matched the language of Quran. The Soviet system wanted to deprive us of this by changing our alphabet twice. Now it is time that we should come back to these values and use our language on an everyday basis.

If we read Abai's texts thoroughly, we will come to a conclusion that many Kazakhs do not fully understand them since many words were forgotten. The scope of use of the national language would get a strong impetus if we translated the Quran and Hadiths more. It is a paradox that if you look at the developed world, you could see that outstanding intellectuals know the Bible and Bible stories well and scientists and poets rely on all of them. However, we were separated from our civilization's roots. I think that the National Commission and, probably, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could use our OIC Chairmanship to facilitate publication of such booklets as 'Islam and Gender', 'Islam and Science', 'Islam and Work', etc. This will not only be of help to us, but also to members of the clergy. I believe that growing religiosity of the population and our increasing integration into the Organisation of the Islamic Conference are a natural process. We must use these processes for Kazakhstan to become more competitive in pursuing its catching-up modernisation strategy.



Mr. ERIK BAIZHUNUSSOV
Vice Minister of Healthcare
of the Republic of Kazakhstan

THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AS A SET OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO IMPROVE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Dear Participants!

I would like to thank you for offering me the opportunity to discuss reproductive health issues. I believe that this Conference will make an important contribution to protecting and improving the nation's reproductive health.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Dear Colleagues!

Kazakhstan's adherence and political commitment to supporting reproductive healthcare, raising the birth rate and reducing infant and maternal mortality are quite high.

The aforementioned priorities are reflected in social policies of the Head of the State, N. Nazarbayev, the regulatory documents aimed at socio-economic and demographic development, and strengthening the national healthcare system.

The rights of citizens, children and patients are enshrined in the Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'On People's Health and the Healthcare System' (hereinafter 'RK Code').

Thus, according to Article 88.2 of the RK Code 'a woman has a right to decide on her motherhood and to free choice of modern methods of preventing unwanted pregnancies for family planning and health protection purposes'. Children's constitutional rights to healthcare are realized under Article 89 of the RK Code.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan has the following effective laws 'On the Rights of the Child', 'On Marriage and Family', 'On Social, Medical and Educational Support for Children with Disabilities'.

The RK Minister of Healthcare issued an order approving the 2010 Action Plan to Reduce Maternal and Infant Mortality in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

2011-2015 State Healthcare Development Programme 'Healthy Kazakhstan' was drafted.

Main demographic indicators for 2007-2009, the first nine months of 2009 and 2010, per 1,000 of the population are as follows: natural population increase - 13.44

(13.59 for the same period in 2009); birth rate - 22.53 (22.71 in 2009); mortality rate - 9.09 (9.12 in 2009).

Life expectancy at birth increased by 2.3 years from 2007 to 2009.

To date, the country has more than 4.7 million children, accounting for 29.4% of the entire population, and 4.4 million women of reproductive-age.

During the first nine months of this year the **maternal mortality rate** has reduced to 25.3 per 100,000 live births year on year from 32.7, i.e. a decrease of 1.3 times.

The **infant mortality rate** was 17.1 per 1,000 live births down from 18.4 for the same period in 2009, i.e. a decrease of 1.1 times. The Head of the State instructed us to set up national and regional-level dedicated Headquarters to take urgent measures to reduce maternal and infant mortality, with such Headquarters involving Deputy Akims of Oblasts and cities, heads of national and regional healthcare organizations, representatives of medical schools and research centres.

The country conducts annual preventive medical examinations for children under 18 and their subsequent follow-up and treatment, screening examinations of women to detect pre-cancerous breast and cervical conditions.

free medications are provided to children and teenagers subject to outpatient treatment.

FYI: Categories of citizens eligible for free and reduced-price medicines and medical products within the GOBMP (guaranteed scope of free medical aid) for outpatient treatment include:

- 1) medicines for infants under 1 year of age (mother and child first-aid kit, infant formulas, medicines to treat pneumonia, obstructive bronchitis, acute respiratory viral infections, acute bronchitis, tonsillitis, pharyngitis, acute intestinal infections, rickets);
- 2) children aged 1 to 5 years old (pneumonia, obstructive bronchitis, acute respiratory viral infections, acute pharyngitis, tonsillitis, acute intestinal infections, enterobiasis);
- 3) children and teenagers subject to outpatient treatment of chronic diseases (chronic anaemia, digestive tract diseases, chronic bronchitis, pneumonia, bronchial asthma) and to follow-up;
- 4) iron- and iodine-containing medicines for pregnant women.

Children under 2 years of age are vaccinated against *Haemophilus influenzae*.

FYI: WHO estimates *Haemophilus influenzae* type b ('Hib-infection') to be responsible for 3 million illnesses and more than 400,000 deaths a year. Its infectious germ causes purulent meningitis in 30-50% of cases, pneumonia in 20-30% and acute respiratory infections in 15-20% of cases and is also responsible for sepsis, inflammation of epiglottis, osteomyelitis, pericarditis and arthritis.

Vaccination of children is an effective way to combat Hib-infection. Vaccination proved to be effective following wide-scale introduction of this vaccine in 130 out of 192 countries (68%). Much attention is paid to such vaccination due to increasing resistance of this infectious germ to antibiotics. Even if treatment starts in a timely manner, survivors of Hib-infection get severe complications.

Vaccination against Hib-infection has been performed in Kazakhstan since July 2008 using a combined vaccine (DTP-Hib and DTP-HBV-Hib) at an age of 2, 3, 4 and 18 months, which will develop immunity against 5 infectious diseases, pertussis, diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis B and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b simultaneously. In 2009, 1,088,500 vaccine doses were purchased for a total of KZT 1,398,525.05 thousand, covering 95.6% of children under two years old compared to the recommended minimum of 95%.

In 2010, 1,359,300 vaccine doses were purchased for a total of KZT 1,553,230,300, covering 71.8% of children under two years of age during the first nine months of this year compared to an optimum level of at least 71.2%.

To prevent pregnancy and childbirth complications, pregnant women are provided with free iron- and iodine-containing drugs.

From 2010 on, the National Vaccination Schedule includes three-time vaccination against pneumococcal infection. By 2015, vaccination against pneumococcal disease will reduce the incidence of pneumonia in children under 5 by 50% and mortality by 20%.

Kazakhstan allocated KZT 27.5 billion to vaccinate about 2 million children under 2 years of age against pneumococcal disease in 2010-2015.

FYI: Pneumococcal disease is the most common cause of infant morbidity and mortality worldwide, causing about 0.7-1 million deaths annually among children under five years old.

Pneumococcus has a primary role causing acute pneumonias, especially in young children and elderly people. Pneumococcal disease is peculiar in that it is widespread ('normal' microflora of the upper respiratory tract). However, when entering the bloodstream, it causes clinical characteristics of bacteremia; when it settles in tissues, it causes severe purulent lesions of meninges, lungs, joints, etc. (with the so-called invasive pneumococcal disease developing). In children, the most frequent clinical forms are acute otitis media (up to 60%), pneumonia (up to 65-80% of cases) and meningitis (5-20% of all purulent bacterial meningitis cases).

