

People's Republic of China





PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

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Regional and Sustainable Development Department
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Abbreviations

ACWF	—	All China Women's Federation
ADB	—	Asian Development Bank
CEDAW	—	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIIC	—	China Internet Information Center
CPC	—	Communist Party of China
CPPCC	—	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CPS	—	country partnership strategy
DFID	—	Department for International Development
GDI	—	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	—	gross domestic product
HIV/AIDS	—	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IJA	—	International and Judicial Affairs
ILO	—	International Labour Organization
IMR	—	infant mortality rate
MCH	—	maternal and child health
MDG	—	Millennium Development Goal
MMR	—	maternal mortality ratio
NBS	—	National Bureau of Statistics
NDRC	—	National Development Research Committee
NGO	—	nongovernment organization
NPC	—	National People's Congress
NWCCW	—	National Working Committee on Children and Women
OWYW	—	Office of Workers, Youth, and Women
PRC	—	People's Republic of China
SCIO	—	State Council Information Office
SCLGPR	—	State Council Leading Group on Poverty Reduction
SCAIDS	—	State Council AIDs Working Committee Office
SME	—	small and medium enterprise
SOE	—	state-owned enterprise
UN	—	United Nations
UNCTC	—	UN Country Team in China
UNDP	—	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	—	United Nations Children's Fund
URC	—	urban resident committee
WGWC	—	Working Group on Women and Children
WTO	—	World Trade Organization

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS
(as of 20 December 2006)

Currency Unit	—	yuan (CNY)
CNY1.00	=	\$0.1279
\$1.00	=	CNY 7.8212

In this report, the symbol “\$” refers to US dollars.

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Executive Summary

This gender assessment is undertaken to ascertain the current situation with regard to gender and development in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The gender assessment comprises part of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) country partnership strategy for the PRC, and adheres to the ADB gender and development policy.

Gender and Poverty. The PRC has made significant progress in reducing poverty among its citizens—from 49% in 1989 to less than 7% in 2002. However, the gender dimensions of poverty in the PRC have not been systematically diagnosed so that they can be appropriately incorporated into poverty programs, and the PRC's progress as measured by the Gender-related Development Index lags behind that of its general Human Development Index. Given the ongoing structural changes in the economy, this may mean that women are generally not sharing the benefits equally with men, and are in fact disadvantaged in comparison to them.

As more rural men than women seek employment away from their villages, an increasing number of households are de facto headed by women who must now run the farm and the household. Thus, women farmers are especially vulnerable to poverty. Women spend substantially more time than men on household chores (about twice as much time), limiting the time they have for income-generating activities. Simultaneously, the transition to the market economy has resulted in fewer services available to ameliorate the demands on women's time.

Although women legally have equal rights with men, in practice they have difficulty attaining their rights, including for land use. Without access to land, rural women are destitute. Efforts to assist women often are made in a stereotypical manner by assuming avenues are limited by gender, and by promoting women-specific projects while not mainstreaming the integration of women into all poverty-reduction efforts.

Economic Development. During the transition to a market economy, the employment of men increased 4% more than that of women. In the age group 24 and over, more women than men have been laid off and far fewer have been reemployed. Those who are reemployed often find jobs in the informal sector at low wages, and with little or no benefits nor protection. Moreover, the retirement age for women is lower than that for men by 5 years, which results in their receiving smaller pensions than men do.

Most working women are concentrated in service sector jobs and work in rural areas. Such work is considered to be low skilled and receives low pay. During 1990–2000, wages rose dramatically, but the income gap between men and women increased by 7.4%. Part of the problem results from women spending at least twice as much time as men on housework. Employers generally prefer to hire men because they assume women will devote greater time to family responsibilities than men, and to avoid providing maternity benefits. Labor laws keep women from employment in hazardous work, reinforcing stereotypes about women.

Women who go into business tend to be in low-paying services. Although women have proven to be successful entrepreneurs, they have greater difficulty accessing credit than men, except for microcredit specifically targeting women. This has proven effective, and women borrowers have a high success rate in their activities and repayments. Microcredit schemes have also helped women gain confidence and respect for their newly exhibited leadership abilities.

In rural areas, men usually assume leadership and decision-making roles. However, more women have had to take over these roles when their men leave for jobs elsewhere. This has enhanced the decision-making abilities of rural women.

Low or negative returns from farming are forcing rural people to look for jobs elsewhere. The PRC has an estimated 130 million migrant residents, most of them young adults. While traditionally, men have been the first to migrate in search of work, young women are now joining them in increasing numbers. Migrant workers face harsh conditions, low pay, and little protection or benefits. Women tend to specialize in export industries and household services, while men are often in construction. Women migrants have contributed greatly to export growth but have a very small share in its benefits.

Human Development. Relative to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the PRC has made significant advances in reducing infant—under-5—and maternal mortality rates (MMRs), although there is concern over the higher rate of mortality among female infants than among males. The Government has nearly achieved universal primary education, although this has proven more difficult in minority areas. Nationwide, the enrolment was over 96% in 2000, up from about 76% a decade earlier.

Education achievements have increased substantially from 1990 to 2000 and gender gaps have narrowed, but are still very wide at the upper levels, with twice as many males as females with college-level or higher education. The Government has implemented programs to assure that the cost of basic schooling for rural and poor students is covered.

The Government has successfully implemented laws and policies aimed at improving women’s health care. Life expectancies have lengthened and MMRs have decreased. However, the effects of privatization of the health care system compromise the gains. The natural population growth rate has decreased significantly, but the sex ratio at birth is skewed abnormally in favor of male infants, and the mortality rate of female infants is higher than that of males. The Government is implementing programs to improve maternal and child health (MCH) care, especially in poor and rural areas.

The Government’s reproductive health program, which was primarily targeted at population control, now also focuses on the promotion of general reproductive health and combating HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. It has implemented several programs aimed at treating people with HIV/AIDS and assisting them and their families. However, infections are rising faster among women than among men because of women’s increased vulnerability to the disease. Special education and information dissemination activities are under way in an effort to

increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS among women and youth. Migrant women are especially vulnerable as they may not have access to health care or knowledge about it.

Further Gender Concerns. Gender-based violence is receiving increased attention. Local initiatives have been taken to assist victims, but can only meet a small fraction of the need. Women are increasingly aware of what sexual harassment entails and of their legal rights, and young women are increasingly willing to protest against it. Pertinent laws need rewording and strengthening.

Trafficking of women and children is difficult to document, but indications are that it is rising. Victims from rural areas may be enticed by promises of good jobs, then find out that they are forced into prostitution or marriage. Government and nongovernment agencies have made serious efforts to combat trafficking. The Government has ratified relevant United Nations (UN) conventions and is actively working with UN and other organizations to counteract the problem. Nevertheless, the Government needs to strengthen its laws and enforcement, improve data collection and research on trafficking, and reduce poverty among women, especially as the skewed birth ratio is likely to increase the number of incidences of trafficking of women.

The PRC is experiencing water shortages, which impact women more severely than men, as women are often responsible for household chores and collecting water. A water cellar project is being implemented to assist families in water-poor areas, and has benefited 1 million people. Benefits include reduction of the time women spend fetching water, and thus increasing the time they have for other productive activities. The Government is also making progress in reversing deforestation and, through the All China Women's Federation (ACWF), women have had a very significant part in the afforestation program.

While the PRC has insurance coverage for its citizens, including pension, medical, unemployment, and work injury insurance, more men than women participate in the insurance schemes. Women generally work fewer years than men because they take time out for family responsibilities, retire earlier, and work in lower-paid sectors; hence, women generally have lower pensions than men. Women are also accessing health care less than men due to its increasing costs and the limited coverage of medical insurance. The minimum living standard insurance benefits jobless people in cities and towns. However, because it is provided to the household head, women may not have adequate say over the use of this insurance. Maternity insurance is also provided, but the amount given is less than needed for good quality medical services. Gender analysis of the social insurance schemes is needed, and of their impact on women, so that they can be better tailored to the needs of women as well as those of men.

Policies and the Institutional Environment for Gender Equality. The PRC has an extensive legal system for the protection of women's legal rights, and the Constitution specifies that women and men have equal rights. The PRC is signatory to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The PRC adopted a law specifically for women in 1992, and amended it in 2005 to include (i) the national policy of gender equality; (ii) the state's responsibilities in promoting national women's development and integrating it into the overall national economic and social program; (iii) clarification of the

Government’s responsibilities in protecting women’s rights, and the role of AWCF; (iv) reaffirmation of the need for greater representation of women in government, and for addressing women’s rights to education, work, and their person; and (v) prohibition of domestic violence and sexual harassment. The amendment is an important step forward, but some people note that it and other recent laws for women lack binding force for implementation and retain the image of women as caregivers rather than promoting an image of women as functioning in all occupations.

The number of women in the legal system has increased slowly since 1995. In 2002, 22% of prosecutors, 21% of judges, and 14% of lawyers were female. The Government has implemented programs aimed at raising awareness of women’s rights among the general population. It needs to review extant legislation to remove discriminatory provisions and gaps, and to enhance the implementation and enforcement of laws on women’s rights.

The PRC has successfully established the legal basis for women’s rights and built national women’s organizations. ACWF, which was formed in 1949, has nationwide reach as well as international influence and contacts. The National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW) was created in 1992 under the State Council to coordinate work pertaining to women and children, and to further their causes. It drafts and runs the national programs for women and children, and intercedes with other government departments regarding protecting the rights of women and children. ACWF is publicizing the state policy on gender nationwide, and NWCCW will provide gender training in the Central Party School, to raise gender awareness of policy makers and increase their capacities in gender analysis and planning.

Gender and Governance. Since the mid-1990s, new women’s organizations have been formed, ranging from hotlines to assist women with problems to leagues of women mayors and associations of women scientists. Women’s study centers have proposed practical ways to handle specific problems faced by women.

Few women are found in high-level positions in politics or government administration. Recent public administration reform has dampened women’s chances to advance in government because their retirement age is lower than that of men and their opportunities to advance are hampered when they are raising a child. Affirmative action is not used to compensate for these disadvantages.

Recommendations for Mainstreaming Gender. Recommendations include the following:

- Improve data collection and analysis of gender-related issues contributing to poverty, and develop gender-based approaches and frameworks for research and interventions in gender and poverty reduction.
- Promote gender equality in employment and its integration with family activities.
- Work to change stereotypes that place and keep women in low-paying jobs and positions that do not entail decision-making responsibilities.
- Promote equal access to education at all levels for men and women.

- To normalize the sex ratio at birth and in infant mortality, develop campaigns and policies that benefit families with girls.
- Analyze and compensate for the impacts of the Health Sector Reform by reducing or eliminating user fees for MCH care for poor women, and mobilize women's organizations to disseminate health information and monitor health services.
- For reproductive health, increase men's responsibility for family planning; increase dissemination of information and access to all, including adolescents and migrants; and develop schemes to compensate men and women caring for the ill.
- Decrease domestic violence and sexual harassment by amending the Women's Law and other laws to ensure they are enforceable.
- Ensure that women are actively involved in all phases of activities pertaining to the use of natural resources.
- Strengthen women's national organizations so they have greater influence on policies and legislation that impacts women.
- Develop strategies to enforce laws pertaining to women's equality, including rights to land, and conduct gender awareness training for judges and law enforcers.
- Among government personnel at all levels, develop awareness of the importance and impact of gender issues and capacity to address them.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in ADB Operations. Recommendations for mainstreaming gender equality into ADB's operations in the PRC include the following:

- Ensure that women participate fully in ADB project activities to assure their equitable access to economic opportunities.
- Carry out detailed social and gender analysis during project design. Develop an action plan with specific targets, linked to project objectives, and monitor progress. Include gender capacity building in the plan.
- Support and encourage the employment of women on project management teams and in all types of employment for projects.
- Support women's entrepreneurship by analyzing reasons for their low participation in small and medium enterprises, making the changes needed to facilitate their participation, providing training and access to information and knowledge, and providing access to credit.
- Ensure that women's priorities are considered in the design and implementation of projects pertaining to the environment and use of natural resources.

The Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been making large investments and substantial strides in poverty reduction. During this process, innovative approaches have been initiated. Learning from national and international development experience, the Government's poverty reduction programs have started adopting the participatory approach to meet the needs of poor people and communities. This has provided an opportunity to empower women and enhance gender equality.

However, gender dimensions of growth, inequalities, and poverty reduction have not been systematically diagnosed, and gender issues have not drawn adequate attention from policy makers in developing policies and programs. Most data or programs relating to gender and poverty focus solely on women, which makes it hard to compare them with men. With the available data and information, this section tries to analyze gender inequalities in growth and poverty reduction to contribute to a framework for future investigation.

A. Poverty in the People's Republic of China

During the post-1978 reform period, large-scale poverty reduction was achieved through government poverty reduction programs. While data from various sources give different absolute numbers, the trends they reveal are similar. The number of poor people is officially estimated to have fallen from about 250 million in 1978 to 28 million in 2002, a decline in poverty incidence from 31% of the population in 1978 to 3% in 2002 (SCLGPR 2004). Using the World Bank's \$1/day consumption measure, the number of poor declined from 490 million in 1981 to 88 million in 2002, which corresponds to a decline in poverty incidence from 49% in 1981 to 6.9% in 2002 (UNCTC 2004, 2).

The number of poor people referred to in most PRC statistics does not include the urban poor (Table 1). With the increasing income gap within the urban population, the urban poor have become a significant social phenomenon. The PRC had an estimated 10.5 million urban poor in 2000, at the urban poverty line of CNY1,875/capita/year (ADB 2003, 4). Livelihood systems and living conditions differ greatly between rural and urban populations, so it is very hard to compare the poverty of the two.

An increase in the rural-to-urban migrant population complicates the understanding of the overall poverty phenomenon in the PRC. According to official reports, the number of farmers working away from their native homes has increased rapidly, at an average rate of 5 million people annually. In 2003, more than 98 million rural laborers worked outside their hometowns, which is over six times the number in 1990 (China Internet Information Center [CIIC] 2004). The increasing social and economic gap between the rich and the poor in the PRC is primarily due to the gap between urban and rural populations and between migrant workers and urban residents. A sample survey indicated that the annual average income of male migrant workers is CNY486, and that of

females is CNY416 (Wu Guobao 2001), both well below the official poverty line of CNY627 (ADB 2003). Thus, migrant workers' income in general is much lower than that of the urban poor population. Income level alone is inadequate to define the poverty situation of migrant workers, who also face poor living conditions, social exclusion, and deprivation of some basic rights, e.g., on-time payment of wages, leisure time, and social contact.

Table 1. Number of Rural Poor People

Year	Domestic Measure of Absolute Poverty (CNY400 in 1993 prices per capita net rural income)			International Measure of Poverty (\$ a day in PPP per capita net rural income)	
	Central Government Designated Poverty Line (CNY)	Total Poor Population in Rural Areas (millions)	Percentage of Rural Population (%)	Total Poor Population in Rural Areas (millions)	Percentage of Rural Population (%)
Before 1978		250			
Early 1980s	200	125			
1990	300	85	9.5	280	31.3
1991	304	94	10.4	287	31.7
1992	317	80	8.8	274	30.1
1993	350	75	8.2	266	29.1
1994	440	70	7.6	237	25.9
1995	530	65	7.1	200	21.8
1996	580	58	6.3	138	15.0
1997	640	50	5.4	124	13.5
1998	635	42	4.6	110	12.0
1999	625	34	3.7	100	10.8
2000	625	32	3.4	105	11.3
2001	630	29	3.2		
2002	630	28	3.0	88	
2003	637	29	3.1		
2004	668	26	2.8		

CNY = Chinese yuan; NBS = National Bureau of Statistics; PPP = purchasing power parity; \$ = US dollar.

