

Agenda item 6: Contribution of population and development issues to the theme of the AMR in 2010

Mr. Chairman,

I take this opportunity to express appreciation for your initiative to invite this year's NVP countries to participate in discussions on the contribution of population and development issues to the theme of this year's AMR which is, of course, gender equality and women's empowerment.

It gives me a pleasure to inform you that on this very day, April 15th, Mongolia is holding its National Consultative Meeting to discuss the country's draft National Report on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to be presented at the AMR this coming June. All major stakeholders are taking part in discussions: government officials, civil society organizations and representatives of the business community. The NCM provides a good opportunity for all stakeholders to highlight the gender equality and women's empowerment issues at the policy level and, at the same time, appraise progress in the implementation of the gender-related MDG.

Mr. Chairman, let me briefly dwell on two issues that are of importance in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

As stated in the PoA of the ICPD, "the empowerment of women is ... essential for the achievement of sustainable development." This is especially true of **women's economic empowerment**. The development and implementation of specific policies that promote women's economic empowerment, including through better access to full and productive employment and decent work, through supporting entrepreneurship among women and ensuring sustainable income generation is one way to achieve this goal. In my country, women account for 51.6% of the working-age population, slightly more than men (48.4%). Their number though is slightly less in the total number of the employed people, 48.2%. They make up the majority of those employed in education, healthcare, financial services, hotel and catering and wholesale and retail trade. However, men get paid higher in those sectors because they occupy most of the managerial positions. Besides, more men than women are employed in higher-wage industries such as mining, construction,

transport, energy. The overall result is that the average salary for women is 13.2% lower than that for men. Therefore, the objectives set out in the PoA of the ICPD “to enable women to realize their full potential, involve [them] fully ...in all aspects of economic life” remain as important as ever. Promoting women to high-level management positions and ensuring their participation in economic decision-making is an essential ingredient of such efforts. My government is committed to the goal of women’s economic empowerment and sees it as central to the achievement of the MDGs and the eradication of poverty.

My second point is about **women’s political participation**. As we know, one of the critical areas of concern of Beijing is political empowerment of women. The PoA of the ICPD also calls for “women’s equal participation and equal representation at all levels of the political process and public life.” This is one area where we have seen slippage in Mongolia, despite the constitutional and legal framework that guarantee equal rights between women and men in political, economic, social, cultural and family life. The Government’s Program on Gender Equality set out concrete actions aimed at ensuring those rights, and civil society and women’s groups in Mongolia have been active in debating the possible ways forward to ensure that the current 3.9% of women’s representation in the national parliament, which is the lowest according to even our own standards, is increased. The national parliament has now before it a draft Law on Gender Equality that provides for an increase of female representation in the decision-making bodies.