'Healthy Kazakhstan' State Programme plans on gradual introduction of vaccination against pneumococcal infection (2010-2015):

Stages	Regions	Number of eligible children	Purchased vaccines (number of doses)	Estimated purchase price KZT'000)
2010	East Kazakhstan and Mangistau Oblasts	36,080	72,160	649,440
2011	+ Zhambyl and South Kazakhstan Oblasts	129,400	231,400	2,082,600
2012	+ Karaganda, Kyzylorda and North Kazakhstan Oblasts	307,505	462,249	4,160,241
2013	+ Akmola, Atyrau and Kostanai Oblasts	394,632	594,400	5,349,600
2014	+ Aktobe and Pavlodar Oblasts, Astana	500,536	750,804	6,757,236
2015	+ Almaty and West Kazakhstan Oblasts, Almaty	599,536	948,804	8,539,236

Diagnosis and treatment protocols were revised in line with international standards in order to make prenatal care better and more effective.

Efforts are taken to screen, perform pre-natal diagnosis and prevent congenital and hereditary diseases in children.

Furthermore, to improve its efficiency and timeliness, pre-natal care is regionalized, i.e. healthcare organizations across the region are divided into three levels depending on the risk of pregnancy and childbirth.

In order to improve access to healthcare in rural areas, air ambulance service coordination centres are set up in remote and inaccessible areas; 14 helicopters are to be purchased in 2011.

The Ministry continues its efforts to introduce WHO-recommended efficient technologies to protect health of women, children and teenagers such as Safe Motherhood Programme, Integrated Management of Childhood Illness ('IMCI') and promotion of the breastfeeding strategy. Critical conditions in pregnant, pre-natal and post-natal women are monitored daily. Notification and supervision procedures have

been developed, providing for urgent actions to be taken in case of critical conditions in pregnant, prenatal and post-natal women.

The number of women and men registered as infertile is growing year in year out. According to official statistics about 15-16% of marriages are infertile.

For people to realize their rights to infertility treatment, a new line, assisted reproductive technology ('ART'), was launched and should be developed to improve reproduction of the country's population. To date, there are 10 centres offering ART including in vitro fertilization ('IVF') including 2 state and 7 private centres.

At the same time, from 2010 the GOBMP list will include assisted reproductive technology services including in vitro fertilization. The GOBMP will be expanded to include more IVF cycles until 2015.

IVF for 2010-2015:

Period (Years)	Number of cycles	GOBMP Allocations, KZT'000
2010	100	67,500.0
2011	350	256,331.0
2012	600	474,579.0
2013	500	427,121.0
2014	750	691,936.0
2015	750	747,290.0

Thanks to the consistent state policies aiming to improve the economic, social and political situation in the country, some positive trends have been observed in basic health and demographic indicators.

Low reproductive health level is largely due to abortions. Despite a drop in the abortion rates in recent years, abortions remain to be one of main fertility regulators and one of main causes of maternal mortality.

In 2009, most abortions were reported in the age group 19-34 years (75%) and teenagers 15-18 years old (4.09%).

Births among teenage girls aged 15-18 years show no tendency to reduce, standing at 1.2% per year. It is quite disturbing that abortions continue to grow among this category of population. One way to reduce abortions and maternal mortality and increase the inter-pregnancy interval is effective family planning and provision of confidential sexual and reproductive health services, especially for teenagers and youths.

Towards this end, 17 Youth Health Centres ('YHC') have been set up in the country to provide comprehensive medical and psychosocial services to teenagers and young people.

The Strategic Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan till 2020 provides for YHC to cover 25% of the population aged 15-18 years and older.

In order to improve healthcare workers' knowledge and skills with regards to a number of key and most common conditions and complications, the Ministry has provided cascade staff training and retraining.

Over 1,600 obstetricians and gynaecologists and about 3.4 thousand midwives have been trained to provide emergency care in case of critical obstetric conditions. Regional IMCI coordinators were trained and later provided training to more than 300 healthcare workers.

In 2009-2010, more than 250 regional healthcare specialists were trained in CIS and other countries (Israel, Lithuania, Russia) on topical issues in obstetrics and gynaecology, neonatology, assisted reproductive technology and ultrasonic diagnosis.

Dear participants!

Further implementation of the country's policy documents such as the Strategy of Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030, Strategic Plan of Development of Kazakhstan until 2020, the President's 2010 Address to the People of Kazakhstan, 2011-2015 State Healthcare Development Programme 'Healthy Kazakhstan', 2011-2015 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Healthcare will provide a successful foundation for fulfilment of the President's assignments for the coming decade.

Thank you for your attention!



Ms. DINA SHAZHENOVA

Executive Secretary, Ministry of Economic
Development and Trade of the Republic of Kazakhstan

GENDER ASPECTS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

Dear conference participants!

Setting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship is one of the public policy priorities prescribed by the country's core policy documents, namely, the Strategic Plan of Development of Kazakhstan until 2020 and the 2010-2014 State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development of Kazakhstan.

Economic advancement of women is one of the key areas identified by the Head of the State.

First, I would like to touch upon some key gender statistics.

As far as the socio-demographic aspect is concerned, no significant bias is observed gender-wise: women account for 52% of the total population and 49% of employed population.

Overall, the level of women's economic activity has grown slightly; however, it is still lower than that of men. This has to do primarily with women's earlier retirement age and, as a consequence, their quitting work earlier. The level of women's economic activity stood at 65.0% in 2001 and 66.1% in 2009.

The level of men's economic activity is moving slower, standing at 76.0% in 2008 and 75.9% in 2009. In 2009, small businesses employed 268,100 women accounting for 33% of total small business employment. Official statistics suggests that at 1 January 2010, women employees were mostly concentrated in:

- hotel and restaurant business (71%);
- finance (62.9%);
- municipal, social and personal services (74.4%);
- trade (59.8%).

According to statistics, women's contribution to GDP in Kazakhstan was 38.8% in 2009.

In Kazakhstan, women now account for 52% of small and medium sized business managers and 66% of individual entrepreneurs. Most women are employed in service industries such as hotels, restaurants, municipal, social and personal services, as well as trade and agriculture.

To encourage women entrepreneurs' economic activity, in 2009 the Damu Fund ('Fund') developed a special Programme for Conditional Placement of Funds with Second-Tier Banks (STB) for on-lending programme proceeds to women entrepreneurs as microloans.

This Programme was developed as instructed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev during the 5th Women's Forum on 5 March 2009 and aims to encourage women entrepreneurs' economic activity through concessional lending for active and emerging projects.

As of October 1, 2010, banks provided loans totaling KZT 882.9 million to 272 borrowers under the Fund's Programme.

Sector-wise, most loans were provided for trade projects accounting for 71.8% of total disbursements. Service sector lending accounted for 22.6%, transport and communications for 3.7%, agriculture for 1.3% and construction for 0.7%. No industrial projects were represented.

Eurasian Bank, Tsesnabank, Bank CenterCredit, Delta Bank and Temirbank acted as partner banks. Annual effective interest rates do not exceed 14%, loans are provided in Kazakh tenge for a maximum term of five years.

Furthermore, funding for women is provided by the 'Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture' JSC ('Fund JSC'), which has eight on-going rural lending programmes.

As reported by Fund JSC, from the start of the budget programme (2005) until 1 October 2010, 57,101 loans totaling KZT 11,269 million were provided through direct micro-credits including 18,223 loans for women amounting to KZT 3,084 million. Most microcredits were granted to women living in rural areas in South Kazakhstan, Almaty, Zhambyl and Kostanay Oblasts.

