

**Joint Programme of the  
Sixth Plenary Session of the CICA Business Council and  
the Eighth CICA Business Forum  
Cooperation Prospects of the CICA Member States in  
Food Security, Renewable Energy and Green Finance**

*Date: 13 November 2023, 10:00*

*Venue: Trade Hall conference room, AIFC*

***“Empowering women for sustainable energy and development”.***

**Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests!**

On behalf of UN Women Kazakhstan, I would like to extend my warm welcome to everyone and express my gratitude to the CICA Secretariat for the opportunity to participate in this significant event.

UN Women globally, regionally and nationally works to build a more sustainable world, empower women and girls and ensure no one is left behind. Gender equality is the foundation of sustainable development, linked with crucial areas such as food security, energy, and access to financial resources.

**Food security and rural women**

We believe that rural women are the driving force of the country's food security. They play a critical role in achieving the transformative changes necessary for sustainable development. However, rural women face numerous challenges, including limited access to healthcare, services, recourses, and discriminatory social norms.

Moreover, energy poverty is prevalent in rural areas without access to gas supply. Studies show that women are more affected by fuel poverty because they spend more time at home and suffer the most from indoor air pollution (due to the use of coal and other types of solid fuel). Women need to be better informed about cleaner fuel options and be aware of the negative impact of pollution on their health and the health of their families.

Another burning issue is unpaid care work. Housekeeping and caring for family members are often perceived as a woman's responsibility. For many women,

unpaid domestic work has become a second job. In Kazakhstan, women spend 3 times more time on unpaid domestic work than men. To support women, we need, to ensure equal sharing of housework and care work, and to eradicate gender stereotypes that prevent women from realizing their potential.

Today women make-up 42% of workforce in Kazakhstan's agriculture. However, among farm owners, their share is 26%. When it comes to women landowners, women's proportion is only 1.5% of the adult population. Unfortunately, these numbers are far from a gender-equal approach.

We welcome the fact that in the updated Concept of Family and Gender Policy of Kazakhstan until 2030, the Government has set the goal of increasing the representation of women at the decision-making level, including land ownership and farming business.

We believe that empowering rural women is vital not only to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities but also to the overall economic situation in the country.

### **Women in the energy sector**

We also see that Kazakhstan's renewable energy sector needs more measure for advancing gender equality.

According to the recent [UNDP report](#), the proportion of women in Kazakhstan's energy sector remains lower compared to men. Women make up 22 percent of the coal industry, 18 percent of the oil and gas sector, and 30 percent of the renewable energy sector.

There is still a lack of women's participation at decision-making levels in these sectors. The report found that women in the energy are often in low-skilled roles, with high percentages of unskilled women workers. Additionally, fewer women hold managerial or technical positions in the sector. Last year, less than 10 percent of students majoring in energy in Kazakhstan were women.

In addition, [KAZENERGY-EBRD study](#) revealed a gender pay gap in the entire energy sector. The average salary of women is approximately 81% of the average men's salary giving 19% pay gap. What is striking is that only 16% of companies have developed specific strategies and mechanisms to combat sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

**Dear Ladies and Gentlemen**, using this opportunity I would like to draw your attention to violence against women and girls which is one of the worst manifestations of discrimination against women and girls. It remains the most widespread and pervasive human rights violation worldwide. We have to work together for strengthening legislation, increasing institutional capacity, work on data collection, talk more about violence and focus on its prevention, as well as address social norms and gender stereotypes. Please remember there is no excuse for any form of gender-based violence.

## **Finances**

Also, today UN Women actively promotes sustainable financing for gender equality. In this regard, the importance of gender bonds for the advancement, empowerment, and equality of women should be mentioned.

We welcome that ADB placed its first gender bonds on KASE in February 2021, setting a precedent for other financial institutions to prioritize investment in projects that benefit women. This is a significant step forward in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Kazakhstan.

The financing of women's mortgages through these bonds provided financial support to women in Kazakhstan and also helped addressing the gender gap in access to housing and finance.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the importance of Women's Empowerment Principles. They were developed by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, to guide businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. Today Kazakhstan is the leader in Central Asia in the number of companies that have signed these principles. There are 45 companies that signed the WEPs. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the CEOs in this conference room today to join the Principles and publicly declare their company's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

**In conclusion**, I would reiterate that we shouldn't understand food security, energy, and finances as standalone concerns. We must integrate a comprehensive gender approach into our policies and decision-making processes from the outset. This integration will foster more inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

We need to remove investment barriers and create equal opportunities for women's entrepreneurship and decent employment. By providing women with equal access to resources, capital, and technologies, we can unleash their entrepreneurial potential.

I would like to take this opportunity to call upon all CICA member states representatives to prioritize gender-responsive policies and ensure that women are included in all aspects of their lives.

Together we can create a more sustainable and inclusive world.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to our fruitful cooperation!