Sources: Data before 1978 and early 1980s from Zhu Fengqi, 1996; 5. Data from 1990 to 1998: World Bank, 2001, 25; Data from 1999 to 2000: NBS, 2001, 8. Data for 2001–2003: NBS 2004a. Data for 2004: NBS.

B. The Gender Dimensions of Poverty

One quantitative measure of poverty is lack of income, but poverty also includes lack of access to services and opportunities for human development, lack of voice in political life and decision-making, and social subordination and exclusion. All poor people experience these deficits, but in almost all cases women and girls suffer more than men (Department for International Development [DFID] 2000, 13). Despite the lack of systematic data of women's share in poverty at the national level, existing data indicate a significant gender gap in distribution of income and control of assets.

1. Income Poverty in Economic Activities

As in many countries, the gender imbalance in income has increased in the PRC during the last decade. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender-related Development Index (GDI) indicates that in 2003 the estimated earned income (in purchasing power parity [PPP]) of females was \$3,961 and of males was \$5,976 (UNDP 2005)—i.e., the income of women was 66.28% of that of men. Thus, women have a significantly lower share of national income measured by gross domestic product (GDP). However, women's average annual income was about 74% that of men in 2002 (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] 2004, 35 and 51).

Gender disparities in income crosscut with the rural-urban divide. So far, poverty remains essentially a rural phenomenon, although rural income has been raised due to the state's poverty reduction programs that focused in rural areas. Considerable gaps remain in income and welfare between rural and urban residents, with the latter much better off than the former; although there have been reports of an increasing population of urban poor due to the state-owned enterprise (SOE) reform since the 1980s. Above all, engaging in agricultural production means facing high risk and earning low income. Women engage more frequently than men in low-profit and technical agricultural activities and unpaid care work. Of the female rural population, 82.1% are solely engaged in agricultural production compared with less than 64.7% of the male rural population. As the income from farming is lower than from industry and other nonagricultural production, women have lower income in rural areas and greater household responsibilities than men. Thus, female farmers are highly vulnerable to poverty.

In the absence of data on households headed by women in the PRC, it is difficult to assess whether they are generally poorer than households headed by men, or more likely to fall into poverty. The lack of data reveals an assumption that there are no differences between households led by men or women. However, the number of *de facto* female-headed households has been increasing in rural areas, as more men than women have been migrating out of villages to find better paying jobs in cities. This phenomenon has not yet drawn appropriate attention in poverty analysis.

2. Time Poverty

Poverty among women is often exacerbated by the substantial time they spend on unpaid work and subsistence food production. The intensified demand for women to perform unpaid care work has constrained their capacity to participate in activities that generate cash income. Rural women have lower incomes than men largely because they have to allocate much of their time to unpaid work—housework, including washing and cleaning; bearing of and caring for children; caring for the infirm and elderly; household subsistence work, including water and firewood collection, and work for household food security; and agricultural and animal husbandry work.

In the transition from the state-planned economy to a market-led one, the demand on women's labor within households has intensified as public services previously provided by the state, enterprises, or communes have decreased. However, the demand for female labor has risen, particularly in agriculture due to the migration of male laborers. Thus, many rural women have

taken on farm work while continuing to do housework. The demand for women to shoulder double or multiple burdens creates additional stress on them to balance income-generating options with care for families. The excessive and competing demand on women's time is another manifestation of poverty.

3. Asset Poverty

Assets owned by individuals are the basis for their social and economic participation, and can include health, education, natural resources (such as land), financial resources (such as property and access to credit), and social networks. The linkage between assets and poverty is direct.

By law, women and men have equal rights to land and other productive resources as well as equal inheritance rights, but in practice it is more difficult for rural women to exercise these rights than it is for rural men or urban women (Du and Kanji 2002). Regarding rural women's land tenure rights, the new Land Contract Law states that "women and men share equal rights in the land contract system."¹ In reality, however, rural women are becoming landless especially upon marriage or divorce (Lin 2001a). A woman who marries a man in another village moves permanently to her husband's village, according to custom, leaving her lands and virtually forgoing her user rights over them. A divorced woman will find her land has been long taken by her family, and it is nearly impossible for her to claim her share of land in her ex-husband's village. Without land, rural women are destitute. This may explain why there are few female-headed households in the rural area, as women either choose not to divorce or to remarry quickly to survive.²

Several social and economic factors have hampered the realization of women's land tenure rights. Above all, the pattern of male dominant marital relations and the patriarchal structure of kinship have rendered women at a disadvantage in resource allocation. Women's lack of power in decision making has directly compromised their ability to negotiate their rights and interests in resource allocation in households and villages. These factors have not yet drawn sufficient attention in policies or programs concerning rural development at different levels.

The loss of land use rights compromises women's ability to earn a livelihood and seek security in rural areas. It may also affect their social status in rural communities and their political participation in village public affairs. The negative impacts of the loss of land rights call for the amendment of laws and policies and enforcement of existing regulations. As women take over more responsibility for agriculture, their access to land rights becomes especially important for poverty reduction and rural development.

¹ The Land Contract Law has been in effect since 1 March 2003. It prescribes that, during the contract period, lessors are not allowed to repossess land from lessees or adjust the land, including from a woman who moves to her husband's village after marriage and receives no new land there, or who is divorced or widowed. Men and women share equal rights in the contract system.

² However, field studies (Lin Zhibin 2004) show that women are able to get access to land if they live in communities in which land is still subject to redistribution or readjustment. Gender and land relationships are changing due to the changing marital dynamics in the countryside. In some instances, husbands move to their wives' home village. Some unmarried women leave their land to become migrant workers. In rare instances, women protect their rights by using legal and social support systems.

4. The PRC's Rank in Gender and Poverty Reduction

UNDP uses the Human Development Index to assess the progress of nations toward eliminating poverty, and GDI and the Gender Empowerment Measure to assess the progress in eliminating poverty among women. These approaches and measures imply the need to integrate gender concerns in poverty reduction.

A few human development indicators were chosen to examine whether the PRC's human development is correlated with its economic development (Table 2). The table indicates that the PRC's pace of human development does not parallel the pace of economic growth. The PRC's GDP increased rapidly from 1999 to 2002, but its GDI ranking increased only from 76 to 71. The PRC's progress toward gender equality in poverty reduction is not as rapid as its increase in GDP.³

Table 2. The Value of Selected Human Development Indicators

Year	GDP		HDI		GDI	
	Per Capita Value (PPP \$)	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	
1999	3,617	87	0.718	76	0.715	
2000	3,976	96	0.726	77	0.724	
2001	4,020	104	0.721	83	0.718	
2002	4,580	94	0.745	71	0.741	
2003	5,003	85	0.755	64	0.754	

Notes: In 2003, the People's Republic of China's HDI ranking was among 162 countries, and that for GDI was among 140 countries.

GDI = Gender-related Development Index; GDP = gross domestic product; HDI = Human Development Index; PPP = purchasing power parity; \$ = US dollar.

Source: UNDP *Human Development Reports* 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/>.

5. Absence of Gender in Poverty Statistics

While crude data sets are disaggregated at the field level, national-level data do not allow for the assessment of poverty gaps between men and women. The data relate to economic and livelihood factors, but do not adequately represent the impacts of aspects of social development such as education and health, personal security, basic services and infrastructure, environment, and power and decision making (DFID 2000).

It is hard to find sex-disaggregated data in statistics in general, and in poverty statistics in particular. The Government submitted the "Report of the People's Republic of China on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)" (State Council Information Office [SCIO] 2005). The report's data are not sex-disaggregated, but some women-specific data are given without

³ Political and economic participation and decision making are measured by the percentage of seats in parliament held by women; female legislators, senior officials, and managers; and female professional and technical workers; and by the ratio of estimated income earned by females and males. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has not joined the assessment as it has not yet submitted relevant gender-disaggregated data. The Gender Empowerment Measure focuses on political and economic participation and decision making.

comparative data for men. Without gender in poverty statistics, it is difficult for the Government to give the anti-poverty strategy a gendered face. Due to the absence of sex-disaggregated data, the gender dimensions of poverty in the PRC are largely under-diagnosed. Little is officially recorded on intra-household income and welfare distribution (ADB 2003).

C. Gender and the State Programs on Poverty Reduction

1. National Policies

In October 2001, the Government issued the Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction Program for Rural China (SCIO 2001), reviewing the content and achievements of its rural poverty reduction programs and outlining a broad framework for removing the remnants of rural poverty in the early years of the 21st century. The Government placed recent rural poverty reduction programs in three stages: 1978–1985, 1986–1993, and 1994–2000. In 2001, the Government launched the Rural Poverty Reduction and Development Compendium (2001–2010)—“the Compendium.” This marked the beginning of the fourth phase of the PRC’s poverty reduction policies.

The fourth phase is summarized in the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the New Century (2001–2010). Lessons from the past (e.g., the “8–7 Program”) have been incorporated in the new strategy, so that villages have been made the basic target, and poverty reduction investments are to cover poor villages. The Compendium emphasizes the development of science and technology, education, culture, and health, recognizing that sickness has been the principal factor pushing rural households into poverty. The Compendium calls for participatory poverty reduction approaches, village-based comprehensive development, and overall progress (SCLGPR 2001, Gao 2001, and Wang Sangui 2004). Finally, the Compendium has recognized that rural-urban migration is a critical avenue for poverty reduction and new policy initiatives are making it easier for rural inhabitants to benefit from new job opportunities arising in PRC urban areas (Wang Sangui 2004).

Apart from a few efforts that target women, the importance of a gender perspective in the development of poverty reduction policy is still not widely recognized in the PRC. Relevant economic, trade, and finance policies remain gender-blind. There continues to be insufficient or no gender impact analysis of policies relating to economic growth and poverty reduction. The concerns, needs, and efforts of women in poverty have not yet been fully addressed in poverty reduction strategies.

2. Subsidized Loans, Microcredit, and Gender

The Government began experimenting with the use of subsidized poverty loan funds for microcredit activities in 1994. Microcredit has proven effective at directly targeting poor households, individuals, and especially poor women. According to the Report of the People’s Republic of China on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000), rural microcredit projects have been implemented in 28 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities to help women out of poverty.

Microcredit has an automatic linkage with women's development. The repayment rate is higher when the organization in charge is a nongovernment organization (NGO) rather than a government organization or project management office, and when borrowers are solely women. The use of subsidized loans for funding microcredit is a promising way to target poor households directly, particularly women. The positive impacts of microcredit activities are officially recognized in the Compendium. The gender impacts of microcredit schemes should be systematically reviewed to permit women more access to state microcredit programs.

D. Gender and the National Millennium Development Goals

In 2003, the United Nations (UN) Country Team in China (UNCTC) assessed the country's achievements and experience since 2000 in its progress toward the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report noted that "the attainment of the MDGs is very much in line with China's own national development plans, embodied in building a well-off *xiaokang* society during the first two decades of the 21st century" (Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in China [OUNRC] 2004, ii).⁴ The report identified problems and a growing gender gap as shortfalls. The main findings relating to women or gender issues highlighted in the assessment are as follows:

Education. For UN MDG targets, the PRC is slightly behind in the girl/boy ratio for both primary education (90%) and secondary (85%). Major disparities in the ratio persist between regions and provinces. According to the National Population and Family Planning Commission,⁵ while average national primary school enrolment reached 99.1% in 2000, it was lower for girls in the poor western areas, at 95%. While 16 provinces have already reached the primary education enrolment rate of 100%, several provinces with large minority populations in the northwest and southwest have fallen behind (e.g., Tibet had a primary school ratio of only 85.5% in 2000). That same year, 6.42 million females over 6 years old had never been to school—2.5 times the number of males (2.54 million). Illiteracy among men was about 5%; for women, it was 13%.

Infant and child mortality. Sex-disaggregated data should be reflected in all MDG progress reports; however, this is not the case yet for the PRC. Therefore, MDGs 4 and 6 are used to exemplify the gender implications of all MDGs. Goal 4 is to "reduce child mortality." The target is a two-thirds reduction in the under-5 mortality rate between 1990 and 2015. The PRC reports it is on track in reducing infant and under-5 mortality. During the 1990s, reported infant mortality dropped from 33 per thousand live births to 28. However, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported under-5 mortality at 39 in 2001 (UNICEF 2004), and that the PRC may have difficulty reaching the target of 16 by 2015 (UNICEF 2004).

⁴ The government has renewed emphasis on its vision of achieving balanced development, referred to as *xiaokang*, meaning an all-around, well-off society, by 2020. At the 3rd plenary session of the 16th meeting of the Communist Party of China, it was determined that *xiaokang* would focus on balancing development between (i) urban and rural areas, (ii) regions of the country, (iii) economic and social development, (iv) human development and protection of natural resources, and (v) domestic development and opening up.

⁵ Formerly the State Family Planning Commission.

The female infant mortality rate (IMR) should be lower than the male IMR; however, it is the opposite now in the PRC. In 1990, the female IMR was 33.5 per thousand live births, while the male IMR was 32.4. In 2000, the female IMR was 33.72, while the male IMR was 23.90. This trend is caused by a strong preference for sons, coupled with a rapid fertility decline and availability of means to determine the sex of an unborn child. In the PRC, sexual predetermination is illegal, but the increasing availability of technology makes it difficult to control illegal private consultations. The Government is undertaking pilot projects to find solutions, but more research is required.

Combating disease. MDG 6 is to combat human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria, and other diseases; and target 7 is to halt by 2015 and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. At the end of 2003, the total number of HIV cases was estimated at 840,000, corresponding to a total prevalence rate of 0.07% (UNCTC 2004, 48). Recent years have seen an increasing proportion of HIV cases in females—from 15.4% in 1999 to 39% of the total cases in 2004 (OUNRC 2004, State Council AIDs [SCAIDS] Working Committee Office 2004). The gender implications of HIV/AIDS are as follows: (i) Pregnant women who carry the virus will likely pass it to the next generation. About one third of babies from infected mothers will have HIV. Infected babies normally survive for only 2–3 years; (ii) The risk of women being infected by the HIV virus is 2–5 times higher than for men due to unprotected sex; and (iii) Women are often at a disadvantage in protecting themselves from unsafe sex due to the unequal power structure in the family and society. Closer tracking of HIV/AIDS infection with sex-disaggregated data is important. The national MDGs are presented in Appendix 1 (Lin 2001e).

Environment. The PRC has made strides forward in improving its environment—forest cover has increased by almost 2%, up from about 16.5% in 1998; desertified land and desert area has decreased by over 47,000 square kilometers; and by the end of 2004, almost 15% of the PRC's land area was classified as natural reserves. However, the rising population and a burgeoning economy continue to stress the land and other natural resources. Water quantity and quality are deteriorating, and competition for water use is increasing. Land, water, humans, and biodiversity are all threatened by pollution and overuse of the environment.

In response, the PRC Government has increased funding for the environment from 0.7% of GDP to 1.4% in 2003 and projects spending to 2% in 2010. Cities and provinces are formulating environment protection strategies, and sustainable development is highlighted in the 10th 5-Year Plan, which specifies targets for water quality; urban environments; and agricultural, forest, and grassland areas. Environmental protection focuses on the maintenance of arable land, control of land conversion, reduction of urban environment degradation, increased safe drinking water, and reduced pollution from fertilizers and feeds.

The PRC is on track for meeting two of three targets of MDG7 (Environment): (i) halving the number of people without access to and afford safe drinking water, and (ii) increasing the proportion of rural people with access to sanitation. However, the PRC may have difficulty in meeting the third target—reversing the loss of environmental resources by 2015. More effective management and monitoring are needed to use the PRC's water resources effectively, and better statistics on which to base the managing and monitoring.