A total of 14% of SMEs run by women enjoyed governmental support under the Business Road Map 2020. The issue that the term 'female entrepreneurship' should be defined by laws was raised repeatedly. It was discussed at the roundtable 'Gender Aspects of Private Entrepreneurship Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan' arranged by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade on October 22, 2010. The discussion was attended by Senate and Majilis deputies, representatives of government authorities and public associations as well as the Economic Research Institute, the Damu Fund and the Fund of Financial Support for Agriculture.

Majilis deputies have initiated respective amendments to the current entrepreneurship legislation. Thus, they proposed the following definition of female entrepreneurship. It is 'female entrepreneurship in the form of individual entrepreneurship without forming a legal entity or a legal entity, which is run by a woman, has at least 50% of its authorized capital owned by a woman and employs at least 30% of female employees'.

The development of entrepreneurship from the gender perspective will also be covered by the 2011-2014 Programme of Development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises currently being developed by the Ministry.

In order to analyze the state of women's entrepreneurship in the country and make specific recommendations, the Ministry is also performing a study this year, with its findings to be included into the aforementioned entrepreneurship development programme.

All the above measures in support of private entrepreneurship including women will not yield the desired effect if the business climate is not improved in general.

In this context, being a competent authority responsible for government policies supporting and developing small and medium sized enterprises, our Ministry together with entrepreneur associations and other government authorities are taking great efforts to reduce administrative barriers and provide financial and non-financial support to entrepreneurs.

For example, measures have been under way to streamline the licensing system since 2008. This year, the draft Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts on Improvement of the Licensing System' was developed and submitted to the Majilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, which provides for cancellation of 331 permits out of 1,015 identified ones (licenses, certificates, accreditation, permits, approvals, etc.).

With the enactment of the draft law, we estimate the expected time and money savings for entrepreneurs to reach about KZT 27 billion.

To improve the state authorities' compliance and oversight activities and given that from 2011 onwards, all requirements for inspected entities will only be prescribed by laws and Presidential decrees and resolutions of the Government of Kazakhstan, the law 'On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Revision of Competences of State Authorities and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Adopt Regulations Setting Requirements to Inspected Entities' was drafted.

The draft law amends 137 legislative acts including nine Codes and 128 laws of Kazakhstan and is currently under review of the Majilis of Kazakhstan.

These efforts will include a review aiming to eliminate overlapping, obsolete and corrupt provisions.

I believe that all these measures provided as part of state support to small and medium sized enterprises will have a positive impact on the improvement of the country's business climate as a whole.

This year, the reforms resulted in Kazakhstan's *Doing Business 2011* ranking improving by 15 notches (59 out of 183 countries).

Furthermore, in terms of the number and impact of the reforms, Kazakhstan has topped the list of 10 countries that achieved most success in establishing an enabling business environment.



Ms. AIGUL SOLOVYEVA

Deputy of the Majilis of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
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GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF KAZAKHSTAN

Dear conference participants!

First and foremost, I would like to welcome everyone and thank the organizers of this conference. There is no doubt that it is an important and timely event, and a fresh perspective that expressed ideas and thoughts will offer to us today will provide impetus and guidance in advancing the principles of equal opportunities and rights of women within the framework of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The role and importance of **Islam** in this context have been explored very little and remain **underestimated** by communities in many countries of the world since deep understanding and comprehension of the fact that Mohammed came to this world with a certain mission requires that we should, at least, be well-educated and have philosophical thinking and approaches.

The stated topic of my speech has to do with the socioeconomic aspect and, therefore, the slides show statistics over years. These data show women's status in Kazakhstan in this regard, and the statistics book published annually should be the basis for monitoring the trends. In this context, I would like to emphasize the importance of statistics, which, by their very nature, must aim for objectivity and not only inform about the current situation, but also be able to impact on future results.

The next slide shows women's input into economic development, i.e. GDP, which accounted for 38.8% in 2009. When reviewed from the social perspective, the data lead to a conclusion that without gender mainstreaming the world economic organism will not cause women to have a sense of personal connection with macroeconomics. If their share decreases instead of increases and they fail to see their place in the economic system, women will step aside and will not try to contribute to this development. At the end of the day, such a prospect will remove this constructive component from the country's economic potential.

The next slide shows the share of loans received by women from financial institutions, for example, in Atyrau, Almaty and Kyzylorda Oblasts, which is quite high. It is important to evaluate this trend as two of these oblasts are primarily oil ones

and employ men, whereas small business is more open for women. It is possible that the variety of socioeconomic programmes supported by foreign companies, such as microcredit programmes (and others), involve mostly women and are more likely to be used by women. Competitive environment, not taking into account the oil business, is quite different situation, for example, in Almaty, North-Kazakhstan and Kostanai Oblasts, where women account for a low share of loans. This slide also shows that Deltabank, Tsesnabank, Eurasian bank are **more active** in financing women, whereas Astana Finance, Temirleasing, Leasing Group are **less active**, which also implies that we need to pay attention to and express public opinion on credit policies of financial institutions towards women entrepreneurs. Based on the analysis of their activities and lending percentage, one can talk about the level of civilization of the bank and about how much they understand and consider this important aspect. Often, women's entrepreneurship is associated with microcredits only, though personally I feel sceptical about this. It is unfair to put women into this category of lending only, whereas it would be a more advanced approach to set up a system for moving women forward to higher positions, the large and medium-sized business niche, which will allow for some kind of a breakthrough in this direction. Of course, this will call for adequate mechanisms, and, being a member of the National Commission, I can say that the latter is planning to provide women with adequate and meaningful tools to make these intentions come true. A strong argument in favour of this opinion can be the example of **Tengizchevroil**, which held a competitive selection resulting in women taking most managerial positions and winning on the basis of objective, transparent, honest and principle-based procedures.

Women's interest in enhancing their skills is demonstrated in the slide on the DAMU programme, with women quite actively involved in training projects such as **Business Adviser** and **Damu Komek** within its framework. It should be noted that the balance of equality is observed for people with disabilities as far as the gender indicator is concerned.

The next slide features the unemployment rate, which was 6.6% in 2009 across the country, 7.5% for women and 5.6% for men, through the percentage of women's activity is much higher since it is women, who express their willingness and initiative to fulfil their potential in economic and social domains. Women's life expectancy at birth, which is ten years longer than that of men, is an indirect proof of this statement. With almost equal access to education, women account for 58.3% of university students and 61.3% of master's degree students. It is quite interesting that they account for 50.0% of graduate students, while at the PhD level they only account for 42.9%. This fact can be interpreted to mean that after marriage women prefer to focus on their spouses' careers rather than on their own. However, according to official statistics the level of economic activity across the country reached 70.7% in 2009, 66.5% for women and 75.9% for men. Unfortunately, it is hard to infer women's data from self-employment statistics, which tends to fluctuate from 32.5 to 33.7% within a year, as they are broken down by type of activity without taking into account latency inherent in this category of employment. Women's involvement in household activities falling within this segment is 56.7%, whereas specific parameters for small and medium businesses cannot be inferred due to lack of clear criteria of women's entrepreneurship.

Women account for 48% of salaried employees, whereas their wages only account for 66.2% of men's wages, in which context I would like to note a clearly visible pyramid typical of many countries, with Kazakhstan being no exception. Men dominate high-level jobs and, as a consequence, earn well, which implies that women have poor access to prestigious business and government jobs, where vital and responsible decisions are made including those directly affecting women and children. Summarizing the above and taking into account our traditions, mentality, society perceptions and prevailing stereotypes, it is safe to say that male and female

managers have different approaches to management. However, they are interrelated and complement each other and, thus, the entire society can benefit from this diversity. Women account for 11.5% of employees in industry and construction, 59.7% in services, and 33.8% in small and medium businesses.

