

# Women's Forum in Khujand: Unity, Development and New Initiatives



From March 31 to April 1 of this year, the International Women's Forum "Navruz - a holiday of women glorifying unity" was held in the city of Khujand (Tajikistan) as part of a joint visit of the heads of state of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Representatives of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan took part in the forum.

The aim of the event was to discuss the role of women in preserving cultural traditions and values, strengthening peace and developing entrepreneurship, as well as creating opportunities for professional exchange of experience.

Speaking at the forum, ISRS Deputy Director Shafquat Nurullayeva said that the signing of the agreement on the junction point of the state borders between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan is a historic triumph of diplomacy and political will. This proves that even the most difficult issues can be resolved through dialogue, mutual respect and trust.

It was especially noted that this event will contribute to sustainable development, strengthening stability and prosperity not only of the three states, but of the entire Central Asian region as a whole.

Moving on to the main topic of the event, Shafquat Nurullayeva focused on the economic activity of women, emphasizing that their role in business has reached a new level and continues to grow rapidly.

Referring to data from the International Labor Organization, the expert noted that women make up almost half of those employed in the global economy and create 37% of total global GDP. Women's business has become a significant part of global entrepreneurship. According to expert forecasts, ensuring equal

participation of men and women in economic processes could increase global GDP by a quarter by the end of 2025.

In this context, Deputy Director of ISRS Shafoat Nurullayeva pointed out that these global trends are also reflected in Uzbekistan, where specific steps are being taken to increase women's activity.

Firstly, as the representative of the ISRS noted, within the framework of the "Uzbekistan-2030" strategy, large-scale measures are being implemented aimed at increasing the activity of women in the political, social and economic spheres, protecting motherhood and childhood, promoting gender equality, and ensuring their rights and interests.

Today, women's entrepreneurship plays an increasingly important role in the country's socio-economic development. Women actively participate in the small business sector, contribute to the development of the economy at the local, regional and national levels, making a tangible contribution to improving the well-being of the population.

Secondly, the expert emphasized that legislative and other measures are being taken in the country to improve the business environment for the development of small businesses and private entrepreneurship among women. Representatives of this sector actively use the conditions created to reduce administrative barriers, improve the system of legal protection for entrepreneurs, reduce the tax burden, provide benefits to business entities, and expand access to financial and other resources.

As a result, over the past five years the number of businesswomen in Uzbekistan has doubled, and the number of those who have opened their own businesses has exceeded 200 thousand, while their share in various sectors of the economy and industry is about 50%.

Thirdly, Shafoat Nurullayeva stated, this year Uzbekistan has outlined large-scale plans to provide employment to 2 million women and attract 1.3 million of them to entrepreneurial activities. To achieve these goals, an additional 3.3 trillion soums will be allocated in 2025 to support women's entrepreneurship.

It was separately emphasized that an important step was the creation of the Council of Women Entrepreneurs in accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This Council is designed to strengthen the role of women in the entrepreneurial environment, protect their rights and provide legal, financial and practical assistance. It has the right to directly represent the interests of businesswomen in parliament and initiate programs aimed at developing their businesses.

Following the forum, participants expressed confidence that regular holding of such events will contribute to strengthening interaction and cooperation between women entrepreneurs in the region, as well as the development of new economic initiatives for women in Central Asia.