

Dear colleagues,

Dear friends,

Good afternoon.

I am Cao Yanping, secretary-general of Xi'an People's Friendship Association with Foreign Countries.

As you may know, there is a Chinese saying: Women shoulder up half of the sky. In my years of working, I also witnessed in person the progress and development of gender equality in China and also in Xi'an. So today I am very happy to share with you about our practices in promoting gender equality.

First of all, we have a comprehensive law system. In 1995, the state issued the Chinese Women's Development Framework which defined the goal and plan for women's development. We also set up a system to assess the level of gender equality and issued local policies and regulations to protect women's lawful rights.

Second, the government and NGOs have been jointly working on supervising, securing and promoting women's rights. For example, the maternal leave is 150 days at most, and the spouse can also have 15-day leave to accompany the new mother. To help handle family violence and marital disputes, we also have the special mediation mechanisms and laws. Each year, we will also launch anti-family violence activities

In the municipal government, people's congress and the political consultative conference of Xi'an, women politicians represent a great amount of seats with the number still increasing. They have devoted great efforts in protecting women's rights, voicing up to the society to care about women, and providing suggestions for the legislative departments in making policies regard with gender equality. In the recruitment of civil servants and staff of public institutions, we have always been treating women and men the same and also encouraging excellent women to be promoted to managers. Take our Office as an example, this year we recruited 9 new staff, of which 8 are women.

The pandemic threatens our life, and even the normal social orders. So women's well-being and rights should be paid with more attention. We gave special care to women's employment and family violence and enhance help for the pregnant and lactating mothers return to work. Also we opened 24-hour hotline for psychological consultations and legal consulting to ease women's anxiety and protect women's lawful rights.

Promoting gender equality and securing women's rights is our eternal mission and responsibility. In spite of so much hard work, women are still a vulnerable social group. Their social positions and rights for education and political activities are still in great need for improvement. Xi'an hopes to strengthen the cooperation with the ASPAC, to contribute more efforts for the gender equality.

Thank you.