Reversing the losses is especially essential for women, who often bear the brunt of the burden for acquiring water for household and agricultural use, and may be left to deal with deteriorating agricultural land while men migrate to find paid labor elsewhere. Given women's important role, their active participation in planning, managing, and monitoring use of environmental resources should be ensured at all levels.

***Chapter 2* Gender Dimensions of Economic Development**

A. The Formal Labor Market

Employment is the fundamental prerequisite for sustaining livelihoods. The Communist Party of China (CPC) has declared that women's entry into the public sector is a condition for their liberation, and has promoted women's employment. However, in the transition from a state-centered toward a market-led economy, new challenges and problems have emerged as women have tended to be marginalized in the formal labor market.

1. Gender and Employment

The employment of women increased from 291 million (44.95% of the total employment) in 1990 to 337 million (45.28% of the total) in 2003 (SCIO 2004a); the employment of men increased 4.16% more than that of women.

The gender disparity in employment is distributed across age groups, but women aged 15–24 have higher employment rates than men of the same age (World Bank and ADB 2005). This indicates that young women are disadvantaged in receiving tertiary and higher education. Conversely, in the 24–65 age group, men's employment rate surpasses that of women. Women in this group are disadvantaged due to reproductive responsibilities and/or their earlier retirement age (55) than for men (60), which negatively affects their pensions. Women, on the average, devote 300% of the time men give to housework (NBS 2004), which affects women's active participation in the labor market. Due to the differential retirement ages stipulated by laws and policies, women leave the workforce before men (NBS 2004).

Unemployment of women is increasing fast. The female employment rate in urban areas decreased by 29.4% from 1995 to 2003, 2% more than that of men (Jiang 2005). Employment pressure has been increasing as the market-oriented reforms of SOEs have resulted in many layoffs since 1960s. From 1998 to 2003, 13.36 million women were laid off and became unemployed (SCIO 2004a). That more women than men have been laid off indicates discrimination against women (Table 3). The All China Federation of Trade Unions noted that women were often the first employees to be laid off (*China Daily* 2 July 2004).

Only 39% of women who had lost their jobs became reemployed—24.9% less than for men. Furthermore, reemployed women mainly work in the informal sector, such as wholesale, retail sales, food, hairdressing, and domestic service, where they receive low pay and have little security. The second national survey on women's status in the PRC revealed that 49.7% of women workers laid off from SOEs had encountered sex and age discrimination when seeking reemployment, versus 30.8% reported by men (All China Women's Federation [ACWF] and NBS 2002). Laid-off women often choose short-term or temporary jobs or self-employment due to the unfavorable labor market toward them (*China Daily* 2 July 2004).

Government agencies and private organizations have made concerted efforts to cope with unemployment. The Government has been building a social security system and increasing the budget devoted to unemployed insurance. Women's federations at various levels have provided training for 5.8 million laid-off or unemployed women, and directly helped 2.5 million women to find new jobs from 1998 to 2003 (SCIO 2004a). However, most of the assistance for laid-off women emphasized self-employment in the informal sector, and work for laid-off women tends to entail domestic work in communities.

Table 3. Unemployment Rate in Urban and Rural Areas in 1990 and 2000 (%)

Year	1990	2000
National total	0.88	3.68
Male	0.81	3.60
Female	0.96	3.88
Urban total	1.79	8.36
Male	1.64	7.78
Female	1.99	9.17
Rural total	0.17	1.20
Male	0.16	1.26
Female	0.19	1.16

Source: World Bank and Asian Development Bank 2005.

2. Gender Gaps in Occupations, Salaries, and Wages

The PRC's Population Census in 2000 indicated a gender gap in employment structure. Women comprised only 16.8% of heads of governments, parties, social organizations, enterprises, and institutions in 2000. Table 4 shows that representation of men and women in types of occupations. Furthermore, within the professional and technical fields, women were concentrated in health care, sports, and social welfare, where they constituted 61.9% of total professional and technical personnel in urban areas in 2002 (Table 5). These occupations were normally identified to be "more suitable" for women than for men. Although women in the PRC are better educated and more deeply involved with professional jobs than ever before, they have rarely broken through the "glass ceiling" that keeps them from top-level management and professional positions. Most women work in the service sector, farming, forestry, and herding or fishing—considered to be low-skill, low-paying jobs.

**Table 4. Occupation Composition of Employment in 1982, 1990, and 2000
Percentage and Sex Distribution (%)**

Occupation	1982		1990		2000	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Percentage Distribution						
Heads of governments, parties, social organizations, enterprises, and institutions	0.4	2.5	0.4	2.8	0.6	2.5
Professional and technical personnel	4.4	5.6	5.3	5.3	6.5	5.0
Office clerks and related staff	0.7	1.7	1.0	2.4	2.1	4.0
Workers in commerce and service trade	4.3	3.8	5.9	5.0	10.1	8.4
Workers in farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and related activities	77.1	68.0	75.3	66.8	69.0	60.7

Table 4— Continued

Occupation	1982		1990		2000	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Workers in industrial production, transport, and related activities	13.0	18.3	12.0	17.7	11.7	19.3
Other workers not classified elsewhere	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sex Distribution						
Heads of governments, parties, social organizations, enterprises, and institutions	10.4	89.6	11.5	88.5	16.8	83.2
Professional and technical personnel	38.3	61.7	45.3	54.7	51.7	48.3
Office clerks and related staff	24.5	75.5	25.7	74.3	30.3	69.7
Workers in commerce and service trade	47.0	53.0	48.9	51.1	50.0	50.0
Workers in farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and related activities	46.8	53.2	47.9	52.1	48.5	51.5
Workers in industrial production, Transport, and related activities	35.4	64.6	35.7	64.3	33.4	66.6
Other workers not classified elsewhere	41.7	58.3	42.5	57.5	36.2	63.8
Total	43.7	56.3	45.0	55.0	45.3	54.7
Number (millions)	227.8	293.7	291.0	356.2	316.9	382.6

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, the People's Republic of China's Population Census 2000.

Table 5. Professional and Technical Personnel in Urban Areas by Sector in 2002
Percentage and Sex Distribution (%)

Sector	Percentage Distribution		Sex Distribution	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery	2.4	1.7	30.0	70.0
Mining and quarrying	2.6	2.2	35.3	64.7
Manufacturing	14.0	11.3	34.1	65.9
Production and supply of electricity, gas, and water	2.1	1.6	31.0	69.0
Construction	5.0	2.8	23.3	76.7
Geological prospecting and water conservation	0.9	0.6	28.8	71.2
Transport, storage, post, and telecommunications	3.5	2.6	31.6	68.4
Wholesale and retail trade and catering services	3.8	3.7	41.3	58.7
Banking and insurance	5.2	5.5	44.4	55.6
Real estate	0.9	0.8	35.7	64.3
Social services	2.5	2.2	38.2	61.8
Health care, sports, and social welfare	11.3	16.5	61.9	38.1
Education, culture and arts, radio, film, and television	38.7	42.7	46.8	53.2
Scientific research and polytechnical services	2.8	2.3	34.5	65.5
Government agencies, party agencies, and social organizations	3.2	2.6	34.5	65.5
Total	100.0	100.0		

Source: Statistical data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security 2001.

Occupational segregation by sex has resulted in gender gaps in wages and salaries. The second national survey of women's status in the PRC showed that the income gap between men and women is increasing (ACWF and NBS 2002). During 1990–2000, the income of female employees had increased dramatically, but that of men increased faster. In 1999, the income of urban female employees was 70.1% of that of men, and the gap had increased by 7.4 points over that in 1990. Gender discrepancies in annual income vary among sectors, with mining and public service industries showing the largest gap—women's average wage was generally 74.7% of that of men—with construction showing the narrowest gap—at 11.5%. The income of women is lower than men in all industries (Table 6).

Table 6. Average Annual Wage in Enterprises in 2002

Sector	Average Wage (CNY)		Women's Average Wage as % of Men's
	Female	Male	
Farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery	12,177	14,002	87.0
Mining and quarrying	8,578	11,488	74.7
Manufacturing	13,544	16,652	81.3
Production and supply of electricity, gas, and water	16,665	18,912	88.1
Construction	15,396	17,400	88.5
Transportation, storage post, and telecommunications	17,993	20,895	86.1
Wholesale and retail trade and catering	13,385	16,705	80.1
Real estate	23,186	27,437	84.5
Social services	17,336	23,267	74.5
Others	13,937	17,141	81.3

CNY = yuan.

Source: Statistical data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security 2001.

Women constituted the main labor component of the rural employed population aged 16–49 in 2000. However, their average income was only 87% of that of male workers. Women's lower wages resulted partly from their involvement in unpaid work such as housework. On average, in 2000, women accounted for about 75% of the time households spent daily on housework (5 hours and 31 minutes). In rural areas this is greater (women spend 78% of the 6 hours and 2 minutes) and in urban areas, it is lower (women spend 71% of the 5 daily hours).

3. Discrimination in the Labor Market and Workplace

The steadily increasing unemployment with limited job vacancies results in tensions in the labor market. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, about 22 million to 23 million people will be looking for jobs in urban areas during the next 3–4 years, but only 7 million to 8 million job vacancies are expected (*China Daily* 5 Dec. 2002). This situation exacerbates the tendency toward gender discrimination in employment. Job postings openly express a preference for male employees in many areas. Recent female graduates with good qualifications are often less likely to be hired than males with lower credentials (Li Huiying et al. 2002).

Many factors have contributed to the discrimination. Employers assume that pregnancy and maternity leaves will affect women's performance. Protectionist provisions for women in laws and policies have made women targets when enterprises seek to eliminate redundant staff. The PRC's Labor Law guarantees protection for women during pregnancy, nursing, childbirth, and neonatal care. It also stipulates that all female workers are entitled to 90 days of maternity leave.⁶

Women are prohibited from work that is considered particularly hazardous, e.g., mining, scaffolding work, logging, high altitude work carrying heavy weights, and other work categorized as physically intense. Such regulations promote the notion that a woman's primary responsibility is to have and rear children, and disadvantages them in the labor market.

Women with low levels of education, particularly female migrants, are the lowest paid. In recent years, many joint enterprises have drawn young unmarried female migrants from rural areas to work in export-oriented industries under poor working conditions and for long hours. Some enterprises contravene labor laws, e.g., by not having labor contracts with workers, using child labor, or refusing to provide necessary protection facilities (State Council 2005). Reports of infringements upon women worker's labor rights and interests include cases of injury such as chemical poisoning (Nan 2002 and Tan 2004).

B. The Informal Labor Market

As in most countries, women in the PRC comprise the majority of informal sector workers, in segments that have low productivity and marginal links to the formal economy. The employment of women in nonpublic and private enterprises increased by 60% from 1995 to 2000 (ACWF and NBS 2002). However, women concentrate in the lower strata of the informal sector, which is in community- and home-based work.

1. Community- and Home-based Work

Community-based work includes domestic service (e.g., fee-based services relating to household chores, child care, and care of senior and sick people), maintenance of facilities, and management of the community. By 2001, 12.1 million people were employed in community-based services—70% (8.4 million) of them women (CIIC 2001).

Women who were over 40 years old and laid off from SOEs and women migrants moved into informal services. By 2003, 40% of the laid-off women who had found jobs again were working in their communities (*China Daily* 19 Feb. 2003). Since the Government had identified community-based services as an effective strategy to absorb labor, and the work is seen as "suitable" for women, more women are expected to be absorbed in this sector. Women's federations are mobilized to advise unemployed or laid-off women to join the sector.

However, most of the work available is temporary and can provide very limited payment and social protection. Women's income in the informal sector is merely 69.4% of that of men (You

⁶ Labor Act of the PRC, Ch. VII, Sec. 62 (1994).

2005), showing that women involved in community- and home-based work are poorly paid compared to male counterparts who open their own businesses. Men have been the primary beneficiaries of pro-poor policies such as reduction of or exemptions from taxes for laid-off workers to encourage them to start their own businesses. Furthermore, community- and home-based work provides little social welfare. Nearly 80% of such women workers have not been able to have maternity leave or stipends for maternal care. Moreover, such female workers have little bargaining power to protect their rights and interests, as the laws and policies concerning labor rights are not implemented in the informal sector.

2. Small and Medium Enterprises

Women entrepreneurs own 20% of all enterprises in the PRC (ACWF and NBS 2002). However, data do not indicate the relative sizes of businesses owned by men and women. Businesswomen rarely received bank loans—56% reported seed capital for their business came from personal savings, 40% reported borrowing from relatives and friends, and only 4% had borrowed from banks (National Development Research Committee [NDRC] and UNDP 2003, 185).

Many factors affect women in getting loans for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and expanding their businesses. The new Law on Promotion of SMEs does not address the special concerns of women, nor provide support to businesses developed by women. In practice, many formal and semi-formal financial institutions still do not serve poor women. In some areas, women had to show their husbands' identity cards when applying for credit (NDRC and UNDP 2003, Du Jie 2004). Women tend to take smaller loans than men, and activities in which they invest also remain small scale. In general, gender norms, women's low level of education, lack of business skills, low level of group organization, and paucity of time and mobility combine to undermine their access to SMEs. Although the informal sector has provided opportunity and easy entry for women, they tend to be marginalized in economic development. Many small businesses owned by women lack access to organized markets, credit, training, and public services. Such enterprises provide very low and irregular incomes and employment.

C. Women and Entrepreneurship

By 1999, 19.59 million women owned businesses.⁷ The PRC's Entrepreneur Survey System 1996–2001 (Table 7) showed that entrepreneurial businesses led by women are profitable. Female entrepreneurs concentrate in privately owned and foreign investment enterprises, and in the more developed regions.

Laid-off female workers face many barriers to initiating their own businesses. First, the education level of laid-off women workers is very low—e.g., in Hunan, 58% of the laid-off female workers had less than middle-school education. Second, laid-off women have almost no access to commercial loans, and must raise money from relatives or close friends. Third, laid-off women

⁷ Survey Report of China's Entrepreneur Survey System 1996–2001, reported in *China Economic Times* 12 March 2003.

have very limited access to information, including business information. Fourth, women's family responsibilities and the unequal gender relations within the family affect their decisions about initiating their own businesses (Academy of Macroeconomic Research 2000).

Table 7. Description of Entrepreneurs by Gender

Item	Gender Difference
Age	The average age of female entrepreneurs is 46.5 years, and that of males is 47.4. More entrepreneurs under 35, and 46–55, are female than male.
Education	The educational level of female and male entrepreneurs is about the same.
Industry distribution	There are 16.6% more female entrepreneurs than males in trade and food and restaurant businesses; 3.4% more in social services, and 2.2% more in real estate. In all other sectors, there are fewer female than male entrepreneurs, e.g., 9% fewer in manufacturing.
Regional distribution	There are 4.9% more female than male entrepreneurs in the eastern region of the country, and 1.7% and 3.3% fewer in middle and western regions, respectively.
Type of corporation	55% of female entrepreneurs are in private enterprises; 3.8% more female than male entrepreneurs are in foreign investment corporations, but 8.5% fewer are in state-owned enterprises.
Profit of enterprises	7.8% more female than male entrepreneurs are in profitable enterprises, 4.3% more are in enterprises that break even, and 12.1% less are in losing enterprises.
Source of initiation funds	65% of female entrepreneurs who established private or shareholder enterprises got their initial funds from personal saving, families, or friends. Only about 30% had bank loans.

PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: The survey report of the PRC's Entrepreneur Survey System 1996–2001, *China Economic Times* 12 March 2003.

In response, women's organizations and the Government have promoted women's self-employment by (i) encouraging laid-off women workers to set up businesses in community services such as cleaning, care centers for children and the elderly, and cooking and other household services; (ii) promoting favorable policies, such as tax deductions/exemptions for enterprises established by laid-off workers; (iii) providing laid-off women workers with microcredit for business development; and (iv) providing training for laid-off women workers.