The weaker sex is poorly represented in the political Olympus, with the country ranking 96th in this respect. It is obvious that improvements in this area would require a great deal of work. In my opinion, focus should be made on cooperation with political parties; for example, Nur Otan, a party that I represent in the Parliament mainstreams the gender dimension into all of its programmes. In terms of education enrolment and literacy, our country ranks first in the world. However, if additional criteria are taken into account, it would move to the fourth place. The country ranks 25th in terms of health and life expectancy, which is a ranking that can, and must be changed. A thorough approach to, and analysis of the causes of high men's mortality due to injuries, smoking and high risks which have a significant impact on their life expectancy. There is no doubt that this factor directly depends on a healthy lifestyle and the situation can be improved through awareness-raising, knowledge sharing and the application of self-care practices used by women, which would also be helpful. Kazakhstan ranks quite high in the world (41st, to be precise) in terms of the gender balance, being second to such countries as Latvia, Moldova and Lithuania, but outstripping many European countries such as Poland, France, Italy and Hungary. In my opinion, this is an outcome of effective work done by the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, an enormous input of international organizations and accomplishments of the female community as a whole. Their joint, systemic, consistent and orderly work, which includes a set of measures, is clear evidence of the dynamic progress toward equality. The aforementioned indicators seem to be quite appealing, but our country faces ambitious goals. Strategy 2020 incorporates an almost inexhaustible capacity for women's empowerment, as it provides for a wide range of socioeconomic programmes and allows them to be implemented in full and be fleshed out with quality content.

The last slide describes legislative measures and prospects for their discussion and improvement in the Parliament. In conclusion, I would like to draw the attention of the distinguished audience on monitoring of foreign companies and banks such as the World Bank and the Islamic Bank as far as dedicated credit lines for women are concerned. International rules leave much room for such opportunities in the form of special temporary arrangements, quotas and special types of funding for mitigating discrimination against women.



Ms. AIMAN MUSSAKHOJAYEVA,
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ART AS A WAY OF STRENGTHENING COOPERATION IN CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL DOMAINS IN THE OIC AREA

Dear colleagues, dear guests!

On the eve of Kazakhstan's upcoming chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and in the context of our country's significant achievements within the OSCE, which will culminate in the forthcoming OSCE Summit, conferences devoted to the gender perspective of social development and, generally, human development, promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue are of great importance.

Being a multinational and multi-confessional state, Kazakhstan is contributing to the strengthening of peace and trust among nations, and has become a sort of a mediator between the East and the West, seeking specific solutions on pressing issues of convergence of different cultures and dialogue of civilizations.

During this mission, the power of art to unite people around beauty, cleanse souls, and instil love in the surrounding world has been the most important way of promoting peace, unity and well-being over the course of two decades of Kazakhstan's independence.

We have a tremendous creative potential and an extraordinarily rich cultural heritage, talented youth and the highest level of artists' skills. Due to international projects, Kazakh art is recognized by people in other countries. With virtuoso playing, sounds of beautiful melodies, the beauty of national ornaments and paintings, the uniqueness of dance rhythms, which are all means of art, we are creating the image of our country. I remember the early 1990's when the then-new Orchestra 'Academy of Soloists' first performed in US cities and had many Americans discover the unknown Kazakhstan. This was followed by different kinds of tours and official trips and participation in international contests, festivals, some concert tours and educational exchanges.

The most recent example of international cooperation was a triumphant European tour of the Eurasian Student Orchestra of the Kazakh National University of Arts.

The effect of the Kazakh art on the international image of Kazakhstan and its competitiveness is indisputable. As you could witness for yourselves, this effect is enhanced in terms of scale and depth of the cultural dialogue. Summing up the entire twenty-year experience of international cultural cooperation, we should realize that we have focused primarily on the West. We have more developed relationships with European cultural and educational centres and are generally geared towards European achievements. One could quote multiple examples and names, but it will be sufficient to recall that over the past five years we have been aiming to enter the European education area. You can also recall the official Years of Culture of Kazakhstan in Germany and Russia. Naturally, this direction of cultural ties with the West has been a prevailing and a leading one, as prescribed by the sequence of the Strategy-2030 priorities. The focus on western spiritual and cultural cooperation also has to do with the established 20th century cultural and educational traditions in our country.

However, as far as its nature, centuries-long history, linguistic, ethnic and confessional traditions are concerned, the art of Kazakhstan is rooted in the East. Our culture is unique due to the interaction between the East and the West and is known to be defined by such a capacious term as 'Eurasianism'.

During Kazakhstan's independence our art has been represented in this region as well. Our artists have demonstrated their skills in Japan, China, Korea, Turkey and other countries. But, still there is much potential for development in this direction of spiritual and cultural cooperation, which is yet to be used for strengthening peace, mutual understanding and helping nations come closer to each other. The well-being of our national culture will largely depend on this vector of interaction.

The subtle world of the East includes such diverse and unique cultures as Japan's Kabuki theatre, China's Yin-Yang philosophy, the art of contemplation of Arab music sounds, mystery of Persian ornaments and much more. Many would agree that we know very little about this art and perform and study it less than others. We do not fully take into account the psychology and mentality of people in the east and focus primarily on western values. We know about today's oriental art due to the positioning of some of its representatives in Europe.

With regards to implementation of the Eurasian concept and boosting international relations in both directions, Europe and Asia, bright prospects are being opened due to Kazakhstan's upcoming chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011. Kazakhstan has been entrusted with a key role to bring together peoples, nations and ideologies, creating a zone of peace and stability in the Asian continent and the Muslim community. Kazakhstan's overall achievements in this foreign policy area will be advanced through the establishment of relations with Islamic eastern countries in spiritual and cultural fields and their development at a new level commensurate with that achieved by our art in its dialogue with the West.

In our cultural cooperation with the eastern world we have yet to realize and demonstrate a special place occupied by the Islamic East. Each country of the Organization of the Islamic Conference is unique, but, at the same time, Kazakhstan and each of these countries have something in common, either the language or religious traditions, or ethno-genesis. Kazakhstan is situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, North and South, East and West, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.

The topic of this conference 'Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the OIC: Gender Perspective' has brought us together to share our views on sustainable development in the human dimension, as all of us face certain challenges in our respective fields.

We, artists, are ready to embark on our peacekeeping mission, to foster dialogue between western and eastern civilizations and understanding between Europe and the Muslim world. Our art is powerful in that we can boast of highest achievements in both western and oriental art. However, cooperation with eastern Islamic cultures calls for a careful attitude towards traditions and mutual understanding. Thus, while offering

our music projects to audiences in the Arab East, we should take into account certain communication peculiarities.

It is a tradition of Arab countries to have social entertainments separate for male and female communities. Accordingly, musicians are divided into male and female bands. The etiquette of some countries prohibits watching women playing and watching their body movements, to say nothing about purely concert dresses. Arab peoples are more used to folk songs and sounds of folk instruments. European music traditions are not well accepted and developed in all countries and often have to go through quite complicated assimilation. Such challenges in cultural cooperation should not repel us. They should make us search for unconventional ways of cooperation and enrich the experience of the Kazakh art.

