

Eurasian Women's Forum: Women in the Changing World.

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Women play an increasingly important role in resolving issues that society and the state encounter and in the modern world, they should not face the choice between family and self-fulfillment,

According to Russian President Vladimir Putin at the third Eurasian Women's Forum held in St. Petersburg on October 13-15.

“It is completely obvious that in modern conditions a woman should not face the choice between children and family or professional fulfillment. That is why in Russia the conditions are consistently created for a woman after childbirth to begin or resume her professional career at any moment, to become accomplished, to achieve growth in what she enjoys,” Putin stressed.

The Eurasian Women's Forum, held since 2015, is one of the largest international platforms uniting female leaders from all continents to examine and discuss the role of women in the modern world and work out new approaches to solving global problems.

The forum was organized by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS). This forum has won wide recognition as an effective mechanism of interaction and dialogue for women who are influencing social, political and economic decisions. It facilitates the growing participation of women's movements in resolving global challenges.

The chosen theme of the third forum “Women: A Global Mission in a New Reality” has much significance for today's world. Boosting international cooperation to enhance the role of women in order to meet the goals of sustainable development, forming women's agenda and new approaches to solving global problems in the new reality - these are the main objectives for participants and organizers.

The participants, indeed, devoted key debates to the role of women in ensuring global security, the transition to new models of economic growth and social progress, overcoming

the adverse consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, developing healthcare, balancing universal digitization, and addressing global environmental and climate problems.

For the first time, the forum feature meeting of the International Working Group of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Nuclear Energy Agency on improving gender balance in the nuclear energy industry.

Expert sessions featured prominently for international organizations and associations. Those include field sessions of Women 20, the UN session on industrial development (UNIDO), the World Bank session, the BRICS Women's Business Alliance meeting, international club of APEC BEST AWARD winners and participants, and International Club of Women Regional Leaders.

Throughout the world, there is a growing demand for female leadership. Research has shown that companies with women on their boards of directors enjoy better results. As new skills requirements are emerging, so educational programmes for female leaders are becoming critical. The ability to share experience at an international level of implementing such programmes help foster joint initiatives. This shows a turn for women in political sphere.

In the face of global challenges, there is an increasing need for a new paradigm, along with a renewed focus on changing attitudes to women. Women have made an enormous contribution to efforts to improve health, raise life expectancy, and improve quality of life. These are the first role as women in the family, and this is unchangeable fact in the world.

Previously there had been some innovations. The BRICS Women's Business Alliance was first presented at the 2nd Eurasian Women's Forum. The leaders of Brazil, India, China, Russia, and South Africa gave their unanimous support to the initiative, and adopted the declaration on the establishment of the alliance. Last year (2020) saw the official launch of the BRICS Women's Business Alliance.

The alliance seeks to implement multilateral cooperation projects aimed at consolidating and strengthening its role in the global economic agenda. The alliance's areas of focus include the development of innovation, healthcare, food and environmental security, an inclusive economy, the creative industries, and tourism.

Women have been forging alliances and ahead of this forum for instance, the Women's Business Association of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FLO FICCI), considered as the largest women's business association in India, signed a memorandum of understanding with Russia. This collaboration aims at developing women's entrepreneurship, social communications and at creating favourable conditions for cooperation between business circles in Russia and India.

It plans promoting entrepreneurship and professional excellence through seminars, conferences, lectures, trainings, and other events aimed at encouraging and stimulating the involvement of the skills, experience, and energy of women in all sectors and at all levels of economic activity.

The Eurasian Women Association has so many programmes and projects with other women's groups and associations in the Eurasian region, in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Obviously, women have come a long way throughout the world, since their first conference

held 1986 in Beijing, China and resultantly declared March 8 – as International Women’s Day marks annually throughout the world. Women have taken up the fight, sometimes collaborating with women-conscious men and thus paving the way up to the top echelon in all economic and social spheres. Women now have associations structure from the grassroots, in all countries, and up to regional organizations and to the United Nations.

Speaker of the Federation Council, **Valentina Matviyenko**, in her opening speech at the plenary session, highly stressed that the main goals of the global women’s community as that directed towards improving people’s quality of life as well as building mutual understanding and trust between countries and peoples in the name of peace and sustainable development.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister, **Viktorina Abramchenko**, similarly noted in her speech that women are directly involved in implementing broad scope of development tasks in Russia and beyond on international platforms.

