



## **Recommendations of the 8th Ukrainian Women's Congress**

### **"Women's potential: new roles, new quality"**

**(Kyiv, 5 November 2024)**

On November 5, 2024, the 8th Ukrainian Women's Congress "Women's Potential: New Roles, New Quality" was held in Kyiv. More than 700 participants took part in the Congress, including Ukrainian politicians, representatives of central executive authorities and local self-government, civil society activists and women entrepreneurs, representatives of business and culture from all regions of Ukraine, ambassadors of the G7 countries, Ukrainian and NATO military personnel.

The overarching outcome of the Congress "Women's Potential: New Roles, New Quality" is that women should become the driving force of change in bringing victory and further reconstruction of Ukraine. Women's potential is not only a resource that should be used to overcome the challenges of the war, but also an important component of rebuilding and modernising the country. It is important to engage women into political processes, decision-making, economic recovery and formation of new social and cultural patterns.

At the Congress 57 speakers took part in the discussion platforms on the following issues:

- Women's dimension of leadership. Priority policies.
- Is politics without women a threat to democracy?
- Business and politics.
- Gender-sensitive recovery.
- Social change: expectations vs reality.
- Women. The Army. NATO.

The Congress has issued the **following recommendations** to the legislative and executive authorities, international partners, business community and civil society institutions.

Having discussed the issue «**Women's Dimension of Leadership. Priority Policies**», the participants recommended the following:

- Representatives of legislative and executive authorities, local self-government bodies should take into account the mandatory representation of women in delegations, working and expert groups, commissions and other organisational structures when making decisions, and consistently implement the principle of parity of women's participation at all levels of decision-making. Given that 37 per cent of communities are currently headed by women, develop policies that would increase the visibility of women and strengthen their role at the community level. Provide for mandatory gender assessment of government policies and programmes at all stages of their

implementation, with a view to incorporating women's perspectives into decision-making. Conduct systematic analysis and reporting on progress in implementing relevant policies.

- To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to take into account the following. The Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution No. 69 of 27 January 2023 "On Amendments to the Rules for Crossing the State Border by Citizens of Ukraine" established unlawful prohibitions and obstacles for women deputies of local councils when crossing the border, limited the possibility of volunteer and work trips abroad that are not related to deputy work. In the absence of any possibility to influence or change the situation, women local councilors began to resign from their positions. The problem can be solved by cancelling the CM Resolution. It is recommended to prepare an appeal and a petition to the President with the relevant requirements.
- Ensure the implementation of legislative initiatives aimed at preventing discrimination and creating equal career opportunities for women, including flexible working hours, maternity support and protection from gender-based violence.
- Promote the creation of specialised training programmes for women leaders in politics, economics, science and the public sector, including in partnership with international organisations.
- Encourage the creation of national and regional platforms for women that will facilitate their integration into decision-making processes at all levels of government. Promote the development of networks of women leaders. Support the initiatives of international organisations aimed at developing a global network of women leaders to share experiences and best practices.
- Introduce a system of financial and social incentives for enterprises and organisations that actively engage women in leadership positions and promote their professional development.
- Organise awareness-raising campaigns to promote the idea of gender equality in leadership among the general population, including young people.
- Develop mechanisms to protect women leaders from gender stereotypes, hate speech and other forms of discrimination in the public sphere.
- Ensure regular monitoring and analysis of the implementation of Ukraine's international commitments in the area of gender equality. Recommend international organisations to intensify cooperation with the government and Ukrainian NGOs to provide financial and technical support for programmes aimed at expanding women's leadership.

After discussing the issue «**Politics without women - a threat to democracy?**», the participants recommended the following:

- Ensure the irreversibility of the quota principle of women's representation by the law. Ensure equality of rights and opportunities during elections and guarantee active and passive suffrage for all women and men.
- Promote greater participation of women in electoral process, including through financial and organisational support for women candidates.
- Introduce legislative mechanisms that prohibit discrimination and ensure equal access

for women and men to political elections and public service.

- Promote the establishment of mentoring mechanisms that bring together experienced women politicians with those who are just starting their political careers to share knowledge and best practices.
- To appeal to international organisations to support initiatives aimed at promoting women's political participation through grants, training programmes and the exchange of international experience.
- Provide for the introduction of national training programmes for women seeking political office, with a special focus on developing leadership, communication and political analysis skills.
- Develop awareness-raising campaigns to combat stereotypes about the role of women in politics, raising public awareness of their contribution to strengthening democracy.
- Encourage political parties to adopt internal gender equality policies that include quotas for women's participation in party governing bodies and on electoral lists. At the same time, provide for the introduction of sanctions for political institutions and parties that systematically ignore the principles of gender equality in their activities.
- Initiate the creation of platforms for public discussions, conferences and forums on the role of women in politics, involving activists, academics, media and international partners.
- Ensure the participation of women in international and regional delegations representing the state in order to strengthen the country's democratic image on the global stage.
- Promote the development of a network of women leaders at the national and international levels to share experiences, join forces and create joint initiatives.