At the end of my speech, I would like to outline a diverse range of areas of international cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Islamic world in spiritual and cultural domains. First, we need to create **new knowledge** in all areas of art and literature about Islamic civilization, its past and its present. This knowledge should be in the public domain, especially for youth education purposes. Second, integration and cooperation offer a **diverse exchange of artistic achievements**. Boosting international relations should encourage diverse forms of presentation of Kazakh art in the East and the Arab-Persian culture in Kazakhstan, for example, by holding the Year of Culture in one of the Islamic East countries. Third, interaction between the cultures and bringing nations closer to each other will be facilitated by **transfer of national achievements via education**.

Thus, the upcoming new vector of cultural and spiritual cooperation will reveal an important role of art diplomacy in Kazakhstan's foreign policies.



Mr. SALIH AKÇAY
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EAST AND WEST: ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Culture of Love in the East-West Concept

The history of thought and opinions is not alien in the era of revolution. The philosophy, which started from Socrates' 'Know yourself', was in tune with the Islamic 'He, who knows himself, knows Allah'. Plato once said that an educated and self-complementing society that builds a moral and perfect system by perfecting human and spiritual development will be a happy and an ideal one. Following In Plato's footsteps, Aristotle said that focus on material, positive sciences will lead to a happy end. Although rationalism and imperialism drove other relationships and social behavior to the foreground, while dividing intelligence and spirit, state and nation, there are shortcomings in the full knowledge of a person.

To date, such pressing problems as pollution, hunger, poverty, growing armed forces, people who grew up between society and corruption, hopelessness, stress, loss of humanity and mistrust, misunderstanding and selfishness have led to various debates among people.

In the present context, the UN set up after World War II does not have sufficient capacity to cater for human needs. Intercultural tolerance and dialogue fill in the space left by national and international organizations and the UN and, by doing so, expand functional activities. Now, going beyond formation of a person, the state becomes more like the machinery protecting and serving a person. It is not the state with its new functions and systems; it is the person, which matters.

International balance implies convergence of East and West, with great strides being made in that direction at present. This synthesis is the beginning of sensibility, tolerance, unity and respect, with the person being at the heart of such synthesis, and the way that leads to a positive attitude.

Achievements in modern technology, telecommunications and the environment during the globalization era affect the entire human race. In my opinion, with East and West being the common home for everyone, the creation and proclamation of a global culture of spirituality is the common goal and mission of all public organizations. To this end, by creating common psychology, joining forces to address common problems, in particular, through the joint efforts of each and every public entity and organization, especially international ones, we should make our world a happy and uniform system.

In my opinion, there are three main problems in the world. First, it is illiteracy; secondly, it is the unwillingness to unite for common goals; and, thirdly, it is poverty. All of these problems affect the entire humankind and lead to disasters. To solve these issues, we should continue to promote education and fight illiteracy with the help of public organizations and government agencies. Based on human values, while fighting the unwillingness to unite for common purposes and taking into account and respecting national peculiarities and cultural values, we must work to unite the national and international community, and help people in need using charity, support and poverty elimination capabilities. From this point of view, notwithstanding differences in religion, ethnic background, race and culture, we should show respect and morality and only then we will become a kind and humane society.

I think that the humankind provides an impetus for organizations. I believe that people devoid of humanity and spirituality are like animals, which have no human qualities. Thus, an ideal person must be one, who has both intelligence and spirit, that is, in line with Plato's and Aristotle's principles, and who is determined to explore the current era and address global challenges.



Ms. RAUSHAN SARSEMBAYEVA

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PARTICIPATION OF NGOS IN IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL GENDER POLICIES

Recently, the role of the civil society in promoting democracy has received increasing official recognition globally. Civil society and the state form a complex and contradictory dialectical unity, which becomes a powerful source of progress if correct relationships are established. Advantages of countries having as strong non-governmental organizations as state institutions are obvious for everyone. Through a variety of forms of institutional interaction, such countries acquire greater social stability. Broad involvement of citizens into various forms of cooperation contributes to more efficient accumulation of social capital, which in its turn becomes a decisive competitiveness factor in the post-industrial society.

The Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women notes that growing strengthening of the non-governmental sector, particularly women's organizations and feminist groups, has become a driver of change. NGOs are an important mouthpiece in improving legislation or mechanisms ensuring the advancement of women. Furthermore, they have become catalysts for new approaches to development.

Of course, each country has its own path of development of cooperation with NGOs. For example, what is peculiar about Kazakhstan's history is that the state was the first to emerge and that an informed civil society appeared later. Following the path of democratic development, the state is setting the stage for supporting the non-governmental sector.

Several stages can be identified in the development of women's NGOs in Kazakhstan. The first stage includes the period up to 1991, when the republic had only 3-4 women's organizations that were set up following the order of state authorities (so-called quasi-NGOs) and operated within certain state programmes. Their focus did not involve grassroots initiatives and was in essence social, regulatory and paternalistic.

The second stage includes the period from 1991 to 1994, when at the dawn of independence of Kazakhstan and democratic changes about 20 women's NGOs and women's initiative organizations (accounting for 4-5% of all registered NGOs) were set up. Focus of women's NGOs was in line with the overall direction of development of the

third sector at that time. These are, primarily, advocacy, protection of national culture and traditions, introduction of educational programmes on legal literacy and political participation. One should mention 1994-1999, a period marked by active growth of NGOs (a total of 1600 organizations including 74 women's NGOs). The scope of their impact and activity has expanded. A number of international and national associations, unions and foundations have emerged. These are 'International Environmental Association of Women of the East' (1995), 'Republican Association of Women with Disabilities' (1996), 'National Council of Women', etc. Quantitative growth of non-governmental organizations has, first of all, to do with such factors as significant financial support from international foundations and organizations through grants and adoption of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'On Public Associations' in 1996 (31/05/1996).

Of particular importance was the President's Decree establishing the Council on Family and Women Affairs and Demographic Policies under the President, which, given the importance of the issue and the aim to focus on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, was later transformed into a key institutional mechanism for women's issues in Kazakhstan, National Commission for Women Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan¹. It must be noted that compared to its previous structure the current National Commission for Women Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan designed to protect the interests of families, provide conditions required for women's involvement into political, social, economic and cultural life of the country has more rights and powers delegated to it.

In 2000, the President's Address to the People of Kazakhstan included assignments to the Government to set the stage for the development of the non-governmental sector. The legal framework for the assignments included the Law on Non-Profit Organizations and 2003-2005 Programme of State Support to NGOs, which underpinned regional programmes. Of great significance was the adoption of the Law on State Social Order in April 2005, which marked the overhaul of the system of relationships between government and NGOs.

In October 2003, the first Civic Forum involving the Head of the State Nursultan Nazarbayev was held, which was essentially the start of a new stage in the development of the non-governmental sector in Kazakhstan. It is marked by emergence of a system of efficient interaction between the non-governmental sector and the authorities at all levels.

Today, NGOs are actively involved in implementing government policy objectives to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women, such as improvement of the legal and political culture of the society to secure gender equality in all areas of life, social work and family relationships. This is evidenced by objectives to develop the civil society in the country and practical outcomes of women's movement.