D. Microcredit and Women

Microcredit for rural livelihoods. The availability of credit may determine the household livelihood strategy. Men and women often prioritize livelihood needs differently. Women tend to prioritize the use of money for livestock production (e.g., pigs, sheep, and chicken), crop production, and small business; men tend to prioritize crop production and specialized production (e.g., fishponds and fruit).

Women tend to borrow smaller amounts of money—e.g., up to CNY1,000—while men will borrow more—e.g., over CNY2,000 (Lin 2001c and 2005). Because women have long been

denied access to credit, some microcredit schemes take affirmative action to reverse this inequality, and lend solely to women.

Microcredit for women’s business starts. Microcredit has become an effective tool to help poor and laid-off urban women workers. For example, the Tianjin Women’s Association for Business Development and Promotion—established in 1999 with UNDP support—targets poor, laid-off, and unemployed women aged 24–47 in Tianjin City. Up to 2002, 1,871 women had borrowed from the association.⁸ In 2005, the association issued credit to over 1,000 women.⁹ In Guangxi in 1999, the Guangxi Provincial Women’s Federation and Liuzhou Municipal Women’s Federation started a microcredit scheme to support laid-off women workers. Until 2002, the Municipal Women’s Federation had issued credit of CNY3.46 million to 1,481 laid-off women. Their business success rate was 100% and the repayment rate was 97%. Businesses they established included catering and kindergartens.¹⁰

Microcredit and the development of women leaders. Microcredit has also enhanced the development of women leaders. With microcredit schemes where women are the sole borrowers, women leaders are elected to manage the fund at various levels. Women, especially poor rural women, are given opportunities to develop their leadership skills: over 4,860 women’s economic cooperatives have been established in poor areas in Shanxi Province with the support of a microcredit scheme, which has provided many women opportunities to foster and show their abilities. As a result, many women leaders in microcredit projects have been elected to the rural villagers’ and local party committees (Wu Xiaoling 2004). Microcredit schemes can assist both women’s practical and strategic needs.

E. The Rural Economy

Investment in rural areas has taken a back seat to growth in urban areas. Rural women, who are often marginalized due to lack of skills and information, need avenues to prepare them better to cope with changing dynamics. This includes the loss of male household members who move to work in cities.

Table 8. Farm Hours Worked and Percentage of People Working on Farm
(by demographic group, 2000)

Demographic Group	Percentage Working on Farm	Mean Hours in 2000	Standard Deviation
Men aged			
16–25	39.5	550.8	523.5
26–35	76.5	792.9	677.0
36–45	86.7	860.7	696.1
46–55	90.3	891.9	697.0
over 55	69.2	832.6	666.5
All Men	70.0	803.3	671.9
Women aged			
16–25	32.8	543.7	533.9
26–35	81.2	849.2	684.9
36–45	91.2	944.1	698.5
46–55	86.0	911.1	688.6
Over 55	40.4	574.9	503.2
All women	65.0	827.1	673.7

Notes: Means and standard deviations are measured only among individuals working on farm. Sample size is 3,794.

Source: The China National Rural Survey 2000.

⁸ Available: www.twede.com.cn.

⁹ Available: www.news.tom.com.

¹⁰ Available: www.news.tom.com.

Gender analysis in the 1st PRC Agricultural Census Results of March 2000 indicates that more females than males work and stay in the rural area (Lin and Qiu 2000). The data in Table 8 indicate that men are more likely to do farm work than women (70% of men in the sample over age 16 work on a farm, but only 65% of women). However, women report working slightly more hours than men on farm, on the average by 24 hours a year. The data show that men aged 26–55 are slightly less likely to have worked on a farm than women and are more likely than women to have off-farm jobs.

1. Women's Decision-making Roles in Agriculture Production

With the increasing absence of men in the countryside, women's decision-making roles in agricultural production have increased. Rural women whose husbands leave for off-farm activities have gained "authority in the male's absence." This provides scope for women to strengthen their decision-making capabilities. A case study in Gansu and Hebei provinces indicates gender differences in labor and decision-making patterns. Decision making increases with the increased share of labor, although a gap remains between the amount of labor shared and the level of decision making involved: e.g., in the households with small business and off-farm activities, women's share in crop production is 72%, while women's involvement in decision making is only 49% (Table 9). The gap implies that women do not have enough say over what they actually do.

Table 9. Gender Decision-making Pattern in Crop Production

	Households without Off-farm Activities		Households with more than 6 person-months of Off-farm Activities per year	
	Women's Share in		Women's Share in	
	Division of Labor	Decision Making	Division of Labor	Decision Making
In Beitan Township, Jingyuan County, Gansu Province				
Sample size	<i>N=39</i>		<i>N=86</i>	
Crop production (%)	30	29	40	35
Purchase of farming inputs (%)	15	25	21	29
Marketing of crop products (%)	47	53	56	61
Average (%)	31	36	39	42
In Fangzhuang Township, Wuquiao County, Hebei Province				
Sample Size	<i>N=61</i>		<i>N=14</i>	
Crop production (%)	55	47	72	49
Purchase of farming inputs (%)	36	51	42	58
Marketing of crop products	No data	No data	No data	No data
Average (%)	46	49	57	54

Source: Lin 2001a.

2. Changes in Agriculture Production

Accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) has important implications for economic and social development in the PRC. The rural areas will retain an economic advantage in some agricultural products and processing. Public programs could help hurdle barriers to these opportunities. Increased trade is likely to increase jobs for women, especially in export processing.

Some recent studies supported by the World Bank and the United Kingdom's DFID conclude that WTO accession needs to be followed up by sound supporting policies, or most households will be worse off due to the accession (Winters 2002). One economic model suggests that 87% of farm households and 50% of urban households could lose income (Chen and Ravallion, cited in Winters 2002). In poorer and more remote provinces, poverty and inequality could increase significantly. There is particular concern about the vulnerability of farmers to the impacts of globalization in general and the WTO accession in particular and their ability to compete with cheaper imported agricultural commodities. Although different crops will experience different impacts, the net impact appears to be a small decline in farm wages and land rents, which would exacerbate poverty in the absence of compensatory policies. Declining incomes for farmers may or may not be compensated by possible decreases in the costs of inputs and some consumption goods (Du and Kanji 2002).

As expected, the PRC's WTO entry has rapidly affected the employment and income of Chinese farmers. Grain, cotton, and oil farmers, both middle and low income, have suffered most (Ma and Lan 2002). In response to the changes, women agricultural laborers are expected to transfer gradually from land-intensive to labor-intensive industries and, to a lesser extent, to nonagricultural industries. In the long run, land-intensive products such as corn, soybean, and cotton will lose domestic market share to imports and employment in these sectors will fall (UNDP et al. 2003).¹¹

Job opportunities for women working in the sectors that are less internationally competitive (corn, cotton and, to a lesser extent, soybean) will decline gradually at first, but faster in the long run. Opportunities for women in more competitive agricultural activities (such as chicken raising) will expand—but not sufficiently to compensate for the job losses in the short to medium term (UNDP et al. 2003).

3. Women and Water

Water problems in rural areas include water shortages, lack of access to potable water, and pollution from pesticides and industries. The PRC is experiencing a severe water shortage. More than 400 of the PRC's 662 cities lack sufficient water for their needs. Increasing urbanization will strain water and wastewater treatment facilities. In many poor rural areas, farmers have no access to potable water. In some areas, farmers rely on rainwater for drinking and washing during rainy season and use whatever water they can get during dry season. The deterioration of water resources

¹¹ In a research conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), three land-intensive crops were selected: cotton, soybeans, and corn; and one labor-intensive activity was selected: chicken breeding. The analysis is based on interviews with 314 agricultural laborers.

affects women more severely than men for several reasons, including the following: (i) Women take more responsibility for agricultural resources than men and the decline of water resources will affect women's agricultural productivity. (ii) Women are traditionally responsible for fetching water for drinking and other household use. With less water available, women will have to spend more time fetching it, and therefore, less time on other tasks. (iii) Deteriorated sanitary conditions will impact women themselves and increase the time required for caring for the ill.

Various measures have been taken to tackle water problems. Some water projects may have concerns specific to women; others specifically target women. In many village development plans under the PRC's Rural Poverty Reduction and Development Compendium (2001–2010), water projects have been prioritized and implemented. And in many international development projects, "women and water" had been an integrated part of the project design.

Sparse rainfall has become the only water source in many villages in some drought-affected western areas, including Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, where the annual rainfall is about 300 millimeters while the annual vaporization is more than 1,500 millimeters. The PRC Women's Development Fund established the "Mother Water Cellar" project, launched in February 2001. By May 2005, the project had covered 22 provinces and regions,¹² and constructed about 100,000 water cellars benefiting one million people. The project has reduced women's time in fetching water, and thus, allowed them to increase their productive activities.

4. Women and Forest

The PRC now registers 160 million hectares of forest area, 11.27 billion cubic meters of forest stock, and a forest coverage rate of 16.55% against 8.6% in the 1950s. The PRC's current forest coverage rate is only 60% of the world average, and its area comprises only 4.6% of the world total. The PRC's per capita forest area is only one fifth of the world average. The nation has nearly 170 million hectares of desertified land, accounting for 18.2% of the country's total land area, and affecting 400 million Chinese. The Government is making efforts to reverse the situation. The PRC's afforested area has reached 47 million hectares, accounting for about one third of the world total and ranking first in the world. At present, construction of six major green projects is under way.¹³

Women are playing a significant role in afforestation. They are becoming the major labor force in rural areas due to the absence of males. Project interventions have focused on women's participation in afforestation. The introduction of community forestry is transforming traditional rural forestry to have a strong focus on popular participation, which creates opportunities for greater participation by women. Community forestry is one of the most important components of

¹² Including Chongqing, Gansu, Guangxi, Guizhou, Inner Mogolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan.

¹³ The six projects are (i) the natural forests project; (ii) the key shelterbelt project in the north, northeast, and northwest of the country, and in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River; (iii) the project to return cultivated land to forest cover; (iv) the sand control project around Beijing; (v) the wildlife protection and nature reserve construction project; and (vi) the fast-growing and high-yielding timber project in key areas.

the PRC-Netherlands Poverty Alleviation Project, which puts into practice participatory approaches and develops environmental and gender awareness.

Women are specifically targeted as tree planters by ACWF. ACWF has launched an afforestation project and mobilized women's specific participation. In 2003, 120 million women participated in "greening the land," planting trees on 1.6 million hectares.

Women are also assigned traditional gender roles in forestry. Women tend to be more focused on non-timber forest products for their families' basic needs, e.g., fuelwood, fodder, ferns, and fruits, while men focus more on commercially oriented products such as timber, coal, and charcoal. Women shoulder the burdens of collecting wood from ever greater distances and of indoor air pollution, causing eye and lung problems.

F. Labor Migration

How the PRC tackles the issues of migrant workers will largely determine the country's development in the coming decades.¹⁴ The PRC has 782 million rural people, which is 60.9% of the total population (NBS 2003). Many rural people rely on farming tiny plots of land. Landholdings differ among regions. In some parts of the southern PRC, the average landholding per person is only about 0.04 hectares. Low and negative economic returns from agriculture are pushing many farmers to seek alternative livelihoods. The PRC has an estimated 130 million migrant residents, and 4 million to 6 million of them are in Beijing (NBS 2003).

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, in 1999 over 16% of the rural populations were laborers. This number was expected to rise.¹⁵ More than one third of the total migrant laborers concentrate in industry. About one third of female migrant laborers concentrate in business, the food industry, and the service sector, while male laborers are more dispersed across construction, transportation, business, the food industry, and services. In 2000, rural males accounted for 52.3% of the total migrant population. Most migrants are young adults—people aged 15–39 comprise 75% of female migrants and 69% of male migrants (NBS 2004). Up to 300 million Chinese farmers may move into cities in the next 20 years (UNDP report cited in Xinhua, 30 July 2006).

Zhang et al. (2004) examined the role of women in labor markets and argued that younger women are beginning to specialize by working solely in the off-farm sector. While participation rates among women were still much lower than those of men—63% were for men and 31% for women—in 2000, the gap narrowed for younger ages and disappeared for the youngest cohort (Table 10). Men and women aged 16–20 had similar off-farm participation rates (about 75%) and were increasingly specializing in off-farm labor.

¹⁴ In this report, "rural labor migration" refers to people who are registered as farmers and migrate to urban areas seeking employment opportunities.

¹⁵ Information from the National Office for Rural Fixed-point Observation, Data Collection of Rural Socioeconomic Typical Investigations, cited from Wu Guobao 2001.

Table 10. Off-farm Labor Participation Rates by Gender for Selected Age Cohorts in Rural Areas, 1990 and 2000

Age Cohorts	Off-farm Labor Participation Rates (%)					
	Total	1990 Men	Women	Total	2000 Men	Women
16–20	23.7	29.9	13.1	75.8	74.7	75.6
21–25	33.6	47.3	13.1	67.2	78.8	53.5
26–30	28.8	47.9	8.8	52.5	72.8	33.7
31–35	26.8	44.4	6.8	47.6	70.5	22.5
36–40	20.5	37.3	3.6	43.3	70.0	20.3
41–50	20.8	33.4	5.2	37.6	61.2	18.7

Source: Zhang Linxiu et al. 2004.

Female and male migrant workers face different kinds of difficulties and discrimination, although both experience harsh working conditions, have low social status, and receive low pay. In addition, domestic workers may suffer from lack of personal freedom and loneliness, and are exposed to domestic violence and sexual harassment, while factory workers may suffer from hazardous work environments.

In some places, especially in the export-oriented special economic zones of the Southern PRC, women comprise more than 70% of the migrant workforce. Male migrants now dominate the construction industry across the PRC, while rural migrant women are the backbone of the workforce in the textile industry, and predominate in manufacturing in the special economic zones and in domestic service (Gaetano and Jacka 2004).

More than 10 million migrant laborers work in Guangdong Province, according to the 2000 national census. The Guangdong Statistical Bureau estimates that more than 60% of these are women. Migrant workers tend to work in wholly foreign-owned enterprises, joint ventures, township and village enterprises, and private enterprises that produce toys, clothing, footwear, electronics, and other consumer goods. Guangdong alone generated more than 40% of the PRC's foreign trade in terms of value (Zhang Ye 2001). Migrant workers, especially female migrants, have contributed greatly to but share little from this economic growth.

Chapter 3 Gender Dimensions of Human Development

A. Education

The most effective strategy for eliminating poverty and achieving sustainable development is to expand access to and improve the quality of education (Zhang Tiedao et al. 2004). Keeping girls out of school is costly and undermines development. Education for girls is the single most effective way of tackling poverty (Hill and King 1993 and Hill and King eds. 1995). Women with even a few years of basic education have smaller, healthier families; are more likely to be able to work their way out of poverty; and are more likely to send their own children—boys and girls—to school. Child mortality is lower, the higher the number of years of education of the mother. Countries that are failing to ensure that women obtain education and free and equal rights and opportunities are falling behind in all aspects of development (DFID 2000).

1. Gender Gaps

Education level. Education achievements in the PRC have increased substantially from 1990 to 2000 (Table 11). Gender gaps in education have also narrowed. In 2000, about three fourths of the illiterate population and only one third of those with college education were female. Female illiteracy had decreased since 1990, and the percentage of women in higher education had increased significantly. However, the gender gap widens as the education level increases, with 1.5 males/female at the college level and over 9/1 at the graduate level.

