



Speech by

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Family, Women and Children's Issues
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

Round table

“Gender and Economy”

UN Special Program for the Economies of Central Asian countries (SPECA)

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Dear guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first thank each of you for participating in the “Gender and Economy” round table. I want to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Economic Development, UNECE, UNESCAP for support in organizing this round table which is dedicated to a very important issue.

A number of opportunities were created for people on the total post soviet area at the last decade and this was the result of economic and technological changes. The development of entrepreneurship in the country provides economic development, the creation of new jobs, unemployment reduction and hence, facilitates the improvement of people's living standards.

It is not possible to achieve the abovementioned without the provision of women's participation in the social, economic and cultural life of the society. Therefore, it is necessary in these terms to provide potential entrepreneur women's participation in economic development processes. The development of women entrepreneurship will help to facilitate poverty reduction, increase women's social and economic significance, and in many cases eliminate gender discrimination.

SPECA is an important mechanism to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through integration of the member countries to the world economy and strengthening of their cooperation in economy and environment. SPECA supports the creation of national mechanisms in the sphere of including regional cooperation and gender issues to economic policy and pilot projects through advanced experience exchange. The goal of this roundtable on gender and economy is to define the areas of regional cooperation and carry out opinion exchange on possible projects and activity opportunities jointly with SPECA Research Institutes.

Women's participation in labor market is important for several reasons. Being active from economic point of view, women could benefit equally from social provision, pension and

healthcare systems. In this case, while keeping doing household chores they will have opportunities for personal development.

Like in other countries, women and men are presented unequally in various sectors of economy. Gender inequality in labor payment is one of the inequality forms at labor markets.

After the transitional period of economy the majority of women in the country began to work in non-governmental sector. The number of women working in non-governmental sector have a great will to take credits to start or continue their business. The creation of small and medium entrepreneurs is supposed to be important factor while elaborating programs on economic development and employment. The problems emerging while credit-taking are the main obstacles for women who want to start their own business.

Reforms of the last decade in the sphere of social-economic development, education, healthcare and institutionalization created opportunities to achieve macro-economic stability and economic development. In its turn, this leads to the improvement of population's, and particularly, women's living standards. In the result of macro-economic reforms in Azerbaijan women being highly educated, with professional awareness, useful knowledge and habits show willingness to start their business. Development of women entrepreneurship helps to reduce poverty, increase women's economic and social significance and in many cases helps to eliminate gender inequality in the society.

A number of State Programs were signed by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Gender is described as a separate sector in State Programs on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development for 2006-2015. The main executor of activities in this sector is State Committee for Family, Women and Children Issues. The Program sets the conduction of various events and measures for women to deal with entrepreneurship activities.

State Program for Social-Economic development of Regions (2004-2008) defined the objectives for balanced economic development and creation of opportunities in main spheres of development for women equal with men. Within this framework a new state strategy planned to liquidate unemployment issue, particularly among women. The successful implementation of the State Program influenced positively to macroeconomic figures in the country and growth was observed.

The establishment of Women Entrepreneurs National Association can be envisaged as a significant step in the list of such measures. The events were held to involve young families to entrepreneurship activity. 291 persons were involved to "The Bases of Entrepreneurship" courses in 2004-2005; the majority of them were youth.

The future solution of problems, such as women's participation in economic reforms process, women's economic rights protection, etc. is very important.

I believe that this round table through including gender issues to economic policy will create capacious opportunities for experience exchange.

Thank you for attention. At the end I would like to ask you all to participate actively in discussions.