After discussing the issue of «**Business and Politics**», the participants recommended the following:

- Ensure a minimum of 40% representation of women in company management and supervisory boards by law, according to the EU norms.
- Business organisations should ensure a transparent career development system: introduce clear and transparent criteria for improving both qualifications and career progression of employees. Such approaches should make it impossible to discriminate on the basis of gender.
- Support the implementation of mentoring programmes: create special mentoring programmes for women who want to achieve leadership positions.
- Ensure the principle of equal pay: establish transparent mechanisms for checking and eliminating the gender pay gap.
- Support corporate gender equality programmes: implement internal trainings and programmes to raise awareness of the importance of equal rights and opportunities.
- Introduce flexible work schedules and other mechanisms to help women balance professional and family responsibilities.
- Implement professional development programmes. Provide training and education to

- improve women's skills in management, finance, IT and other key areas.
- Encourage and support women's leadership: introduce internal awards or prizes for women leaders who achieve outstanding results.
  - Support women entrepreneurs: introduce programmes (including grants and soft loans) for businesses founded or run by women. Provide small loans to start or expand women-owned businesses.
  - Encourage collaboration and networking to share experiences among women entrepreneurs.
  - Actively support anti-discrimination policies: implement strict rules against gender discrimination, with clear complaint mechanisms.
  - Introduce a system of rewards and incentives for the implementation of such policies:
    - Provide tax incentives to companies that achieve 40% gender equality in management positions and implement programmes to support, according to the EU norms;
    - Introduce a system of gender equality ratings for companies so that they can use them as a tool to improve their reputation.
  - Support for women in STEM: Create and support programmes that encourage women to choose and develop in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
  - For the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science to conduct information campaigns and develop incentive mechanisms to attract more women to study in more in-demand professions and to work with business to encourage more women to work in traditionally "male" professions. To encourage businesses to support socially important issues in a more responsible manner, offer loan programmes and preferential incentive programmes.

After discussing the issue of «**Gender Sensitive Recovery**», the participants recommend the following:

- Representatives of international organisations, in meetings with authorised representatives of the governmental structures of the Ukrainian state, to emphasise and underline Ukraine's commitments contained in national legislation and international law, as part of the national legislation, on the importance of involving women in negotiations, decision-making on the formation of state policies and strategies, allocation of resources and finances, and the processes of restoring Ukraine.
- When allocating donor resources for regional recovery, take into account the presence of a gender component, inclusive approach and diversity in recovery plans and specific recovery projects, and incorporate gender analysis at all stages of the recovery process to address the specific needs of women, men, children and vulnerable groups.
- Provide for gender-sensitive strategies for infrastructure reconstruction, ensuring the safety and accessibility of public spaces, health and social services for women and children.

- Promote women's equal participation in decision-making on community recovery, including their involvement in the planning, monitoring and implementation of recovery activities, and ensure women's access to financial resources and business support programmes, enabling them to contribute more actively to economic recovery and social stability.
- Develop reintegration programmes for IDP women and those returning from temporary stays abroad who have lost their sources of income, with a focus on vocational training, job creation and psychosocial support.
- Promote the establishment of centres for protection and assistance to women survivors of CRSV and domestic violence, providing legal, medical and psychological support.
- Oblige the authorities to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data on the impact of the war to ensure that recovery efforts take into account the needs of different groups.
- Support civic initiatives and organisations working with women in crisis areas by ensuring their funding and inclusion in government recovery programmes.
- Initiate the creation of international platforms and participate in existing ones to share best practices in gender-responsive recovery, involving governments, civil society organisations and international organisations.
- Introduce training programmes for government officials, humanitarian missions and reconstruction projects on gender equality and a sensitive approach to recovery.
- Recommend to central executive authorities to include women in peacekeeping missions, humanitarian projects and reconstruction initiatives to ensure gender balance in stabilisation processes.
- Develop policies and programmes to address gender inequalities that may be exacerbated during war, including in access to healthcare, education and employment. Organise gender-sensitive medical care in recovery areas, including reproductive health needs of women, and psychological support for survivors of CRSV.
- Promote gender equality in resource management systems during recovery, ensuring equal access for women and men to recovery programmes and other resources.
- Encourage international organisations and donors to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach into their recovery programmes, ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation of such programmes.
- Gender-inclusive recovery requires taking into account the new realities in the labour market that are specific to individual regions. Those regions where most of the population has moved from the occupied and frontline areas are unable to provide jobs for IDPs for a number of reasons: lack of jobs or adequate qualifications of female candidates, lack of social institutions to assist the elderly, and lack of sufficient educational facilities, mainly preschools and primary schools. Relocated businesses, which are now becoming a significant component of the economic capacity of the regions, are particularly affected by the lack of social facilities. Programmes should be developed at the state level to enable women to support themselves. This problem can be solved by including relevant actions in national and local strategic development and recovery programmes.
- Gender-inclusive recovery requires appropriate gender-responsive and inclusive services and infrastructure. Such services should take into account the characteristics