Table 11. Education Levels of People Aged 15 and in 1990 and 2000, by Gender (%)

Level	Distribution across Levels				Distribution between Genders			
	1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Less than Full Primary	31.9	13.0	13.9	4.9	70.1	29.9	72.7	27.3
Primary	33.8	35.3	33.6	28.4	47.7	52.3	52.7	47.3
Junior Middle School	24.3	36.0	36.0	44.6	39.0	61.0	43.2	56.8
Senior and Specialized Middle School	8.8	13.1	12.8	16.4	39.1	60.9	42.4	57.6
College and Over	1.2	2.6	3.7	5.6	30.3	69.7	38.3	61.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	48.8	51.2	49.0	51.0

NBS = National Bureau of Statistics; PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: The PRC's population censuses in 1990 and 2000, in NBS 2004.

Illiteracy rate. Illiteracy rate decreased dramatically from 1980 to 2000. Among people over 15 years old, it declined from 34% in 1982 to 9% in 2000—for females, the decline was from 49% to 14%, and among males, from 21% to 5%. The female illiteracy rate has dropped faster than

the male rate; however, with 1 person in 12 illiterate, the rate is still strikingly high, and three out of four illiterate people are women (Table 12). Appendix 2 gives the sex-disaggregated illiteracy rates in the provinces, major cities, and autonomous regions.

Higher economic development correlates with lower illiteracy rates. In Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin—the three municipalities with the highest GDPs—the average illiteracy rate is 9.5% for females and 2.4% for males, while, in Gansu, Guangxi, and Guizhou—the three regions with the lowest GDPs—the average illiteracy rate of females is 22.0%, and of males is 8.0%. In minority areas, the illiteracy rate is even higher—in Tibet, the illiteracy rate is 60.5% for females and 34.4% for males.

Enrolment rate. The enrolment rate of school-age children has increased dramatically, from 75.8% in 1990 to 96.5% in 2000. The gender gap decreased from 4.2% in 1990 to 0.8% in 2000 (Table 13). The gender gap in cities and towns is small, but that in the countryside is wider (Appendix 3). The enrolment rate in the countryside is lower than that in the cities and towns. In the six regions where minorities are concentrated the enrolment rate (87.3% for boys and 90.0% for girls) is largely lower than the national average. The average enrolment rate in the three lowest income provinces (92.4% for boys and 91.4% for girls) is lower than the national average (96.9% for boys and 96.0% for girls).

Table 12. Sex-disaggregated Illiteracy Rate (%)

Year	1982	1990	2000
Average illiteracy rate	34.49	22.21	8.80
Male	20.78	12.98	4.66
Female	48.88	31.93	13.11
Average urban illiteracy rate	17.75	11.97	5.22
Urban male	9.47	6.08	2.38
Urban female	26.96	18.36	8.17
Average rural illiteracy rate	39.42	26.23	11.19
Rural male	24.23	15.74	6.18
Rural female	55.09	37.11	16.43

Source: World Bank and Asian Development Bank 2005.

Table 13. Enrolment Rate of School-age Children (7 and over) in 1990 and 2000 (%)

Year	1990	2000
Nationwide Average	75.83	96.48
Male	77.82	96.86
Female	73.66	96.03
Average in Cities and Municipalities	79.16	97.95
Male	79.29	98.01
Female	79.02	97.88
Average in County and Township Towns	81.42	97.93
Male	81.60	98.05
Female	81.22	97.78
Average in Rural Areas	74.64	95.86
Male	77.19	96.37
Female	71.87	95.26

Source: World Bank and Asian Development Bank 2005.

Gender gap and dropout rate. The dropout rate of school-age children declined from 13.16% in 1990 to 2.68% in 2000, and the gender gap narrowed from 3.6% to 0.4% (Table 14). The average dropout rate in the three lowest income regions and provinces (3.7% for boys and 5.4% for girls) is higher than the national average (2.5% for boys and 2.9% for girls). The average dropout rate in the six regions and provinces with large minority populations (7.5% for boys and 8.4% for girls) is about three times the national average, which should be cause for concern.

Table 14. Dropout Rate of Children Age 7–14 in 1990 and 2000 (%)

Year	1990	2000
Nationwide Average	13.16	2.68
Male	11.44	2.50
Female	15.01	2.89
Average in Cities and Municipalities	11.55	2.51
Male	11.27	2.58
Female	11.86	2.44
Average in County and Township Towns	9.55	2.12
Male	9.39	2.11
Female	9.73	2.14
Average in Rural Areas	13.78	2.82
Male	11.65	2.55
Female	16.06	3.13

Source: World Bank and Asian Development Bank 2005.

Years of schooling. The average years of schooling has increased 21.6% (i.e., from 6.25 years in 1990 to 7.60 in 2000). During the same period, the average length of schooling for females increased faster (29.6%) than that for males (15.7%), and the gap between females and males has continued to narrow, from 1.58 years in 1990 to 1.07 years in 2000 (Table 15). The gender gap in the countryside is larger than in the urban cities: in 2000, it was 1.18 years in the countryside and 0.82 years in urban areas.

2. Government Efforts to Ensure Primary and Middle School Education in Poor Areas

To achieve the goal of universal primary education as stated in the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs, the Government issued in September 2003 the “Decision of the State Council on Further Strengthening Rural Education.” The decision proclaimed that by 2007, 9 years of education will be compulsory in the western regions, illiteracy among young and middle-aged people will practically be eliminated, compulsory education will reach at least 85% of children, and illiteracy among young and middle-aged people will drop below 5% (State Council 2003).

To solve the shortage of funding for rural poor children’s education, the Government set up a primary and middle school stipend that focuses on support for students from poor families in the western rural areas. In 2004, distribution of free textbooks was extended from the middle and western rural areas to extremely poor and vulnerable families and orphans throughout the country. By 2007, all students from poor families in the rural areas of the country will be exempt from miscellaneous and textbook fees, and boarding students will have subsidies, so no student would have to drop out of school for financial reasons (State Council 2003).

The “Spring Bud Program,” which was launched by ACWF to assist girl dropouts in poor areas to return to school, has raised over CNY500 million and assisted 1.35 million girls to return to school in 15 years. The program has set up over 20,000 classes for girls and over 200 schools.

B. Health

During 1995–2005, the state implemented additional laws and policies that aim to improve women’s health. The Women’s Law (1992) and the amendment (2005)¹⁶ stipulated clauses for improving the health of women and infants. The Program for Development of Chinese Women (2001–2010) set the goals and targets for women’s health improvement. The PRC’s initiatives to increase hospital delivery rates and attendance by skilled personnel have been highly successful. The proportion of women who received antenatal care increased steadily, hospital delivery rates were increased, and the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has been reduced significantly.

However, the efforts have been compromised by the privatization of the health care services during the Health Sector Reform since the 1980s. Gender disparities persist and gaps in women’s access to health services remain between eastern and western provinces, and between urban and rural areas. Western poor areas have much higher incidences of childhood and maternal mortality due to economic constraints. The overall progress in reducing the MMR is slowing. New demographic and reproductive issues have emerged, such as the unbalanced sex ratio at birth, higher female IMR, and an increasing proportion of women with HIV/AIDs.

Table 15. Mean Years of Education in People Age 7 and Over

Year	1990	2000
Average in the PRC	6.25	7.60
Male	7.02	8.12
Female	5.44	7.05
Average in Cities and Municipalities	8.02	9.38
Male	8.60	9.78
Female	7.39	8.96
Average in County and Township Towns	7.95	8.36
Male	8.55	8.86
Female	7.28	7.84
Average in the Countryside	5.60	6.76
Male	6.43	7.33
Female	4.74	6.15

PRC = People’s Republic of China

Source: World Bank and Asian Development Bank 2005.

¹⁶ The Law of the PRC on Health Protection of Mothers and Infants and the Law of the PRC on Population and Family Planning.

1. Population and Demography

The population of the PRC in 2002 was 1.28 billion; 48.5% (623.4 million) were female. The PRC's population is undergoing a demographic transition characterized as follows: (i) The natural population growth rate has declined steadily. (ii) The total fertility rate has decreased dramatically. (iii) The sex ratio at birth is not normal. (iv) The proportion of elderly people has increased. (v) The migrant population has grown (NBS 2004).

The natural population growth rate has decreased by 55%, from 14.39 per thousand in 1990 to 6.45 per thousand in 2002. The total fertility rate has dropped from below 5 and 6 in the 1950s and 1960s to below 2 on the average in recent decades. The national sex ratio at birth was 116.9 male live births for every 100.0 females in 2000, above the upper limit of the normal range. In 2002, 93.77 million people were 65 or older.

The Government and international agencies have noted the continually increasing sex ratio at birth since the 1980s. Internationally, the normal sex ratio at birth is stable at 103–107 males per 100 females. In the PRC, the ratio increased from 108.5 in 1982 to 116.9 in 2000. The ratio is beyond the normal range in all provinces except Tibet and Xinjiang autonomous regions. In some areas, as many as 135.6 males are born per 100.0 females (Table 16). Furthermore, the sex ratio at birth increases at each birth after the first child (Table 17).

Table 16. Provincial Sex Ratio at Birth: 2000 Census

Place of Birth	Sex Ratio	Place of Birth	Sex Ratio	Place of Birth	Sex Ratio
National	116.90	Zhejiang	113.11	Sichuan	116.37
Beijing	114.58	Anhui	130.76	Guizhou	105.37
Tianjin	112.97	Fujian	120.26	Yunnan	110.57
Hebei	118.46	Jiangxi	138.01	Tibet	97.43
Shanxi	112.75	Shandong	113.49	Shaanxi	125.15
Inner Mongolia	108.48	Henan	130.30	Gansu	119.35
Liaoning	112.17	Hubei	128.02	Qinghai	103.52
Jilin	109.87	Hunan	126.92	Ningxia	107.99
Heilongjiang	107.52	Guangdong	137.76	Xinjiang	106.65
Shanghai	115.51	Guangxi	128.80	Chongqing	115.80
Jiangsu	120.19	Hainan	135.04		

Source: World Bank and Asian Development Bank 2005 (adapted from Table 2).

The skewing of the birth ratio has aroused serious debate among policy makers and scholars. Some suggest that parents of a girl child, particularly in the rural areas, might choose not to register the girl child to reserve the quota for a son. Thus, there might exist a population of unregistered girls who will encounter many difficulties with access to education, health care, and employment in the formal labor market.

The high sex ratio is an adverse side effect of the Government's family planning policies. The Government introduced the one-child policy in 1978–1979, applied primarily to Han Chinese living in urban areas. The preference for sons is deeply ingrained in the Han ethnic group, and is even more pronounced in rural areas. While recognizing that changing culture is a formidable task in the long run, the Government has indirectly acknowledged the preference for sons by allowing rural couples to have a second child if the first child is a daughter. This has increased the incentive to have a son as the second or third child if the first child is a daughter.

Some couples use ultrasound to determine the sex of a fetus and abort female fetuses. Although this is illegal, it is hard to monitor implementation of the law. In poor rural areas where couples cannot afford the medical approach, some girls are abandoned. No data are available on the abandonment of girls, but there have been sporadic reports of female infanticide. The underreporting of the birth of girls may be a primary contributing factor to the high sex ratio at birth.

The 2000 Population Census showed about 40% greater mortality among female infants than males (UNCTC 2004). The gender gap in IMR has been increasing steadily, although the overall IMR has been decreased since the 1970s (Table 18). In about 1990, the female and male IMRs were almost the same. In 2000, however, the female IMR exceeded that of males significantly, by 10 per thousand. The gap had intensified by 10 times during the decade (NBS 2004).

Table 18. Infant Mortality Rate: 1982, 1990, and 2000 (per thousand live births)

Sample	1982 Census			1990 Census			2000 Census		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	37.74	38.73	36.67	32.89	32.36	33.48	28.41	23.92	33.75
Urban	24.16	25.27	22.96				13.32	11.55	15.38
Rural	40.27	41.23	39.23				35.72	29.80	42.87

Source: World Bank and ADB 2005 (Table 10).

In addition, disparities in IMRs exist between urban and rural areas. In 2000, the female IMR was 42.87 per thousand in rural areas, but only 15.38 per thousand in urban areas. The Country Report on Child Development in the PRC (2003–2004) stated that by 2003, the IMR in remote areas was 5.8 times higher than in coastal regions, and was at least 2.5 times higher in rural than in urban areas (NWCCW 2005).

Table 17. Ratio of Male to Female Births: 1990, 1995, and 2000

Year	1 st Child	2 nd Child	3 rd Child
1990	105.2	121.0	127.0
1995	106.4	141.1	154.3
2000	107.1	151.9	159.4

Sources: The People's Republic of China's population censuses, 1990 and 2000; 1% sample survey in 1995.

The increasing gap between male and female IMRs means that many girls are not surviving the first 4 years of life, despite having a natural biological advantage. This indicates that female infants may not receive the same health care and nutrition as males, which again indicates a preference for sons. One study found that the presence of a young son was associated with as much as 50% more spending on health care than the presence of a daughter (Khan and Riskin 2001).

In response to the skewed gender ratio, in the early 1980s the Government passed legislation that criminalizes infanticide, abandonment of children, and selective abortion. The Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care (1994) outlawed the practice of identifying the sex of the fetus and sex selective abortion. The 2002 Population and Family Planning Law reaffirmed the illegality of sex-selective abortion. Government agencies, NGOs, and international donors have made concerted efforts to balance the sex ratio at birth. Among the efforts are the official statements (in 1998 and 2000) and the “Care for Girls” project (2003), which was initiated by the National Population and Family Planning Commission and mobilized social attention and efforts to address the sex ratio at birth.

2. Public Health Care Services and Maternal and Child Health

Despite the challenges in terms of access to and quality of health care, some indicators have improved significantly since the 1980s. Life expectancy at birth has continued to increase, mortality rates of infants and children under 5 have dropped greatly, maternal and child health (MCH) care has improved, and the MMR has been halved (Table 19). While data vary depending on source (see for example Appendix 1), the improvement is clear.

Table 19. Progress in Maternal and Child Health since the 1980s

Item	Progress
Life expectancy at birth	From 1981 to 2000, life expectancy rose from 67.7 to 71.4 years. Life expectancy for women increased from 36 before 1949 to 75.3 in 2002, 4.6 years longer than that of men.
Mortality rates of infants and children under 5	Mortality rates of infant and children under 5 have dropped. In 1991, the infant mortality rate was 50.2 per 1,000, and in 2002 it was 29.2, a drop of 41.8%; in 1991 the mortality rate of children under 5 years was 61 per 1,000 and in 2002, it was 34.2, a drop of 42.8%.
Maternal mortality ratio	In 2002, the maternal mortality ratio was 43.2 per 100,000 births, a 51.4% decrease compared with 1990. The progress reflects improved living standards, increased maternal education, and the establishment of a comprehensive network of health services in all counties.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2004.

While the improvements in health care have been impressive, disparities remain between urban and rural, and eastern and western areas. Evidence of the differential is reflected in several aspects: (i) gaps in life expectancy between urban and rural areas increased from around 3.5 years in 1981 to over 5 years in 2000, which indicates a greater improvement in urban than in rural areas; (ii) the rural IMR was 35.72/1,000 births compared to the urban IMR of 13.32 in 2002; and (iii) the

rural MMR was 58.2/100,000 live births as compared to an urban rate of 22.3. The MMR in the coastal areas was 19.7/100,000, while inland it was 53.8 and in remote areas it was as high as 71.6 (Government of the People’s Republic of China 2005).

Several factors account for the imbalance. Insufficient funding and inadequate facilities are a major constraint for women and children, particularly in poor areas. National health accounts data showed that government expenditure had dropped from 25% of total health expenditure in 1990 to 15% in 1999 (UNCTC 2003). Table 20 summarizes the health facilities from 1990 to 2002. Although the number of hospital and health center beds per 1,000 people remains the same as in 1995, the number of clinics and maternal and childcare facilities declined between 1995 and 2002.