The institutionalization of women's movements in Kazakhstan is a reality and includes a large group of non-governmental organizations in various fields. These include **education-related women's organizations** (Women's Union of Al-Farabi Kazakh State National University); **mother and child organizations** (Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities, the Union of Large Families in Kazakhstan, the Moldir Association of Single Mothers, Almaty Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, etc.);

organizations dealing with health issues (Bibi-Ana Republican Association of Women with Disabilities raising dependent children, National Centre for Protection of Maternal and Child Health);

¹ The Council was set up by the Council's Decree in March 1995 and was restructured on 22/12/1998

business women's NGOs, which have been actively involved in development of entrepreneurial skills of unemployed women by educating them (these have included the Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan, Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan and their branches in the regions, etc.);

crisis centres (Podrugi, Zabota, Nezabudka Crisis Centres);

professional organizations (Women's Creative Initiative League, Association of Women Lawyers);

environmental organizations (International Environmental Association of Women of the East, Greenwomen);

Muslim organizations (League of Muslim Women) and others.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan has two Centres for Gender Studies (CGS): in Alma-Ata (headed by Svetlana Shakirova) and in Karaganda (headed by Natalya Usacheva). There are two Feminist Leagues: in Alma-Ata (headed by Eugeniya Kozyreva) and in Kokshetau (headed by Galina Morozova). Number-wise, these entities employ one to several dozens of people. It is hard to say how many women are involved in women's movement today, because their number is ever changing, upwards at that.

And we can confidently say that today non-governmental organizations in Kazakhstan are proceeding in multiple vectors in implementing national gender policies.

As you may know, I am in charge of the Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan, which will soon be 15 years old. And almost from the very beginning we have paid much attention to searching for cooperation with authorities. It has not been easy. But I can say one thing. We have taken an active part in the development of the Gender Policy Concept in Kazakhstan and in the development of the 2006-2016 Gender Equality Strategy. Moreover, we discussed and debated the need for the development and adoption of Laws 'On Domestic Violence' and 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women' on an ongoing basis and can note with deep satisfaction the contribution of the non-governmental sector in this area.

On 15 November, we initiated the national gender sensitive manager contest and expect to announce its results in one-month's time. We had a similar contest in 2006 after the adoption of the 2006-2016 Gender Equality Strategy in Kazakhstan in 2005. At that time, the contest drew a big public response.

At the moment, the main goal of the contest is to inform the public about gender policies in Kazakhstan, to get a feeling about how well executives know them, and how effectively the gender equality strategy is being implemented in the country.

When speaking about the role of the non-governmental sector in national gender policies, one should note the contribution of the Expert Council of the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family- Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan consisting of representatives of research and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Acting within the Expert Council allows non-governmental organizations to submit their proposals and recommendations, express their vision of gender policies in Kazakhstan. In essence, this is a dialogue platform for the government and non-governmental organizations and yet another channel for communicating public views to the government. As part of women's advancement in the socio-political life, a Republican network of women's leadership schools was set up and includes 69 NGOs from all oblasts of the country. The Interregional Leadership Workshop for women from Akmola, East Kazakhstan, Karaganda, Pavlodar and North Kazakhstan Oblasts was launched under Pavlodar Fund 'Partnership Centre'. The first results of the workshop included the launch of Petropavlovsk City Gender Club bringing together high school students from four schools and lyceums for developing social activity and shaping leadership skills.

In addition, the country's first permanent commission on the Gender, Family and Demographic Policy working with NGOs and youth was launched in Kostanai Oblast Maslikhat. However, despite such positive developments in the third sector, which testify that the state understands the significance of NGOs for the development of the civil society in Kazakhstan, as a whole; conditions for its functioning in the country should be further improved.

Support for NGOs dealing with gender issues is very important for successful implementation of state policy goals to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, such as improvement of the society's legal and political culture to ensure gender equality in all areas of life, including politics, social, labour and family relationships.

It is clear that sustainability of NGOs depends on their relevance in the society, i.e. at the end of the day, their funding. Clearly, NGOs should have multiple funding options. These include individuals, charities, companies and, finally, the state itself. Nevertheless, in a situation where the demand for NGO services is not yet high in the society, state social order is prevailing for objective reasons.

This objective is to some extent addressed through the state procurement bidding process for socially significant projects announced by the Ministry of Culture and other agencies. As practice shows, gender and family policies account for an inexplicably small number of state procurement bidding allotments and a range of participating, let alone winning NGOs is unduly small.

In this context, we believe it is practicable for the Government to increase the number of ministries and agencies announcing government procurement of services in socially significant projects and take into account topics within the realm of main government policies to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again that the experience gained throughout these years shows that we can only achieve positive results by acting together in concert. And today we finally came to a conclusion that both the state and the nongovernmental sector are developing a constructive dialogue and successfully elaborating joint proposals to address gender inequality.



Ms. LEYLA MAKHAT,
Docent of the Kazakh National University of Arts

ON THE ROLE OF ART IN DEVELOPMENT AND SHAPING OF GENDER CULTURE

When a contemporary man thinks about a woman's role in visual arts, what images come to his mind first? In painting, drawing and sculpture women are, first of all, muses, beautiful models (and preferably naked ones), endless madonnas and venuses.

Meanwhile, as the research of Pennsylvania University Professor Dr. Snow demonstrated, some of the first Upper Paleolithic cave paintings were made by women.

The archaeologist thoroughly examined handprints left by ancient artists on the walls next to their paintings. He measured images from the French cave Pech Merle (with paintings dating back 25,000 to 16,000 years ago), the Spanish cave Cuevas de El Castillo (with 28,000 year-old handprints) and several others.

The scientist was interested in the exact size of some of the fingers. Analysis of proportions of the index, middle, ring and other fingers led the researcher to conclude that most of them were women's!

This implies that many cave wall images were painted by women, and the role of the fairer sex in the stone-age culture was much greater than the scientists had previously believed.

But let's get back to now.

Contemporary visual art cannot be considered in the context of a single country. Upon being created, all pieces of spatial art forms become public property not only of one country, but the entire global community. At the moment, when half of the world's population is 'online', all visual plasticity changes and processes are presented to the court of public opinion.

What's happening in the world of art now?

At this point, the global market of fine arts demonstrates an increasing interest in contemporary German and Chinese art.

For example, let's look at what is happening at Document, Art Basel and other important fine art festivals! This has to do with a number of reasons, one of them being a phenomenon of the new German painting school. This process that lasted over a period of nearly 30 years is now yielding its active results, with an increased interest in new German school masters to last for decades (as estimated by European critics). Professional art dealers' investment in Chinese art gives a reason to be positive about the future of Chinese artists.

The role of fine art is hard to overestimate. A contemporary person is accompanied by images created by artists from cradle to grave. And that is why they (we ..), artists, are responsible for shaping visual images and the artistic taste of the society. Taste preferences of a society can be treated as a system of emotional assessment, which must conform to the requirements of a majority.

Monuments and works of the world's fine art are a sort of a chronicle of development of human culture. These monuments are unique in that they are understandable by representatives of different ethnic and social groups.

Naturally, works of plastic arts are a powerful factor in the development of gender culture. It is visual images that do not need to be verbalised are the first to cause people's reaction.

As all of us know, visual arts include various kinds, genres and movements. Easel and monumental painting is just one of these kinds. Sculpture, graphics, design, arts and crafts are also full-fledged forms of plastic arts.

