



Message on the occasion of the 2017 International Women's Day

Embassy & Permanent Mission of Afghanistan
Vienna

8 March 2017

On International Women's Day, we remember the many achievements of women in Afghanistan and across the globe, and we pledge our commitment to gender equality.

Article 22 of the Afghan constitution stipulates: "Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, men and women, have equal rights and duties before the law."

Over the past fifteen years, Afghan women have made great strides in retaking their active roles across all spheres of our society. Of almost eight million children enrolled in school, 40% are girls. 28% of the parliamentary seats are held by women. Afghan women serve in the administration, in the justice sector and in the armed forces. Afghan women have successfully reclaimed their roles in sports, culture and the media. We commend all women who already lead and inspire others to follow.

However, we realize that the situation of women in Afghanistan remains fragile and that much more work has to be done as far too many women continue to face discrimination, violence and barriers to full participation.

Safe in the knowledge that improving social, economic, and political opportunities for women will improve society as a whole, we will continue to advocate for full gender equality and substantial women's empowerment. We remain committed to provide women with equal resources and opportunities and to enable them to reach their full potential. In more detail, the National Unity Government of Afghanistan will work to

- further enhance women's roles in the economy, by enabling them to advance their education and vocational skills and their roles in leadership and advocacy
- continuously boost the participation of women in politics
- raise the awareness of women with a view to assuming their rights

In this context, we also thank our international partners for supporting women's empowerment across Afghanistan, through quick-impact and long-term programmes and projects.

We must fully engage women to deliver security and prosperity; by increasing their roles in their local communities, as well as on state and national levels will significantly contribute to peace, human rights, democratic norms and principles, solidarity and sustainable development in Afghanistan.

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