Table 20. Health Services from 1990 to 2002

Indicator	Unit	1990	1995	2000	2002
Total hospitals/health centers	unit	62,126	67,460	65,944	63,858
Maternity and child care hospitals and centers	unit	3,148	3,179	2,598	3,067
Number of doctors/1,000 people	doctor	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.5
Number of hospital and health center beds/1,000 people	unit	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3
Utilization rate of hospital beds	%	80.9	66.9	60.8	57.4

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2004 (Table 1.2, p. 9).

The fee-based approach has tended to increase regional disparities in health care and has affected poor people’s access to affordable and quality health services. The increasing charges for deliveries in hospitals and the deterioration in the quality of services following cuts in health sector budgets has undermined affordable, quality health services.

The Government has developed policies and initiated programs to reduce maternal and child mortality rates effectively in poverty-stricken areas in the western PRC. The 1995 MCH Law is a major step forward in attempts to improve health care for women and children. The law states that women must receive instruction on healthy pregnancy and that pregnant and post-partum women should receive advice on hygiene, nutrition, and psychology. The Program for the Development of Chinese Women (2001–2010) issued targets to (i) intensify the construction of obstetric services and create conditions for childbirth in hospitals to bring down the MMR nationwide by one fourth of its level in 2000; (ii) raise the rate of childbirth in hospitals in rural areas to 65% and the rate of childbirth in hospitals by pregnant high-risk women to over 90%; and (iii) in areas remote from hospitals, ensure that 95% of deliveries outside hospitals are attended by trained midwives.

The MCH Department in the Ministry of Public Health provides overall direction for the delivery of MCH services. It introduced the “Baby Friendly Initiative” in 1993 to promote baby-friendly hospitals and breast-feeding. NWCCW, together with the Ministries of Health and Finance, implemented a project to reduce maternal and child mortality rates and eliminate neonatal tetanus. In 2004, budget from the central government, supplemented by provincial budgets for special purposes, was allocated to continue the project, covering 1,000 counties of the central and

western PRC. At the same time, NWCCW and the ACWF's Women Development Fund jointly initiated the "Maternal Health Expressway" project, which provided vehicles to project areas and free medical services to people in poverty-stricken areas. A new government plan encourages provincial authorities to make at least CNY10 per person available for health, and for the central government to provide an additional CNY10 per person for rural health care. Although issues of MCH have not yet been fully considered in this plan, it provides a good opportunity to combine current policies and programs to improve MCH in poor areas.

3. Reproductive Health: Family Planning and HIV/AIDS

The reproductive health concept has greatly influenced the focuses of the family planning policy. In 1995, the Government changed the program from an administration-oriented to a service-oriented approach, from population control only to promotion of reproductive health. The Ministry of the State Family Planning Commission initiated the "Quality of Care in Family Planning" project and has continued to integrate development issues such as poverty relief, social security for the elderly, and family planning services for migrants.

New issues have emerged concerning women's reproductive health. Abortions have been increasing among young unmarried women in urban areas. Women aged 20–29 have the most abortions, and 23–65% of the women having abortions are unmarried, depending on the region. In major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin, about 65% of abortions in 2004 involved unmarried women (*Shanghai Daily* 6 Jun. 2005). The high abortion rate is due to the increasing incidence of premarital sex and lack of contraceptive knowledge and appropriate counseling and services (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA] and China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation [CFPA] 2004).

The lack of women doctors has contributed to the reluctance of affected women to seek treatment. Migrant women also have issues of reproductive health. Although migration has empowered women to some extent in terms of self-confidence and gaining relevant skills, "migration exposes women to unprotected sex, increased abortion, and increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases—including HIV/AIDS—due to lower access to needed services at the destination" (Zheng and Gu 2004, 68; Bu Wei 2003). Thus, more local reproductive health and family planning agencies should provide services appropriate to migrants.

The Government spelled out national goals for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in "China's Mid- and Long-Term Plan for Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS" and "China's Plan of Action for the Control and Prevention of HIV/AIDS (2001–2005)." The National Working Committee for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment under the State Council was established in 2004, with ACWF as a member. The State Council issued "Instructions on Concrete Steps for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment" in 2004, and held a national conference on HIV/AIDS. The Infectious Disease Prevention and Treatment Law has been revised, providing a legal framework for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Since 2003, the following services have been available free of charge: provision of antiretroviral drugs, anonymous testing for HIV/AIDS, services to prevent mother-to-child transmission, tuition for AIDS orphans, and care and support for poor people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

HIV/AIDS infection is a serious problem across rural and urban areas. In the PRC, women still are a minority of the HIV/AIDS-infected population, but their numbers are increasing. According to the Joint Assessment of HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment, and Care, the proportion of female HIV cases has increased rapidly in recent years in the PRC (SCAIDS 2004). This reflects the increase in cases reported among former blood and plasma donors and more HIV cases found among sex workers.

The rate of infected females has continued to rise since 1998 (Table 21). In 2004, 39% of the total HIV cases were in females (SCAIDS 2004). The main HIV transmission route is through injection in drug use, with the proportion of sexually transmitted and mother-to-child transmission increasing in recent years. HIV/AIDS incidences have recently increased among sex workers and have shown a slight increase among pregnant women.

Table 21. Reported Additional Numbers of People Infected by HIV, 2000–2002

Year	Number		Total	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Number (people)				
2000	1,008	4,193	3,681	18,836
2001	1,866	6,353	5,547	25,189
2002	2,492	7,332	8,039	32,521
Increase (%) (previous year = 100)				
2001	85.1	51.5	50.7	33.7
2002	33.5	15.4	44.9	29.1
Sex Distribution (%)				
2000	19.4	80.6	16.3	83.7
2001	22.7	77.3	18.0	82.0
2002	25.4	74.6	19.8	80.2

HIV = human immunodeficiency virus.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2004 (p.80, Table 6.9).

Some HIV/AIDS prevention and care issues have been linked with gender equality. A national expert team on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission has been established to conduct training, and a project on prevention of mother-to-child transmission was launched to provide HIV/AIDS virus testing and counseling service to women in areas of high HIV/AIDS prevalence. ACWF and the Central Communist Youth League have collaborated with the Ministry of Public Health to conduct “face-to-face” education activities for women and young people to raise their awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and to disseminate knowledge about the disease. ACWF conducted 480 training workshops for key staff at county and village levels. However, these interventions have not included sex workers, who are stigmatized by society. Given the recent increasing HIV prevalence rate among sex workers, there is an urgent need to provide them with information and services for safer practices.

A. Gender-based Violence

Domestic violence is one of the most prevalent problems plaguing Chinese women today. According to ACWF's 2004 survey, domestic violence occurs in about 30% of households and wives are victimized in at least 95% of the cases (Xinhua New Agency 5 March 2003). A survey by the Hongye Women's Hotline that documented 100 cases indicated that perpetrators and victims included many who were well-educated (*China Daily HK Edition* 19 Sept. 2003).

Domestic violence against women has gained the attention of NGOs, legal experts, and legislators. ACWF's 9th Congress in August 2003 placed it high on their agenda. At the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) in March 2003, 10 deputies recommended revising the Women's Law (1992) to safeguard women better from domestic violence. In June 2000, the China Law Society launched a project to combat domestic violence¹⁷ and established a nongovernment research center on domestic violence.

Local initiatives include developing regulations on preventing domestic violence and providing support services for women victims. Some services have been set up in 16 provinces and at local levels. In 2003, the first domestic violence hospital, Tiejing Hospital, was set up in Beijing (Wu and Moller 2003). In 2003 in Tianjing, a northern port city, women's federations in cooperation with the Civil Affairs Bureau have set up a sanctuary to provide abused women with asylum, legal advice, and medical service (Xinhua News Agency 25 April 2003). However, such services are rare in the PRC and can meet only a small fraction of the demand.

Women now are more aware of how sexual harassment is defined (James Liu 2002). *Beijing Youth Daily*, one of the PRC's most influential newspapers, surveyed 200 Beijing female residents aged 25–45, with at least junior college education. Of the respondents, 70% had been subjected to sexual harassment and half of them had protested. There have been a few successful cases of litigation against sexual harassment recently, and individual gender scholars and advocates, as well as women's federations, are calling for the integration of clauses against sexual harassment in the revision of the Women's Law. Violence against women has exacerbated their difficulties with gaining equality in health and development. All these factors pose challenges for improving women's health and achieving gender equality.

B. Trafficking

Data on trafficking in women and children are hard to collect because the practice is illegal and hidden. Reports on rescued women indicate that trafficking is occurring regularly. From 2000–2002, police rescued 25,116 women who had been kidnapped and sold—this figure was only part of the total, as many cases may not have been discovered. The increased number of rescued women

¹⁷ The project is named "Counter measure Intervention of Combating Domestic Violence Against Women."

victims, from 17,973 in 2000 to 30,560 in 2002 (NBS 2004, 98), suggests that trafficking in women is rising.

In the PRC, trafficking is generally from less developed to more developed areas with higher living standards. Women are trafficked primarily for prostitution and marriage. Traffickers usually entice victims to migrate voluntarily with false promises of good, well-paying jobs. Women who have been trafficked to poor areas normally are sold as wives to poor and unmarried men. In some areas, local authorities do not assist the victims because they have sympathy for men who cannot find wives. In recent years, increasing numbers of women have been brought to work in entertainment businesses (NWCCW 2004). Many of them are vulnerable to being forced into prostitution.¹⁸

Cross-border trafficking is increasing, for purposes such as commercial sexual exploitation, forced marriage, and forced labor (NWCCW 2004). For example, some southwest Chinese women are trafficked into Malaysia and Thailand, while the PRC is also a destination for trafficked women, e.g., from the Russian Federation and Ukraine.¹⁹ In Yanbian, for example, where men outnumber women, ethnic Korean men seek North Korean women to marry.²⁰

The PRC has made efforts to combat trafficking and has criminalized it. The 1992 Women's Law and other legislations explicitly prohibit trafficking. The Labor Law, Law of Protection of the Minor, Law on the Protection of Juvenile Delinquency, Marriage Law, and Adoption Law all prohibit trafficking. The Government has issued policies to protect women from being kidnapped and trafficked. The National Program for the Development of Chinese Women (2001–2010) and the National Program of Action for Child Development (2002–2010) include strategies to combat trafficking in women and children.

As human trafficking has become a professional and well-organized trade, the PRC has ratified relevant conventions such as the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Convention on the Child, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The PRC has been actively involved in collaborative programs with international organizations and NGOs. ACWF has conducted a project to counter trafficking and violence against women and children with UNICEF since 1999. It also worked closely with the ILO International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) and on the Yunan portion of the ILO Mekong Sub-regional project to combat trafficking in children and Women; and implemented a community-based project to prevent trafficking of women and children with Save the Children-United Kingdom (SC-UK), in Yunnan.

¹⁸ Associated Press, 8 Jan. 1998.

Available: www.catwininternational.org/factbook.China%20and%20Hong%20Kong.php.

¹⁹ Global Survival Network, Vladimir Isachenkov, "Soviet Women Slavery Flourishes," Associated Press, 6 November 1997. Available: www.catwininternational.org/factbook.China%20and%20Hong%20Kong.php.

²⁰ Andrew Higgins, "Straight on for China and Karaoke Slavery," *The Observer*, 15 March 1998. Available: www.catwininternational.org/factbook.China%20and%20Hong%20Kong.php.

Nevertheless, the PRC faces many new challenges in combating trafficking. The continuing skewed sex ratio at birth will exacerbate trafficking in women for marriage and other purposes in the future. After the PRC's entry into the WTO and its close integration into the world market, cross-border trafficking is likely to increase. Thus, the PRC needs to strengthen the enforcement of relevant laws and regulations; improve data collection and research on trafficking; and decrease poverty to reduce the vulnerability of women, build sound social protection, and promote gender equality.

C. Gender Aspects of Social Security System Reform

During the economic transition, new forms of vulnerability emerged. In urban areas, many workers faced unemployment. Thus, the state has accelerated the reform of social security. As the core of the social security system, social insurance includes old age, unemployment, medical, work-related injury, and maternity insurance.

The gender impacts of the social security system reform at the national level are hard to assess because official gender-disaggregated data are inadequate to show differences between men and women. However, the results of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) survey show a gender gap in insurance coverage, as a greater percentage of women was not covered by insurance than of men (NBS 2004). The greatest gap is in coverage with occupational injury insurance (Table 22).

1. Pension

The coverage of basic insurance for the elderly has expanded from state- and collective-owned enterprises to other enterprises. The security, rights, and interests of employees in non-state enterprises are also guaranteed. At the end of 2003, 38.60 million retirees were participating in the basic old-age insurance program. However, because women normally retire 5 years earlier and have been employed in lower paid sectors or industries, they receive less than men (Liu Bohong 2004, Jia 2005). Thus, the living standards of retired women tend to be lower than those of retired men.

Table 22. Participation in Insurance Schemes

Insurance Type	Coverage (% paid by work unit, in 2000)		
	Men	Women	Gap
Pension	64.7	59.3	5.4
Unemployment insurance	33.7	29.7	4.0
Medical insurance	56.4	47.7	9.7
Work injury insurance	47.4	37.2	10.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2004, 53.

2. Unemployment Insurance

The State Council has promulgated the Regulations on Unemployment Insurance, which aims to speed the improvement of the unemployment insurance system to guarantee the basic livelihood of employees who lose their jobs, help them find new jobs, and assist people laid off from SOEs. In 1999, the Government effectively standardized and improved the unemployment

insurance system.²¹ All enterprises and institutions in urban areas and their employees must participate in the unemployment insurance program, under which employers pay 2% of their total wage bill and individuals pay 1% of their wages as premiums. When the unemployment insurance funds in areas that have participated in the social pool program are not enough to cover the need, the shortfall is made up by unemployment insurance regulating funds or subsidized by local financial budgets.

Although the benefits of the unemployment insurance are intended to trickle down to women, they have not benefited equally with men (NBS 2005). Because women are concentrated in sectors or industries with lower pay and less stable working hours, their accumulated and pooled unemployment insurance will be lower than that of men. Thus, they are disadvantaged in the unemployment welfare system based on performance.

3. Medical Insurance

In 1998, based on previous trials, the Government promoted a national reform of the basic medical insurance system for urban employees.²² The reform combines a social pool and personal accounts. The funds for basic medical insurance come mainly from premiums paid by employers and employees: the premium paid by the employer is about 6% of the total wage bill and that paid by the employee is 2% of that person's wage. Retirees are exempted from paying the premiums. The individuals' premiums and 30% of the premiums paid by the employers go to the personal accounts, and the remaining 70% goes to the social pool program funds. In principle, medical insurance is managed locally.

However, the coverage of medical insurance is too limited to benefit most of the PRC's population. Almost two-thirds of total health expenditure is out-of-pocket payment, and 80% of the rural population and 45% of the urban population had no health insurance by 2003 (UNCTC 2004). Although there is no sex-disaggregated data to show gender disparity in benefiting from the medical insurance, women tend to be the last to use outpatient services when sick, due to financial constraints and increasing costs of health care.

4. Minimum Standard of Living Support

A minimum standard of living system has been established in all cities and county towns, providing a basic guarantee for residents whose families' per capita income is below the lowest local standard. Since 1998, the Government has provided a basic livelihood guarantee for people laid off from SOEs, unemployment insurance, and a minimum living standard for urban residents. Laid-off people can receive a basic living allowance for up to 3 years. If they remain unemployed, they can receive unemployment insurance payments. If the per capita income of a family is below the local minimum living standard, they can apply for the minimum living standard guarantee for urban residents. By the end of 2004, 22.05 million urban residents, including women, were

²¹ Contained in the Regulations on Unemployment Insurance.