Based on the classical European school, which, in its turn, follows ancient Greek canons, decorative arts of our country's nomadic period and contemporary Kazakh art are a unique cultural phenomenon. It should also be noted that due to the geographical location of Kazakhstan all kinds of arts, especially visual ones, were constantly influenced by neighbouring cultures, thus getting richer, while retaining their identity.

A thin line between crafts and art works almost disappears when one considers nomads' everyday household items. German scientist Karutz, who studied the life of Kazakhs, wrote in his notes, 'You will never see a Kazakh woman sitting idle. Once she is done with her household chores, she takes a spindle and turns, pulls and spins fibres into thread tirelessly, spindle after spindle'.

As a result of these activities, storage rooms and exhibition halls of state and municipal museums have samples of high art works, which were successfully used in the household for centuries.

Products of carpet-weaving and felt-making, bone carving, woodwork and jewellery can rival works of classical forms of plastic arts in terms of their meaning and quality.

Here one can see a certain paradox. For a product of one's labour to be announced as a work of art, at least two people should think so, an author and another person.

In case of Kazakh folk art works, this is a reverse Process when masters (*shebers*), artists at their heart, sincerely believed that they were making household items, while their grateful descendants admire their work as a work of art.

To date, modern art of Kazakhstan experiences varied and interesting processes. It is hard to make any development forecasts at the moment due to lack of statistics and supervision over fine arts, but despite this the shaping of a new art of independent Kazakhstan is fascinating in itself.

Works of our countrymen can be seen in public and private collections abroad. Kazakhstani artists take part in major international projects domestically and abroad. Young and mature artists are inventing new art movements. Independent art groups and associations setting ambitious goals and successfully achieving them are being set up. Such creative associations are operational in classical art forms and new areas of visual plastic arts. With great pleasure, I would like to note that these creative alliances include not only male artists.

Historically, in people's minds the word 'artist' came to be associated with a male artist, preferably, the one looking arrogant, wearing a beret and carrying a pipe in his hand.

The gender issue in the global fine art is not only my sore point. If you ask an educated person to name five famous male artists, he will remember five, seven, or even 10 names and surnames in two and a half minutes.

Just for fun, ask him to give you names of five famous female artists. After naming Frida Kahlo (thanks to Hollywood!), he will stumble. Not everything is so sad, however. This year the new Kazakh National University of Arts, where I have the honour and pleasure to teach, was opened. The students' gender ratio makes me quite happy as a woman and inspires me as an artist.

Thank you for your attention.



Ms. AIGUL MUKEY,
General Director of El Arna TV channel

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE REVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRUE SPIRITUAL VALUES

Dear Conference Participants!

My speech is entitled 'The Role of Media in Revival and Development of True Spiritual Values'. Before elaborating on challenges facing the media, I believe we should provide a definition of the term 'spiritual values'.

Philosophers define spiritual values as principles, ideals and main life guidelines for each person and each type of culture in history. These are basic principles of morality, of good and evil. These are ideas a person has about himself and his niche in the world; individuality, freedom and creativity. Spiritual values govern our relationships with other people. In our relationships with loved ones, they are such moral qualities as loyalty, charity and responsibility. In the global sense, these values are patriotism, humanity and humanism. Of course, all these values are fostered by a person's family, school, and life itself. But you cannot deny the impact of the media on the shaping of one's world view.

Polls conducted this year by Sange Center show that 97.5% of Kazakhstanis watch TV, 63% read newspapers and nearly 50% listen to the radio every week. This testifies to a special niche occupied by the media in the development of the society. Its impact on people starts at a very early age and continues throughout their life. In effect, in the modern world the media has assumed a large part of functions in shaping people's consciousness, fostering their tastes, attitudes, habits and preferences. It is clear from these polls that the main role in this process belongs to television.

Long ago TV gurus inferred a postulate that TV programmes, series, movies and any TV product are only popular when a viewer can imagine himself in the shoes of heroes, when topics raised in TV projects are understandable and familiar to him. Television of independent Kazakhstan had long been searching for topics, forms and methods of presenting information that would meet the demands of TV viewers.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, when an independent market state was still emerging, the audience did not relate to images of Soviet 'shock' workers, although it did feel nostalgic. Women's images experienced particularly dramatic changes. We had a long history of female characters admired by the audience such as well-known Kyz Zhibek, Nurzhamal from the old movie 'Daughter of Steppes', Gulnaz from 'Love

Station', Bibigul from a popular musical 'Our Dear Doctor'. These female characters promoted such spiritual values as loyalty, patriotism and kindness.

In early 1990's, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, our viewers got to know female characters from foreign movies, who placed independence, careerism and a fight for a place under the sun above all. To some extent, this was on the same wavelength with concerns of Kazakhstani women. At that time, they started exploring the role of managers and entrepreneurs and needed to have corresponding female role models.

In the mid-1990's in response to global challenges and life changes people started looking for simple entertainments helping them to take life easier. It was the time when values traditional for our society became blurred. We saw foreign movies where wealth was more important than spiritual values and where the well-known statement 'the strong should help the weak' was replaced with an egocentric slogan 'the best man wins'. However, basic values developed over centuries and deeply entrenched in the mentality of our society turned out to be resistant.

What is happening now? According to Sange Research Center Kazakhstani viewers consider the media to be not only an entertainer, but also an educator. Important topics that viewers want to see on TV are social problems, life stories and mind-broadening programmes. When choosing between channels, Kazakhstani viewers pay attention not only to the relevance of the topic or the quality of the video, but also to moral standards they promote.

This is also evidenced by how well Turkish series are received in Kazakhstan, which are more popular with viewers of El Arna TV channel headed by me than Latin American soap operas, American and Russian series. In my opinion, the success of the Turkish series has to do with the fact that viewers liken themselves to on-screen characters. The series feature Muslims who fast and respect their elders. However, this does not prevent them from being secular, which matches basic principles of Kazakhstan. Actors can act at ease, they are believable, credible and are well received by Kazakhstani viewers. Female characters in the Turkish series correspond to our mentality and female images. These are working women, who can defend their point of view and become independent business women and politicians, while observing Muslim traditions. By the way, according to the polls these series are also watched by men, who also accept the proposed system of values.

Turkish series made at a good artistic level are a key to high ratings. In general, ratings are the main yardstick for today's television. There is even a saying that TV turns the way the wind of Mr. Gallup, the founder of one of global poll companies, blows. While forming a broadcasting network, one can be guided by other principles also familiar to people such as curiosity about other people's life, desire to count money in someone else's pocket and interest in criminal accidents and high-profile scandals. This is definitely a way to popularity and high ratings, however, state media including El Arna, have a more important ideological task, which underpins our broadcasting policy.

By allocating money to *El Arna*, the state invests in education of a younger generation, which is the most sensitive to TV messages. According to U.S. researchers 60% of teenagers believe TV more than doctors, teachers and other adults. However, teenagers are less susceptible to various types of propaganda slogans. In this regard, modern TV offers unique cognitive and game formats.

The intellectual show 'Leader of the 21st Century' has been on the air in Khabar and El Arna channels for many years. It should be noted that the programme was launched at the time when the society was sceptical towards the education system and the need to strive for new knowledge on an ongoing basis. Intelligent, well-read, purposeful heroes of the programme set an example promoting such values as thirst for knowledge and urge for self-improvement. Furthermore, the game provided an opportunity for dozens of young people to get educated in the country's best

universities and became a model for schools and colleges. Students play 'Leader of the 21st Century' games, learn and follow intellectual leadership standards sets by TV.

