

People's Republic of China

Positions for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

I. Improving Financial Access and Inclusion for Women

The People's Republic of China **acknowledges** that pursuing means of equity for women is an essential part of strengthening any country. Without equity for women, the risk of improper healthcare, uneducated citizens, poverty, as well as other systemic issues that will threaten the wellbeing of any Member State, pose less of a threat when women's equity is properly addressed. However, despite significant improvements that have been seen around the world in terms of financial inclusion for women, the gender gap has remained relatively unaltered since 2011. Closing the gender gap in financial inclusion could have positive effects in smoothing consumption, lowering financial risks and costs, providing security, increasing saving and investment rates, and facilitating new business opportunities. Having access to and use of a range of financial services enhances not only the contribution of women and women-led business to growth, but also contributes to women's autonomy, allows for better use of their personal and household resources, and reduces the vulnerability of their households and businesses. In short, closing the gender gap in financial inclusion can act as an enabler of countries' development, economic growth, inequality reduction, business evolution, and social inclusion. However, greater women's financial inclusion requires a more gender inclusive financial system that addresses the specific demand- and supply-side barriers women face. An inclusive regulatory environment is also relevant.

Working in China since 1998, UN Women provides technical and financial assistance to innovative programs and strategies for gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women works in partnership with governments, NGOs, UN agencies, donors, communities and networks to advance gender equality. UN Women China focuses on: (1) providing strong laws to protect women against violence; (2) giving greater opportunity for women's participation to realize their leadership potential; (3) improving access to land, lines of credit, and higher-quality jobs for women; and (4) including national planning and budget that gives particular credence to the unique needs and priorities of women. In addition, the China Gender Facility was founded in 2004, administered by UN Women with the goal to provide gender equality and empowerment to women in China. The CGF provides grants of around \$50,000 to government, civil society, and academic institutions within China. These grants overall have supported 44 different projects regarding the areas of domestic violence, gender and climate change, as well as providing women equal access to employment.

The People's Republic of China believes that financial access and inclusion for women is an important subject that not only deserves but demands attention. If China and fellow Member States are to provide better financial access and inclusion to women, it will require the participation of everyone, meaning the expansion of programs and institutions together that include women and provide opportunities for women to be better included as well as successful in their respective societies. **China thus proposes** the development of a number of different proposals: (1) the development of national digital identification systems to provide women greater access to financial services; (2) Guaranteeing data privacy and customer protection to ensure quality and safe products are offered to women; (3) the creation of a better international system to disaggregate sex from data collection; (4) a concerted international effort to increase the availability of leadership positions for women; (5) Reducing entry access and usage costs and barriers to financial services for women. This would further eliminate gender bias in finance. And (6) support the creation of women's business associations and networks. Countries should support the creation of women's business associations through several means to raise their voice and visibility. China recognizes this poses significant challenges, but believes that it is a necessary step to help achieve financial security and independence of women.

II. Promoting better access to Education for Women and Girls in Developing Member States

Gender equality is a global priority and equal access to education is intimately linked to the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all and SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The Education 2030 Agenda recognizes that gender equality requires an approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education. Large gender gaps exist in access, learning achievement and continuation in education in many

settings, most often at the expense of girls. Despite progress, more girls than boys still remain out of school and women account for two thirds of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills. Poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the status and role of women, are among the many obstacles that stand in the way of women and girls fully exercising their right to participate in, complete and benefit from education.

The People's Republic of China is revolutionizing the opportunity for young women and believes that education is the backbone of society. In China, gender inequality in educational attainment still exists, but it has been narrowing over time. Moreover, it varies by area (rural versus urban) and grade level. There is nearly no significant gender inequality in the case of girls in urban areas or in the case of the 9 years of compulsory education (primary school and junior high school). Girls, however, still face inequality in rural areas (although inequality is falling over time) and when they reach high school or beyond. The Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China, requires that all citizens must have at least nine years of schooling. This law was put in place in 1986. With rapid economic growth, the increase of parental income enables more children to obtain at least a basic education, and this greatly increases chances of girls going to school as well. Previously, it was common for parents to prioritize the education of sons over that of their daughters; with greater opportunities, the demand for female education can be easier satisfied, fueling an increase in the actual demand for female education as well. China has concluded that economic growth increases the demand for women to attain more higher-quality education with allows them to contribute better to the workforce.

Understanding that gender education gaps still exist in developing countries around the world, **China proposes** the development of the Woman's Education Act (WEA), to alleviate this gap. This initiative pulls .5 percent of each involved country's annual GDP to promote women's education. The funding goes to each young woman to access a higher quality education so that they will be competitively equipped in the job field. This initiative will be expanded into a council. The council is formed for the educational preservation of women and they will oversee the funding and implementation of this program. This council will also make it possible for young women to be able to have safe and proper transportation to and from educational facilities which will help boost the economy and equitably distribute the paying field for young women, of all backgrounds will be able to have access to the best education with this program. **China acknowledges** that each government controls educational development within the confines of their own country; however, an injection of resources, targeted at girls in particular, will assist not only in alleviating that gap, but also facilitating economic growth at all levels and in all sectors. China looks forward to pooling ideas with other Member States to tackle this critical issue.