²² Titled "The Decision on Establishing a Basic Medical Insurance System for Urban Employees."

receiving minimum subsistence allowances. Almost all those who needed such help were covered (SCIO 2005).

However, family members may not pool resources and benefit equally, and heads of households (usually men) may take their opinions to represent the interests of the entire household. Thus, the assumption on which the welfare system rests has overlooked the household power structure and interests pertaining to access to and control over resources. When resources are scarce, households tend to favor boys over girls in the allocation of nutrition and husbands will not necessarily share all their income with their wives. This tends to marginalize women further. Women constitute a high percentage of laid-off people, and those above 40 years old with minimal skills will rely on minimal living insurance because they are unlikely to find jobs. Thus, the minimal living pension that uses the household as a unit promotes women's dependence on family and undermines the policy of protecting women's economic rights. Table 23 shows that in 2000 more women than men depended on family support when unemployed.

Table 23. Major Living Sources of Unemployed People in 2002

Item	Percentage Distribution		Sex Distribution	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Retirement pensions	12.5	24.2	44.8	55.2
Government basic living expenses	2.7	4.1	50.7	49.3
Support from other family members	80.1	63.0	66.6	33.4
Property income	0.6	1.0	47.2	52.8
Security	0.1	0.1	50.9	49.1
Others	4.1	7.7	45.7	54.3
Total	100.0	100.0	61.1	38.9

Source: The People's Republic of China population census, 2000: National Bureau of Statistics 2002.

5. Maternity Insurance

In 1988, the state introduced a reform of the maternity insurance system in some areas. The premiums are paid by the participating employers, and should not be more than 1% of the total wage bill. Individual employees do not pay premiums. Employees giving birth to babies may enjoy a childbirth allowance for 90 days according to law. Women employees who have given birth to babies or had abortions are to maintain their original wages and positions, and be reimbursed for their medical expenses according to related regulations. At the end of 2003, 36.55 million employees were covered by maternity insurance. By the end of 2004, it had been introduced to 28 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central government, with 43.84 million employees, or 60% of all urban employees covered (SCIO 2005).

In 2003, the All China Federation of Trade Unions assessed the implementation of the maternity insurance in 20 provinces. The report indicates progress as well as difficulties. The most serious challenge is that the payments from the maternal insurance have not kept up with the costs of deliveries. Women who give birth have to pay most of the charges for better services.

Gender issues also exist in aspects such as insurance for work-related injuries, social welfare, social relief, housing security, and social security in rural areas. However, gender issues have only been treated as a separate program in the current social security system reform, and have not been integrated into the whole social security system. For instance, the maternity and child-care schemes are separated from other social security programs, and gender issues have not been accounted for in the basic old-age insurance system, the unemployment insurance system, and the basic medical insurance system. Thus, the social security system tends to ignore the different concerns and interests of men and women.

Chapter 5 Policies on and Institutional Environment for Gender Equality

A. Regulatory and Legal Framework

High-level commitment to gender equality is reflected in the Chinese Constitution and in many of the policies and legislative measures adopted by the Government. The PRC ratified the UN CEDAW in 1980 and reports periodically to the UN on its progress in implementing CEDAW stipulations. By 2005, the PRC had submitted five reports.

1. Types of Laws Concerning Women's Rights

The PRC has established an extensive legal system for the protection of women's rights and the promotion of women's development. The system takes the Constitution as its basis and the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women as the core. Relevant clauses relating to women's interests and rights have been integrated into other laws and regulations crossing sectors and areas (Appendixes 4 and 5).

During the reform since the 1980s, many legal statutes have included a clause or article stipulating men and women are to be treated equally, or have described how the rights of women are to be protected.²³ The legal statutes have facilitated gender equality in the PRC's transition from a centrally planned to a market economy. For example, the revised Marriage Law has addressed the protection of women's property rights to divorce, which provides strong support for women in a time of high incidence of divorce. Similarly, the Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees (1998) has introduced a clause to suggest an appropriate proportion of female leaders in the village committees, which provided a rationale for local agencies to set quotas for women in village elections. The most progressive is perhaps the Population and Family Planning Law (2001), which has explicitly made the ethic of improving women's health and elevating their social status as a guiding principle (Article 3) and subsequently stipulated specific regulations in different sections.

However, the effectiveness of the clauses in these statutes was compromised by several factors. First, some of the laws and regulations, such as relevant clauses in the Maternal and Child Care Law (1994) and Labor Law (1994), were structured around a woman's reproductive role, promoting the notion that a woman's primary responsibility is to give birth, care for young children, and attend to reproductive capacities. Second, the clauses are not enough: they do not

²³ The laws include the Inheritance Law (1985), Civil Law (1986), Compulsory Education Law (1986), Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases (1989), Law on Adoption (1991), Law for the Protection of Minors (1991), Maternal and Child Care Law (1994), Labor Law (1994), Election Law (1995), Criminal Procedural Law (1996), Criminal Law (1997), Organic Law of the Urban Residents' Committees (1998), Organic Law of the Villagers' Committees (1998), Marriage Law (revised in 2001), Population and Family Planning Law (2001), Trade Union Law (2001), and Law on Rural Land Contracts (2003).

contain binding force in reality. The relaxed language of the law, without any effective sanctions, makes its implementation difficult, and thus, will most likely fail to have the desired impact.

2. Enforcement of Laws and Regulations

Although the legal framework addresses the rights and interests of women, it has not yet been sufficiently translated into action in the PRC. Relevant surveys and studies have indicated a wide gap between the definition of regulations in laws and the implementation (ACWF 2002b), which indicates that the position of women in practice is not as protected as envisaged in the legislation (*China Population Today* 2003).

Implementation of laws and policies. In practice, effort has been made in using the Constitution to protect women’s rights. The most groundbreaking case was a successful civil suit in 1995 on discriminatory village rules (*cun gui min yue*) against women’s entitlement to land allocation upon marriage. Nevertheless, the text of the Constitution has not been sufficiently binding on courts in the cases of violation of women’s rights. Moreover, in cases where the courts rule in favor of equality, it is often impossible to have the judgments enforced.²⁴

The Women’s Law has played an important role in protecting women’s rights and interests. ACWF (2002b)²⁵ noted that specific achievements include heightened awareness of the law, enhanced awareness of women’s rights and gender equality, and protection of women’s legal rights and interests. However, problems remain. At the provincial level, 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central government have formulated their own regulations for implementing the Women’s Law, and have endeavored to ensure that the protection of women’s rights and interests is reflected when drafting local laws and regulations. However, in some localities, serious problems remain, such as violation of women’s labor rights, domestic violence against women, and low representation of women in the leadership. The main factors that inhibit the enforcement of the law include ways to circumvent it and law agencies not knowing the law. Poor awareness among the public about the law and inadequate legal publicity were also noted as influential factors (ACWF 2002b).

Gender bias in the judiciary. The PRC is improving its judicial system and steadily pushing reforms of the criminal, civil, administrative litigation, and legal aid systems. However, the law enforcement mechanism on gender equality has not been standardized, and gender awareness has not been promoted among judges and law enforcers. The lack of legal aid is a barrier for poor women in realizing their legal rights.

²⁴ In 1995, plaintiffs Wang Yulun and Li Erxian sued Wujin Township in Sichuan for violation of their daughter’s census registration and land tenure rights by marriage and successfully won the case by using the Constitution (de Silva-de Alwis 2003a).

²⁵ In 2002, 10 years after the Women’s Law was put into effect, a national working committee coordinated by the All China Women’s Federation (ACWF), conducted a nationwide sampling survey to assess the implementation of the Law. See the “Survey to Assess Implementation of Women’s Law”, in *China Population Today*, August 2003. pp. 7–12. Chinese version is available at www.china.com.cn/zhuanti/241695.htm. Accessed on 24 June 2005.

Women encounter difficulties in the process of litigation and asserting claims due to the lack of an established grievance procedure. A lawsuit of infringement on women's rights can be filed only if there is a substantive and procedural basis for it in other areas of the law. Women's rights in the areas of marriage, divorce, and property were reported to have faced procedural obstacles despite legal guarantees of equality (ACWF ed. 2004).

To cope with the difficulties, the Women's Law assigns women's federations to monitor law enforcement. By 2004, 23 of the provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities and over 300 prefectures (cities) had established agencies to coordinate efforts to protect women's and children's rights and interests. By 2005, nearly 2,000 courts especially tasked to protect women's rights and collegiate bench panels had been established in the law court system, and over 10,000 women cadres had been invited as special jurors (State Council 2005).

While the network and joint conference coordinated by women's federations have played an important role in enforcing the implementation of laws, women's federations only have the power of persuasion when making proposals to government bureaucracy. They cannot enforce directly or intervene in instances of a government official's failure to investigate a woman's complaint. Nevertheless, ACWF has an important role in identifying cases and seeking legal aid for women victims. In general, the lack of enforcement mechanisms inhibits the effectiveness of the laws and regulations on women's rights.

The lack of gender awareness among law enforcers has affected their enforcement of laws relating to women's rights. They tend to view domestic violence as a private matter. Public security agencies often are reluctant to investigate domestic violence, and some judges have delayed or even refused to review domestic violence in court (de Silva-de Alwis 2003b). Such attitudes affect the effectiveness in gathering evidence, filing reports, investigating, protecting victims, and punishing the perpetrators. Gender awareness training has not been fully integrated into the main curriculums for upgrading relevant public officials' skills.

Insufficient legal aid prevents women from attaining their rights. Limited government subsidies are a chief factor hampering legal aid for women; another is the lack of qualified law professionals. Lawyers' motivation to provide legal aid service has been low, although the Government had stipulated clauses and regulations in laws and policies, e.g.,

- the annual quota in the Law of Lawyers (1996), for lawyers to provide legal aid for the poor as one third of their legal cases;
- the Ministry of Justice's 1996 "Notice on Protecting Women's Rights and Interests and Providing Legal Aid Service for Women," which stipulates that legal aid institutes, law firms, notaries, and local legal services should not shift responsibility and delay cases concerning the violation of women's rights, and requires reduced or no fees for female litigants who are living in economic difficulties; and

- the 2003 decision of the Supreme People’s Court allowing payment of litigants with financial difficulties to be reduced, exempted, or delayed.²⁶

Women’s organizations have played an important role in providing legal aid for women. ACWF and local women’s federations had officially opened 2,700 legal aid centers for women and agencies for protecting women’s rights in 2004 (State Council 2005). However, the centers are generally insufficiently staffed and funded. Legal aid centers have been opened by law schools, such as the prominent Peking University’s Center for Women’s Law Studies and Legal Services, founded in 1995 as the first NGO for providing legal aid to women. However, such centers face funding constraints and find it difficult to cope with the growing demand for services by poor women.

In addition, social support such as shelters and safety nets to protect victims from domestic violence is lacking. In cooperation with women’s federations, some local judicial departments have established centers for assistance and action (State Council 2005). However, there is a tremendous lack of such support for women victims in need, and financial constraints and shortage of qualified staff hamper their effectiveness.

3. Women, the Legal System, and Legal Literacy

The number of women in the legal system has increased slowly since 1995 (Table 24). In 2002, women constituted only 3.6% of chief prosecutors, 7.9% of assistant chief prosecutors, and 22.1% of all prosecutors. Only 14% of lawyers were female—a decrease from 18% in 1995—and 21% of the judges—an increase from 17% in 1995 (NBS 2004).

Women prosecutors, judges, and lawyers are not necessarily concerned with women’s rights and interests. However, they are more aware of women’s experience and more likely than men to work for women’s rights. Many women legislators do their best to introduce bills and pass legislation dealing with the expansion of women’s rights.²⁷ Box 1 lists the bills introduced by female legislators during the NPC session in 2003.

Table 24. Percentage of Prosecutors Who Were Women in 1995–2002 (%)

Level	1995	1998	2000	2002
Chief Prosecutor	1.8	2.9	2.8	3.6
Assistant Chief Prosecutor	5.0	6.0	6.4	7.9
Prosecutor	13.5	16.1	17.4	21.9
Assistant Prosecutor	27.3	28.1	29.0	30.7
Total	17.0	18.1	19.2	22.1

Source: Adapted from National Bureau of Statistics 2004 (Table 8.1, p. 94).

²⁶ In 2003, the Supreme People’s Court issued the “Decision on Providing Judicial Aid to Litigants with Real Financial Difficulties.”

²⁷ For gender distribution in the National People’s Congress, see Chapter 6.

Box 1. The Aims of Bills on Women's Rights Introduced by Women Legislators

1. Amending the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women.
2. Enhancing labor protection of women employees in nonpublic enterprises.
3. Establishing a law on the equality of employment opportunities.
4. Advocating the promotion of employment for female college students.
5. Improving health care during pregnancy and confinement periods, in western, poverty-stricken areas.
6. Taking measures to reduce the negative effects of television on children.
7. Raising the levels and meeting the targets of women's participation in politics.
8. Reinforcing the All China Women's Federation's grassroots organizations.
9. Including the principle of gender equality in the Civil Servant Law.

Source: All China Women's Federation, 2003.

The growing participation of women in the legal profession and the judiciary is expected to improve the awareness of gender equality in these groups. However, given the limited number of women legislators, their voices are not strong enough, nor do they have great influence over law reform in general.

Heightened legal literacy was recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) to enhance women's human rights. The PRC has promulgated several 5-year legal literacy campaigns since 1986. The first (1986–1990) sought to disseminate elementary legal knowledge among Chinese citizens; the second (1991–1995) emphasized knowledge of specific laws; and the third (1996–2000) combined education about the legal system with practice, aiming to promote management and administration according to law in all spheres of life. The fourth campaign (2001–2005) aimed to further the previous efforts and to promote good governance according to the rule of law.

Innovations have been made to publicize women's rights and interests. For example, women's federations, networks, and groups put up advertisements in the streets, organized local plays on combating domestic violence, conducted research, published books and brochures, and organized discussions and trainings. The campaign moved beyond the previous narrow focus on women and was reoriented more broadly to male citizens, law enforcers, and local officials.

In summary, the PRC has achieved tremendous progress in the legal aspects of protecting women's rights and interests, and in building national machineries for women's rights. It needs to make concerted efforts to create and maintain a nondiscriminatory and gender-sensitive legal framework in line with the Outcome Document of the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UN General Assembly 2000a). Particular efforts need to be devoted to reviewing legislation, with a view to removing all discriminatory provisions and the legislative gaps that leave women and girls—in particular the unprotected and those with special needs—without effective recourse against discrimination.

B. National Policies

The Government of the PRC signed the Beijing Declaration and endorsed the Platform for Action at the 1995 UN World Conference, and is therefore committed to document and publicize progress toward key gender equality goals. The commitments have been shown in the State’s Basic Policy on Equality between Men and Women and Program for the Development of Chinese Women (1995–2000) and its successor in 2001–2010 (the New Program).

1. National Policies and Programs on Gender Equity

In 1995, President Jiang Zemin stated at the 4th World Conference for Women in Beijing: “Attaching great importance to the development and advancement of women, we in China have made gender equality a basic state policy in promoting social development. We are resolutely against any form of discrimination against women and have taken concrete steps to maintain and protect the equal status and rights of women in the country’s political, economic, and social life.”

Although a concrete framework for enforcing the state policy is lacking, gender advocates and women’s organizations in the PRC have used state policy to mobilize gender equality in many ways. ACWF, for example, is publicizing the basic state policy on men and women nationwide. It announced 2004 as the “Basic State Policy Publication Year” and designed a series of lectures or training for cadres at different levels. NWCCW (Appendix 6) intends to open gender training relevant to the implementation of the National Women Development Program (2001–2010) in the Central Party School, providing a good opportunity to raise gender awareness and to increase the capacities of policy makers in gender analysis and planning.