and needs of those vulnerable groups that have emerged as a result of the war and whose needs should be taken into account in gender-inclusive recovery planning, development of relevant programmes, planning of funds allocation, etc. The participants of the Congress appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ministry of Social Policy to revise the standards of social services and develop new relevant types of services, such as resilience and mental health services. The participants of the Congress also consider it necessary to emphasise the need to improve the procedure for procuring services from NGOs. In addition to making it possible to provide such services to a significant number of target groups, this will also make it possible to ensure the sustainability of NGOs, effectively equating their activities to professional ones, which has been a point of emphasis for many years. Another important task is to create funds to support the activities of NGOs.

- The participants of the Congress are convinced that it is during gender-inclusive reconstruction that a window of opportunity opens for the changes and transformations expected by society and in the organisation of community life that have been accumulating and postponed for years. And these changes need to be made now, when society feels this need and capacity for change, without waiting for the post-war period.
- The problems can be solved by consolidating efforts at all levels of government, business and society, and by realising that women's equal participation in governance and post-war reconstruction will only strengthen Ukraine.

After discussing the issue of «**Social change: expectations vs. reality**», the participants recommended the following

- Develop a long-term strategy to overcome the demographic crisis, focusing on fertility support, return of migrants, integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and promotion of an inclusive society.
- Provide for the creation of state programmes for the reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs), in particular by ensuring access to housing, education, employment and social support.
- Facilitate the return of women and children who have moved abroad through financial support programmes, favourable employment conditions and access to quality social infrastructure.
- Ensure that social infrastructure is adapted to the needs of people with disabilities who have been injured in the war, including the development of rehabilitation centres, prosthetics and psychological support.
- Develop a national strategy with a redefinition of inclusiveness, including the modernisation of public spaces, transport, healthcare, educational institutions and workplaces to ensure the full participation of all citizens in public life.
- Envisage the expansion and improvement of the quality of social services, in particular through digitalisation of processes, increased funding and the involvement of qualified personnel.
- To recommend the inclusion of a gender-sensitive approach in all aspects of social policy, taking into account the special needs of women, children and the elderly in the context of post-war reconstruction.

- Organise large-scale information campaigns aimed at overcoming discrimination against IDPs, veterans and persons with disabilities, involving the media, NGOs and educational institutions.
- Establish partnerships between the government, international organisations and the civil society sector to jointly implement programmes to restore social services and develop infrastructure.
- To support the development of a network of social enterprises, and to support business organisations that will create jobs for IDPs, people with disabilities and war veterans, while addressing social problems.
- Recommend to international organisations to increase financial and technical assistance to organisations providing services to war-affected people, in particular to support the restoration of social services, education and healthcare.

Having discussed the issue of «**Women. Army. Nato**», the participants recommended the following:

- Ensure equal conditions for women in military service, including access to all types of military positions, from combat to leadership, without gender restrictions.
- Promote the implementation of non-discrimination policies and equal opportunities for women in career development in the military, with mandatory monitoring of compliance with these policies.
- Provide training for military leaders on gender-sensitive approach to personnel management, prevention of discrimination and sexual harassment in military units.
- Develop psychological support programmes for women servicewomen, taking into account their experience of combat, prolonged stay in the conflict zone and challenges related to reconciling military service and family life.
- Promote the active involvement of women in peacekeeping missions and military diplomacy, using NATO's experience, where women have successfully participated in confidence-building and conflict resolution.
- Ensure that military training programmes include a gender component, including topics on gender equality, women's rights in the armed forces and the role of women in conflict and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Introduce state programmes for women veterans that ensure their rehabilitation, professional retraining and social integration after completing military service.
- Provide for improved conditions of service for women, including access to specialised medical services, flexible working hours for mothers in the military and expanded childcare infrastructure in military units.
- Support the establishment and existing national networks of women in the military to share experiences, support and develop leadership skills, in cooperation with international organisations.
- Learn from NATO's experience in implementing gender mainstreaming policies in the armed forces, including through training, mentoring programmes and gender analysis of military operations.
- Introduce a system of collecting gender-disaggregated data in the armed forces to

analyse and evaluate the level of women's participation in military service and their contribution to the performance of tasks.

- Promote the role of women in defence policy-making and strategic planning through their involvement in advisory bodies, strategic staffs and working groups.
- Recommend that international organisations, including NATO, expand cooperation programmes with partner countries in the area of gender equality in the military.
- Ensure the creation of military education programmes that include the experience of women in NATO, their contribution to defence, peacekeeping missions and crisis management.