Media can promote values of debates, respect for others' opinion and importance of consensus. These standards underpin the format of this talk-show, which is now evolving in the state TV. The participation of active young people in the talk show together with experts and government officials teaches democratic principles allowing topics relevant for the society to be discussed and the responsibility for decisions to be assumed.

The media plays an important role in promoting tolerance standards, preserving the unique culture and perception of values of other nations. This year El Arna channel has prepared and aired *Sharkyn Life* reality show aimed to promote such values characteristic of the Kazakh people as openness, hospitality and respect for elders among young people. Participation of Kazakhstani pop stars Almas Kishkinbayev, Beibit Korgan, Akylbek Zhemenev and Arnau duo in the project caught the attention of young audiences as evidenced by the high rating of the programme. Again, not to set the viewers' teeth on the edge and not to turn him away with 'propaganda', high spiritual postulates are offered in a simple and understandable manner. So, while entertaining, TV educates young people.

But perhaps one of the most important roles TV plays is the shaping of family values. According to sociologists watching TV in our country was and still is a family affair. Almost 70% of Kazakhstanis gather in front of their TVs with older or younger family members. That is why the TV in our country makes programmes that one can watch together with one's mother and children. That is why it is so important for programmes, series and movies to promote the principles of care, attention and love.

I would like to tell you a parable. Once upon a time there was an island where all Values lived. But once they noticed that the island started going under the water. All the values sat on their ships and sailed. Love was the last one to remain. It had no ship and turned to her friend Values. Wealth did not take Love, because the ship was filled with treasures and there was no room. Self-determination has refused to help because Love could disrupt harmony. Joy just did not hear the request in the noise of merriment. Only an old man took Love to the land. Love had no time to ask him about his name and asked Knowledge. Knowledge replied that it was Time. So, only time knows how important Love is in people's life.

Over the past few years we have seen a variety of candid pictures in the media, both printed and electronic. We have no taboos, for example, for sale of erotic magazines. But when there were no barriers and prohibitions left, it turned out that moral principles are more appealing to us. Love of family, love for children and love for people surrounding you are the values supported by the media. These values are appealing and understandable to the public, so we can find dozens of examples to talk about on the air and on the pages of newspapers, thus creating some kind of 'circle of kindness'.

I am talking about voluntary and charity projects, which became particularly active in Kazakhstan during the global economic crisis. Hundreds of people give not only their money, but also heart and time for lonely old people, sick children, people with disabilities, i.e., people desperate for our care. El Arna channel has a project titled 'Our Children', which helps kids from orphanages find their parents. Other media also have such programmes and columns. Thus, our journalist efforts are centred on real-life active people setting an example by reviving timeless values.

Dear participants of the conference.

Over the years of Kazakhstan's independence, we have managed to shape a new female image. This is a woman with all roads open for her, who has an opportunity for education and self-education, career and business. A few years ago such values were commonly called western. At the same time, Kazakhstani women stick to values that have been central to our people for centuries: respect for elders, tolerance, loyalty and devotion. These values are called oriental. Thus, the image of modern Kazakhstani women united the two cultures, eastern and western, which the media cover in their reports.

Many countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference have experienced the same synergy of values of different nations and cultures. Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization and exchange of opinions between artists and cultures of Muslim countries will offer an opportunity to share their unique experience in promoting spiritual and moral values in the media and learn a lot from colleagues.

RESOLUTION

International Conference

“Chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the Organization
of the Islamic Conference: Gender Aspect”

The participants of the conference support the activation of the relations of Kazakhstan with Moslem countries meeting long-term interests of Kazakhstan. In his Message to the People of Kazakhstan the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev noted the development of cooperation with Islamic countries as one of the priority of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Since, for its part the Islamic world considers Kazakhstan as integral part of the Moslem community.

Kazakhstan, being a polyethnical and multiconfessional state, completely supports the global process aimed at the development of a dialogue between civilizations and religions. The Organization of the Islamic Conference – OIC, the headquarters of which are located in Jidda (Saudi Arabia), in relation to the number of countries members is considered to be the second largest international organization after the UN. It unites 57 Moslem states of four continents. Active participation of our country in the activity of the Organization of the Islamic Conference since 1995, along with other major regional and global organizations, is becoming more and more significant at a modern stage.

The participants of the conferences note historical importance of the forthcoming chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the 38th Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011, which should serve successful continuation of active work of Kazakhstan diplomacy within the framework of Kazakhstan chairmanship in the OSCE in 2010. This circumstance is the acknowledgement of a significant role of Kazakhstan in the promotion of an inter-civilization and inter-religious dialogue.

The election of Kazakhstan as a chairperson of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of countries-members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011 has become an evidence of great trust and acknowledgement of international authority of our country on the part of the Moslem community. Kazakhstan having a position of a moderator of political, economical and cultural aspects of the Organization of the Islamic Conference activity will focus on efficient solution of actual problems of the Islamic community, consolidation of the organization's capacity to strengthen international safety, economic relationships and promotion of the process of a dialogue between civilizations.

The participants of the conference consider it to be necessary to take an active part in the realization of strategic tasks put by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as contribute to the agenda development for Kazakhstan chairing in the Organization of the Islamic Conference considering the issues of gender equality, observance of women's rights, when employing them, not allowing discriminating them in relation to gender.

Adopting the resolution, the participants of the conference come from the fact that our everyday activity allows solving many actual issues. The most important instrument of state policy and efforts of civil society should become mobilization of society's intellectual and will potential to solve the following tasks:

1. Make feasible input into strengthening of peace and trust between peoples, Kazakhstan will have an aim to become a bridge between the West and the East;
2. Kazakhstan is against the trend of growing Islam phobia and systematic discrimination of Moslems. We call the international community to prevent incitement of hatred and discrimination of Moslems and create effective measures

- to fight with slander on religion and creation of negative stereotypes of people based on religion, faith or race;
3. The experience of the republic in the development of peaceful relations between confessions, which will be useful not only for countries members of the Organization of the Islamic Conferences, should be shared;
 4. Kazakhstan should contribute to the solution of problems in the field of presses and information of Islamic world countries, strengthening of cooperation and coordination in the field of information between the country of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in particular, coordinate the work of countries members' structures engaged in the field of information, define and implement joint activity on the issues of interest for them;
 5. Development of partnership of the institutes of OIC countries members' women community on systemic promotion of women to leading roles in the public- political sphere and the economy on all authority levels. As well as creation of public structures securing coordination of women organizations' efforts in this direction;
 6. Use of the best international experience in support of political and business involvement of women on the part of society and the state and promotion of family values;
 7. Expansion of business partnership and personal contacts of women-leaders of the OIC countries members with the colleague on the international level;
 8. Creation of an international databank on women-leaders to establish an informational infrastructure for their active interaction, experience sharing, and participation in implementation of joint initiatives. Creation of other informational resources securing additional opportunities for self-realization of women in business and public and political activity;
 9. Organization of an informal summit of women leaders of OIC countries members to promote the dialogue to encourage women political leadership to develop peace relations between confessions and cultures.

The participants of the conference are sure that realization of the proposals specified in the present Resolution may become an important contribution into the realization of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011.

Drawing the conclusions of the conference, the participants note the constructive nature of the opinions exchanged, openness and practical value of the discussion.

The participants thank foreign guests - representatives of the diplomatic body and international organizations for their great input into the work of the conference.

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