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**THE ISSUE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN UZBEKISTAN
IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Sh. Toshturov

*Senior teacher,
e-mail: mitra7mix@mail.ru,
Navoi State Pedagogical Institute,
Navoi, Uzbekistan*

Abstract. The Sustainable Development Goals which should be executed by the United Nations in 2015–2030, are remaining in the world's history as an international program aimed at coping with the global problems of the different nations and states of the world. This global program consists of 17 objectives that mainly concentrate on solving the most important and pressing problems around the world. The issue of gender equality is one of the important areas of Sustainable Development Goals. Since gender equality has become a burning issue in most of the countries around the world. Systematic reforms such as ensuring gender equality among citizens, ensuring the rights of women and girls, creating suitable conditions for them, supporting their active participation in the life of the state and society are being carried out in Uzbekistan in recent years.

In this article, the issue of gender equality in the conditions of sustainable development in Uzbekistan, the reforms carrying out in this regard, their results, the existing problems will be analyzed on the basis of local and foreign sources. Some recommendations aimed at eliminating existing problems and further development of gender equality in the country have been put forward by the author.

Keywords: UN; Uzbekistan; Sustainable Development Goals; gender equality; women; global objectives.

A new declaration of “Sustainable Development Goals” (Sustainable Development agenda) [6, p. 35], which is planned to be achieved by 2030, was adopted by 193 states in the United Nations' membership in September 25, 2015. This program consists of 17 objectives, intended for global development in the world. Its most important aspect is that this program has enriched Millennium Development Goals program with new ultimate goals that should be attained as it's a logical continuation. They work towards the following goals: 1) No Poverty, 2) Zero Hunger, 3) Good Health and Well-being, 4) Quality Education, 5) Gender Equality, 6) Clean Water and Sanitation, 7) Affordable and Clean Energy, 8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 10) Reduced Inequality, 11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, 12) Responsible Consumption and Production, 13) Climate Action, 14) Life Below Water, 15) Life On Land, 16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, 17) Partnerships for the Goals [7, p. 14].

Along with the solution of important problems of humanity the realization of new goals, the prospective issues that should be addressed in the future are considered the top priorities of sustainable development on a global scale. With the accomplishment of the main tasks in this international program on a national, regional and global scale, it will unite the nations and states of the world in the context of common goals. Since the second half of 2016 in the Republic of Uzbekistan the process of radical changes and updates in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of the country has begun. In particular, the “Strategy of action” [1, p. 25–150] on further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017–2021 and the “Development of a strategy” of Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 have been developed and put into practice in political, socio-economic and cultural processes. According to international experts [3], measures set out in these strategies are in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The priorities of these programs are fully in line with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goals. In other

words, the strategy of action is the road map of Uzbekistan for the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals [14, p. 68].

In order to improve the attainment level of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Uzbekistan, up to 2030, 16 national goals and 225 tasks in the field of sustainable development have been defined, the “road map” of their attainment has been developed. The function of the parliamentary commission on control over the attainment of national goals and objectives in the field of Sustainable Development have been launched. Achieving the objectives by the UN which are focused on Sustainable Development is of the great importance for Uzbekistan. The full achievement of these goals contributes to the socio-political, economic and cultural development of the country, as well as to the increase of its international prestige.

Gender equality is one of the important issues in the lives of people of the whole world. Therefore, it is included in the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a separate urgent task. The 5th objective in the field of sustainable development is to ensure gender equality and to extend the rights and opportunities of all women and girls in Uzbekistan in line with the reforms aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men.

On the basis of this objective, Uzbekistan has developed 9 essential tasks on the issues of ensuring gender equality in the country and extending the rights and opportunities of all women and girls. Within the framework of these tasks, numerous changes are introducing in the country.

After 2017, important tasks were completed in order to improve the legal and practical basis for ensuring gender equality. About 20 normative-legal acts aimed at the protection of women's rights and interests, including 2 laws, 1 Presidential Decree, 4 Presidential orders, 13 Cabinet decisions were adopted. On the basis of these documents, the role of women in the life of the state and society has been strengthened. Women work in various responsible leader-

ship positions. In particular, according to the Information Service of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, according to the results of the elections to the Oliy Majlis and local councils in December 2019, 48 female deputies were elected to the Lower House of Parliament. This accounted for 32 percent of the total number of Deputies, and 25 percent in the Senate [4] (only in 46 countries around the world, the percentage of women in at least one chamber of Parliament is 30 percent), while in local councils the percentage of women was 25.6 percent. 41 percent of the candidates nominated in the 2019 elections were women, the number of which increased by 30 percent from the quota specified in the electoral code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The number of women in the national parliament reached the level corresponding to the recommendations set by the UN in the first time in the history of Uzbekistan. The Parliament of Uzbekistan has risen to 37th place among 190 parliaments in the world in terms of the number of women. The share of women in management positions reached 27 percent, 44 percent in parties, 40 percent in higher education, 35 percent in entrepreneurship.