Vietnamese Vice President, **Vo Thi Anh Xuan**, made a video conference presentation. She said that the forum is bringing together the majority of women around the world. “The role of women today is extremely important. We can make the world more just and help fight global challenges,” she said.

Chairwoman of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan **Sahiba Ali gizi Gafarova** believes that the topics discussed at the Eurasian Women’s Forum provide an opportunity to consider the most pressing issues of modern life and enhance women’s status around the world. Gafarova unreservedly stated that fully unleashing women’s potential would be the foundation for building a healthy society.

Chairwoman of the Senate of Uzbekistan **Tanzila Narbaeva** noted that the forum once again demonstrated women’s growing role in resolving the socioeconomic issues facing their countries, and demonstrates new approaches to the women’s agenda.

Narbaeva stressed that Uzbekistan, for instance, is ready to share its experience in various areas and is open for multifaceted cooperation. She invited the participants to take part in the women’s forum during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in 2022, planned in Samarkand, the second largest city in Uzbekistan.

Chairwoman of the Lower Chamber of Parliament of Turkmenistan, **Gulshat Mammedova**, said the forum is an important platform for interaction between women and helps to harmonize efforts in addressing various issues of our time as well as exchange views and experience in promoting women’s rights.

Participation of African women was modest, that included for example President of the Senate of Gabon **Lucie Milebou Aubusson**, Liberian **Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor** and Zimbabwean First Lady **Auxillia Mnangagwa** among a few others. President of the Assembly of Mozambique, **Esperança Laurinda Francisco Nhiuane Bias**, delivered a speech at the forum.

Zimbabwean First Lady, Auxillia Mnangagwa, on the sidelines held a special working discussion with the Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Valentina Matviyenko, focusing on developing inter-parliamentary relations, women in sustainable development, education and charity.

The First Lady and the Speaker snapshotted on the possibility of greater participation of Russian economic operators in the development process in southern African region. Both women have expressed an appreciation cooperating on various questions on international platforms. Diplomatic relations between the two marked its 40th year.

On October 15, the participating African women took part an exclusive discussion solely on “the Role of Women in the Integrated Development of the African Continent” at the Tauride Palace. It was attended by women from international organizations, business circles, scientific or academic community and non-governmental organizations.

Matviyenko held discussions with President of the Central American Parliament **Fanny Carolina Fernandez** on the margin of the forum. The conversation mainly focused on expanding interparliamentary ties, reaffirmed the growing interest of Central American countries to bolster ties with Russia.

She emphasized the fact that “Russia is ready to sign an agreement on its participation as an observer in the Central American integration system, which would provide an additional impetus to developing the entire range of ties.” She expressed support for the initiative put forward to establish the Eurasian – Latin American Parliamentary Assembly. In the nearest future, this project needs to be studied in terms of developing dialogue mechanisms for the Eurasian integration space and the Latin American region.

Thereafter, Matviyenko and the Senator of the National Congress of the Republic of Chile, **Ximena Cecilia Rincón**, had an interactive meeting to discuss inter-parliamentary ties between the two countries and opportunities for further mutually beneficial collaboration. Russia is keen to strengthen its cooperation with Chile on all fronts. The dialogue, so far, between Russian and Chilean parliamentarians has traditionally been productive and there is scope to enhance cooperation.

In addition, the brief meeting touched on issues such as ensuring bilateral economic and cultural collaboration, working together to combat coronavirus and facilitating exchanges between higher education institutions in the two countries.

Ximena Cecilia Rincón Gonzalez noted the importance of strengthening and developing Chile-Russia relations, both in a parliamentary setting as well as in the economic, technological and cultural spheres.

The entire third forum, organized primarily to review how women have performed in men-dominated world, identify challenges and roadblocks on their way to gender equality and fight for higher social status and, of course, outline new strategic goals for the future. Held partly offline using modern formats such as video conferencing and online broadcast, it aimed at ensuring extended outreach and providing audience engagement. The rules and regulations for physical presence was in strict accordance with safety measures aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19.

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