CONCEPT NOTE
CSW66 Side event
"Women's Environmental Initiatives in implementing the SDGs"

1. Introductory Issues

Climate change, environmental degradation, natural and man-made disasters are among the most serious global challenges of the twenty-first century.

Based on the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it is forecasted that the poor, particularly in developing countries, will be disproportionately affected and therefore most in need of adaptation strategies in the face of climate variability and change.

Both women and men working in natural resource sectors such as agriculture are likely to be affected. However, the impact of climate change varies from a gender perspective.

Women are increasingly seen as more exposed than men to the effects of climate change, especially in the most vulnerable countries, such as the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states, mainly since they make up the majority of the world's poor and are proportionately more dependent on endangered natural resources.

The difference between men and women can also be noted in their different roles, responsibilities, decision-making, access to land and natural resources, opportunities and needs faced by both genders. Women around the world have less access to resources such as land, credit, agricultural resources, decision-making structures, technology, training and educational services that will strengthen their ability to adapt to climate change than men.

Women's vulnerability to climate change is due to a number of factors - social, economic and cultural: 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty are women.

In urban areas, 40 per cent of the poorest households are headed by women. Women dominate in the world's food production (50-80 per cent), but they own less than 10 per cent of the land. Women make up a high percentage of poor communities whose livelihood is heavily dependent on local natural resources, especially in rural areas, where they are primarily responsible for providing households with water and energy for cooking and heating, as well as for food security.

Women are mainly engaged in farming, especially horticulture, poultry farming and small livestock for domestic consumption. Women have limited access to and control over environmentally sound goods and services; they have insignificant participation in decision-making and do not receive benefits from rational use of resources.

Hence, women are less able to face climate change. During extreme weather conditions such as droughts and floods, women tend to work harder to secure their livelihood. This leaves women with less time to access training and education, develop skills or generate income.

Women in many countries suffer from gender inequality in human rights, political and economic status, land ownership, housing, exposure to violence, education, and health. Climate change will be an additional factor that will further exacerbate women's vulnerability. It is widely known that during conflicts, women face increased domestic violence, sexual intimidation, human trafficking, and rape.

2. 66th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

The sixty-sixth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York City from 14 to 25 March 2022. The priority theme will be “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes”. In this regard, Kazakhstan held
discussions with the Women Entrepreneurs Committee of the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Organization of Turkic States in order to commence discussions of the selected priority theme.

3. **Side-event goals and proposed format**

   **Theme of the event: "Women’s Environmental Initiatives in implementing the SDGs"**

   Current state of affairs proves the need to unite the efforts of all stakeholders to exchange views, develop proposals and recommendations to solve environmental issues. Close interaction among the state, businesses, the public and the international community is necessary.

   Despite their vulnerability, women are seen not only as victims of climate change, but also as active and effective participants and advocates of adaptation and mitigation.

   To contribute to the discussion of the priority theme, the Government of Kazakhstan is organizing a side-event for the public in partnership with the Women Entrepreneurs Committee of the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Organization of Turkic States.

   The side-event will aim to contribute to the agreed conclusions of the CSW by highlighting perspectives, experiences and lessons learned from a specific regional vision on how women's environmental initiatives will contribute to transformative changes in the lives of women and girls in the new development context and taking into account existing challenges and gaps in the implementation of the gender equality agenda at all levels.

   **Purpose of the side-event**

   During the side-event, it is planned to consider the initiatives of the women's community on climate change, economic transformation, green industry, waste management and improving environmental culture.

   Speakers will exchange views on these key issues with a clear focus on climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk management, the necessary reassessment of care and services, strengthening social protection for women and girls, ensuring their rights and access to property, protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

   **Organizers:** National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

   **Co-organizers:** Women Entrepreneurs Committee of the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Organization of Turkic States.

   **Invited participants:** Member States of the Organization of Turkic States, EU countries, others.

   **Outcomes of the side-event:**

   - providing recommendations for the conclusions adopted by the CSW;
   - agreed actions for the implementation of the results of the CSW at the regional level

   **Date:** March 17, 2022, 8.00 a.m. EST.

   **Duration of the event:** 1 hour 30 minutes

   **Format:** online, via ZOOM platform

   **Language** of the event: Turkish, Russian, English

   **Speakers:**

   - **Kazakhstan:** L.Ramazanova, Chairperson, National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
Member, Majilis (Lower Chamber) of the Parliament; Chairperson, Kazakhstan Association of Regional Environmental Initiatives "ECOJER"

- **Azerbaijan**: S.Babayeva, Chairperson, Women Entrepreneurs Committee, Turkic Chamber Of Commerce And Industry, Organization of Turkic States

- **Kyrgyzstan**: A.Chynybaeva, President, Public Movement “Eco-Demi”; Vice-President, Women Organization “Kurak”; Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

- **Turkey**: Hatice Güner Kal, Chairperson, Istanbul Women Entrepreneurs Board.


- **Hungary**: Margit Batthyány-Schmidt, President, Union of Hungarian Women.

- **Turkmenistan**: E.Rahmanova, Memer, Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

**Closing remarks**: Alia El-Yassir, Regional Director, UN Women for Europe and Central Asia.

**Moderator**: L.Ramazanova, Chairperson, National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Member, Majilis (Lower Chamber) of the Parliament; Chairperson, Kazakhstan Association of Regional Environmental Initiatives "ECOJER".