President of Uzbekistan Mirziyoyev in his speech at the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council on February 22, 2021, noted that “we will continue to work hard on gender policy issues to radically increase the role of women in the socio-political life and business field of our country” [5]. In accordance with this, the strategy of achieving gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 by the Senate of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan to was approved in 2021 [13]. This strategy attaches great importance to the issue of gender equality in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals. In Uzbekistan, women are also working in non-governmental organizations. Women's organizations (self-Women's public associations) account for 7 percent of NGOs in Uzbekistan. In 2017 alone, a total of 595 (6.8 %) women's organizations were registered, mainly aimed at social support, health

improvement of women and their families, provision of disability services, development of sports, increasing the legal culture of women and the population [8, p. 5]. The socio-economic support of women is one of the important aspects of Gender equality. Because, on a global scale, the number of women in need of socio-economic protection is increasing. Indeed, the provision of Gender equality is the main factor in the restoration of a healthy society, which is aimed at ranging from poverty reduction, supporting the health, education of children, to their protection and well-being. According to experts of the UN Women's structure, now about 750 million women in the world are forced to marry before they reach the age of 18, Besides, there are no laws prohibiting family violence in the 49 countries around the world [11].

In order to support women in need of socio-economic protection in Uzbekistan, starting from 2020, the “women's book” system has been introduced and 300 billion sums (sum – Uzbek currency) of funds have been allocated annually from the state budget.

The women's book is a list aimed at identifying and solving the problems of unemployed women who are in need of social, economic, legal, psychological support, knowledge and professional study in rural and urban areas.

The “Women's book” included women who are unemployed who need social protection for more than 30 years, who have lost their breadwinner, who have a disability of I and II Group, who need social assistance, who have a disability of I group, who need housing repair, who live in non-residential areas, who do not have a shelter as well as single mother who brings up disabled child, in need of medical protection, legal and psychological help. They were provided with material assistance in various ways. The system of reimbursement of tuition fees of single women who have no parents, or who have lost one of them, has been introduced, and the number of grants for girls in families who need admission to higher education in-

stitutions has doubled. The neighborhood is important in ensuring gender equality. Based on this, great importance is attached to the comprehensive support of women in the neighborhoods. A number of important tasks are carried out in Uzbekistan on the protection of motherhood and childhood.

Uzbekistan is among the countries pursuing an active policy on gender equality between the countries of the world and Central Asia. It should be noted that the first platform of leading women of Central Asia was established. Uzbekistan presided over this platform in 2021. This is the first attempt of the countries of Central Asia under the auspices of the UN to ensure gender equality in the region.

The reforms carried out in Uzbekistan in the direction of gender strategy, as well as the elimination of inequalities in political, economic, social and other spheres between women and men, serve to increase the image of the country in the international arena. In particular, in the Women's Peace and Security Index which has been formed by Georgetown, USA, and Oslo Peace Research Institutes, in 2020, Uzbekistan ranked 89th (710 points), in the 1000-point system (2021/22) among 167 countries, in 2021, 74th (Kazakhstan 761 points, 59th, Kyrgyzstan 713 points, 97th, Tajikistan 727 points, 85th, Turkmenistan 760 points, 60th), among 170 countries [9, p. 103]. Also, according to the report of the World Bank “Women, Business and the Law” (2021), among 190 countries Uzbekistan ranked 13th in 2020, according to the results of 2021, ranked 134 out of 100 points (Kazakhstan ranked 137th (69,4 points), Kyrgyzstan ranked 111th (76,9 points), Tajikistan ranked 103rd (78,8 points) [10, p. 10]. In this report, Uzbekistan is among the countries whose rating has improved due to reforms in several areas.

The UN Development Programme annually conducts research on the gender Inequality Index in countries around the world. It examines the current situation regarding 3 main indicators: 1) reproductive health;

2) civil rights and opportunities; 3) economic activities and opportunities in the labor market. In the report published by the organization in 2019, the highest figures on the provision of gender equality belong to countries such as Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden. From the CIS countries, the Republic of Belarus occupies 27th place, Kazakhstan 46th, Moldova 50th, the Russian Federation 54th, Uzbekistan 64th, Tajikistan 84th and Kyrgyzstan 87th. Almost two-thirds of developing countries have achieved gender balance in primary education [12]. But there are also issues that need to be tackled in this regard. In particular, “The Global gender Gap report 2021 year” prepared by the World Economic Forum did not reflect the role of Uzbekistan (this report includes Kazakhstan 80, Kyrgyzstan 108, Tajikistan 125) [2, p. 10]. Therefore, it is worthwhile to systematically continue reforms on gender equality in the country as well as to expand propaganda work along with their further development.

In our opinion, in order to develop gender equality in Uzbekistan, it is worthwhile to establish a socio-spiritual environment in families, to protect women from harassment and violence, to establish public control so as to prevent negative habits among them, to improve the quality of health services, especially in rural areas, to carry out changes to raise the medical culture of women.

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