The New Program set general and major objectives that have covered the 6 areas of concerns of national development, the 12 critical areas of concern covered by the Platform for Action 1995, the 8 MDG goals, and the major goals in the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly in 2000. The six areas are (i) women and the economy, (ii) women in decision making and management, (iii) education of women, (iv) women and health, (v) women and law, and (vi) women and the environment. The promotion of women's development is the main theme throughout the document.

The six critical areas were broken down into 34 major goals and 100 policy proposals for the development of Chinese women in the first 10 years of the 21st century. These objectives and responsibilities have been allocated among 34 government and nongovernment institutions through relevant monitoring and evaluation systems with statistical indicators (Appendix 7). At the same time, 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities have formulated local programs for implementing the national program in light of the conditions and needs of women in those areas.²⁸

²⁸ See www.nwccw.gov.cn (Chinese language).

2. Program Implementation

In 2004 and 2005, the PRC submitted to the UN two major reports concerning its implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action 1995. The reports, together with the fifth and sixth regular reports on the implementation of CEDAW, provided a comprehensive account and analysis of the PRC's implementation of these international instruments.

The recent report highlighted the Government's efforts at reducing poverty among rural women, which significantly improved their living conditions and quality of life. Considerable progress has been achieved also in improving health care and reducing illiteracy among women. The progress has addressed challenges to Chinese women due to globalization. The main challenges are twofold: (i) In terms of the overall policy environment, problems remain in the mainstreaming of gender awareness, enforcement and judgment relating to women's rights, and government mechanisms to enhance women's status. (ii) The Government's report identified emergent issues that require urgent action, such as women's rights to contract land leasing; women's labor rights including labor protection for women and sex discrimination in employment and reemployment; the low representation of women in decision making at different levels; insufficient education for girls in western ethnic minority areas; little formal schooling for migrants' children; insufficient health care of rural and migrant women; and the prevalence of HIV/AIDs, domestic violence, and trafficking of women and children.

C. National Institutions Promoting Gender Equality

The national institutions on women's issues serve as venues or coordinators to put women's concerns on the policy agenda. The most important institutions in the PRC are NWCCW under the State Council and the Office of Workers, Youth, and Women (OWYW) in International and Judicial Affairs (IJA) of the NPC. At the same time, ACWF has played an important role in national women's affairs.

1. Government Institutions

In 1992, the Government created NWCCW under the State Council. NWCCW serves as a coordination agency in charge of work pertaining to women and children. The membership units have increased from the original 17 in 1992 to 33, composed of 28 government ministries and commissions and 5 NGOs.²⁹ Each member unit identifies a leader at the vice-minister level to be a council member, and appoints a liaison in charge of routine work. NWCCW has an office with eight full-time staff (State Council 2005). Local governments have established local working committees on women and children, with special officers and full-time staff, thus forming a network linking all the government organizations or departments.

²⁹ For the detailed membership and functions, see <http://cinfo.org.cn/language/english/aboutus/001.jsp>. Accessed on 22 Jun. 2005.

NWCCW's responsibilities include coordinating with relevant government departments to promote and implement laws and regulations and policy-related measures concerning women and children. NWCCW's most important mandates are to (i) draft, promulgate, and monitor the two national programs for women's and children's development; and (ii) push relevant government departments to implement the UN CEDAW and Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions on protecting women's and children's rights. NWCCW organized the drafting of two women's development programs (1995–2000 and 2001–2010). While implementing and monitoring the programs, it calls on line ministries to provide annual reports on their implementation.³⁰ NWCCW organizes meetings, seminars, and information exchanges and publishes an internal journal, *Messages on the Two Programs*.

However, like many national machineries for women, NWCCW has constraints concerning its location, resources, and staffing. Some local governments in poor areas are not able to set aside enough funds for women's development. A gap persists between the state's financial inputs and the actual demands for the development of women.

Other government departments that specifically deal with women's affairs include the Department of Community Health and MCH in the Ministry of Health and the Department of Medical Insurance and Department of Labor and Wages in the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.³¹

2. Legislative Bodies

NPC is an increasingly important venue to bring women's concerns into public policy given its increasing role in legislation and monitoring of the implementation of laws and regulations since the judicial reform in the 1980s. The Standing Committee of the NPC established OWYW in IJA at the central level of the NPC, and set up special departments to handle matters concerning women and children in the standing committees at the provincial level (Women and Youth Task Force of the NPC 1995). The main responsibilities are to (i) carry out the research for and draft terms of legislation on women, children, and juveniles and prepare for the discussion of the law cases; (ii) draft the opinion documents discussed by the NPC presidium; (iii) examine the status of implementation of the laws on women, children, and juveniles; (iv) check on the records of the local statutes of women, children, and juveniles; and (v) deal with letters from the public about women, children, and juveniles.

The National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) has set up the Working Group on Women and Children (WGWC). WGWC has an oversight function on the implementation of women's and children's rights and policy studies as well as gender review issues. As with NWCCW, OWYW and WGWC have resource and staffing constraints. The Government's recent administration reform, which was concerned about reducing staff and institutions covered by the state's budget, did not pay sufficient attention to the needs to strengthen NWCCW, OWYW, and WGWC.

³⁰ Annual reports (Chinese version) from line ministries are available at www.nwccw.gov.cn.

³¹ For their detailed functions see ACWF, Facts and Data, www.women.org.cn/english/english/fact/mulu.htm. Accessed on 27 Jun. 2005.

3. The All China Women's Federation

Mass organizations were set up by CPC. In the pre-reform period, ACWF and the Women Workers' Department in the All China Federation of Trade Unions were the only legitimate women's organizations and enjoyed little autonomy. ACWF, founded on 3 April 1949, encompasses women from various ethnicities and circles and aims to enhance women's liberation. ACWF's structure consists of local women's federations and group members. The local women's federations are set up according to the state administrative divisions. Women workers' committees of trade unions in factories, mines, and enterprises, and those at upper levels are all group members of ACWF. ACWF has about 60,000 federations at or above the township and neighborhood level, 980,000 women's representatives' committees and women's committees at the grassroots level, and 5,800 local group members at various levels. Appendixes 8 and 9 show ACWF's organizational structure.

ACWF has used its channels of access and resources to advocate for women's rights in policy at the macro level. For instance, ACWF has played an important role in creating a national machinery to enhance women's status. In response to a proposal from ACWF, in 1995 the Government set up and has continued to strengthen NWCCW. The inclusion of ACWF into the national policy machinery is highly significant. In this way, ACWF has developed links to national policy makers and has been able to exert greater influence on gender planning. For example, ACWF has promoted and participated in the process of drafting the Program for the Development of Chinese Women. As a member of NWCCW, ACWF also participated in the implementation, supervision, and evaluation of this program. It has put forward proposals for decision-making bodies in critical areas of concern, such as women's rights to contract land, amendments to the Marriage Law, reproductive insurance for women, and the prohibition of trafficking in women. ACWF initiated a proposal to NPC to amend the Women's Law. The amendment passed in 2005.

ACWF has played a crucial role in promoting gender equality in the PRC. It has a very effective network of staff, from the central level through provinces and cities to rural townships and villages. The staff conducts research, mobilizes public awareness on gender issues of all kinds, and provides direct services to women. ACWF has cooperated with government at various levels to investigate issues such as trafficking of women and children, women's labor rights, and the reemployment of laid-off workers. ACWF at the central level is increasingly effective as an advocate for women's rights and gender equality. It has overlapping leadership with NWCCW, and thus a direct line to policy making and legislation.

ACWF is important for enabling gender equality in the PRC. It is closely linked to NWCCW (currently, the vice president of ACWF is the director general of NWCCW, and NWCCW's secretariat is in the ACWF premises). In this and other ways, ACWF is increasingly acting as a channel for policy and legislative advocacy. It has played a significant role in promoting women's rights and interests in national policies and laws, and is involved in every issue in gender equality in the PRC, ranging from poverty reduction and reducing women's illiteracy to domestic violence against women. ACWF functions as a quasi-government agency (and is circumscribed by its close association with the Government) and is a major stakeholder in women's issues in the country.

Since 1979, ACWF has cooperated in a variety of projects with UN organizations and bodies such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNDP, UNICEF, United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and United Nations University. ACWF has implemented projects in cooperation with government institutions or international NGOs covering such topics as poverty elimination, education, health, and women's interests and rights. ACWF has completed over 1,000 projects mainly in ethnic group areas and poor mountainous regions in the PRC.

ACWF has placed considerable emphasis on women’s economic development through access to employment and the marketplace. At the grassroots level, ACWF has organized a campaign for rural women to acquire literacy and learn technical skills, and to emulate each other for higher achievements and contributions.³² ACWF has also called on women in urban areas to work hard and strive for achievements.³³ Women’s federations at the local level have successfully coordinated and implemented programs such as microcredit in rural areas and incubator projects in urban areas. ACWF continues to call on women to contribute more in social, moral, and family affairs to safeguard moral values and stability.³⁴ The focus aims to enhance women’s participation in economic development in contrast to a “gender equality” approach that emphasizes the need to change unequal gender relations between men and women.

Like other national organizations, ACWF faces challenges of organizational capacity. It needs constant internal reform to adjust with the present rapid economic and social developments. It needs to continue to broaden its collaboration and networking with other groups’ concerned with gender equality.

D. Gender, National Representation, and Public Administration

In recent years, the PRC Government has adopted a series of measures to promote women’s participation in politics. In 2001, the National Program for the Development of Chinese Women (2001–2010) issued objectives and working targets for women’s entry at different levels of administrative management. Relevant clauses have been integrated into laws or regulations, such as the Village Election Law (1998) and the policies issued by the CPC’s Organization Department. About 36% of all PRC government officials are women, and women held 22% of the NPC seats in 2002, which is comparable to the proportion in developed countries.

1. National Representation

Important national representative bodies include the Central Committee of CPC, NPC, and CPPCC (the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of CPC). Table 25 gives the percentage of women in political institutions at the national level. In general, women’s presence in national-level political institutions has stagnated.

³² The campaign is called “Double Learning and Double Emulation.”

³³ The campaign is called “Women’s Achievement in Their Work.”

³⁴ This has been reflected in the continuing ACWF continuing policy called “Five Good Civilized Families.”

The National People's Congress. The Constitution empowers NPC with the rights of legislation, decision, supervision, election, and removal. The Standing Committee is NPC's permanent and highest body. Its chair, vice-chair, secretary-general, and members may not assume state administrative, judicial, or prosecuting posts. The members of NPC and its Standing Committee hold 5-year terms.

NPC is gradually gaining a large role in the PRC's political system. In recent years, it has been responsible for reforms to make the Chinese legislative process more representative and transparent. Since the economic reform in 1978, NPC and its Standing Committee have passed 451 laws, interpretations of laws, and legal decisions (SCIO 2004d).

However, the number of women NPC deputies decreased to 20.2% (604 of the 2,381 members) in the 10th NPC (2003–2008), from 21.8% in the 9th (1998–2003). Although women's representation on the NPC Standing Committee increased slightly (0.5%), women comprise only 13.2% of the members of this top legislative working body in the 10th NPC. Three women are vice-chairs of the Standing Committee. However, there is no guarantee that they will be succeeded by women. The NPC Standing Committee guarantees "appropriate representation of ethnic minorities" (Article 65, Constitution, 2004), but not of women.

Table 25. Proportion of Women in Political Decision-making Positions
(%, 1997–2000 and 2002–2003)

Organization and Level		Percentage of Women in 1997–2000 (%)	Percentage of Women in 2002–2003 (%)
CPC	CPC Central Committee	6.5 (at the 15 th session, in 1997)	2.5 (5 women, 16 th session, in 2002)
	Members and alternative members of the CPC Central Committee	7.3 (15 th session)	7.6 (16 th session)
	Representatives of CPC National Congress	16.8 (15 th session)	18.1 (16 th session)
NPC	Members of Standing Committee	12.7 (9 th session, in 1998)	13.2 (10 th session, in 2003)
	NPC delegates	21.8 (9 th session)	20.2 (10 th)
CPPCC	Members of Standing Committee	10.0 (9 th session, in 1998)	11.4 (10 th session, in 2003)
	Members of CPPCC conference	15.5 (9 th session)	16.8 (10 th session)
SC, ministries: provinces, prefectures, counties, etc.	Members of SC	5	20
	Ministerial and provincial-level leaders	8.0 (in 2000)	8.3 (in 2002)
	Prefecture-level leaders (director general)	10.8 (in 2000)	11.7 (in 2002)
	County-level leaders	15.1 (in 2000)	16.1 (in 2002)
	Cadres	36.2 (in 2000)	37.4 (in 2002)

CPPCC = Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; CPC = Communist Party of China; NPC = National People's Congress; SC = State Council.

Sources: National Bureau of Statistics, 2004 and 1999.

The distribution of female deputies of the 10th NPC varies across provinces and autonomous regions, ranging from 30.5% in Beijing to 11.9% in Jilin, a northeast province with heavy industry (*China Women's News* 5 Mar. 2003). The percentage of females in top government posts has been dropping compared with other countries: the PRC ranked 24th in 2000, 28th in 2002, and dropped further to 41st by 2005 (Inter-Parliament Union 2005).

The Communist Party of China. Few women sit on the CPC Central Committee. Women's participation at the CPC Central Committee peaked at 10% in 1973 and has been decreasing since the end of the 1980s, particularly after the Economic Reform in 1978. At the 16th CPC Congress in November 2002, 18.1% of representatives were women (up 1.3% from the previous session). However, only five women were elected to the CPC Central Committee, representing 2.5% percent of the 198 seats, a decline from 4% percent in the previous Congress. Since the late 1980s, no woman has sat on CPC's all-important Politburo Standing Committee (Women's Studies Institute of China [WSIC] 2004). There has never been a female general secretary of the Central Committee. Although the percentage of women members in CPC increased by 3.3%, women members only constituted 17.8% of the total members of CPC in 2002 (NBS 2004, 83).

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. CPPCC comprises eight political parties, eight mass organizations, and others (including the All China Federation of Trade Unions, ACWF, and the Communist Youth League). CPPCC provides political consultation for the state. CPPCC members participate in activities (including national economic and social development planning, monitoring and evaluation of implementation of laws and regulations, drafting of major national laws, and major issues involving people's livelihood) through plenary sessions, standing committees, and meetings of the chairpersons of the CPPCC National Committee. The proportion of women deputies in CPPCC rose from 15.5% at the 9th session (1998–2003) to 16.8% at the 10th (2003–2008).

Efforts have been made to increase women's representation. The National Development Program for Chinese Women (2001–2010) stipulates that the proportion of women deputies of the NPC and CPPCC is not allowed to decline from session to session. During the sessions of the NPC and CPPCC, proposals called for the ratio of female deputies to the 10th NPC to rise to 25% from 21% (CIIC 9 Mar. 2002), and for the ratio of female deputies to the 10th CPPCC Congress to rise above 20% (*China Women's News* 5 Mar. 2002).

2. Women in Public Administration

During the past 20 years, efforts to reform the state's administrative management system and personnel system have continued. During this process, women have faced new challenges with fewer posts and greater competition in recruitment and promotion. Only a few women have climbed to high echelons of public administration.

In 2002, 37.4% of civil servants were female. However, very few of them were in the principal decision-making positions: women constituted only 8.3% of the ministerial and provincial leaders, 11.7% of directors general or vice-directors general among prefecture-level leaders, and

16.1% of the total county directors or vice-directors. Only 5.4% of administrative heads are women. At the highest public administrative level, only one of the top five is a woman—the Vice-President for the State Council in 2003. Of the 28 principal ministers, only 1 was a woman—and she is both vice president of the State Council and principal minister in charge of health issues. In 2005, a woman was appointed principal governor for Ningxia Province; she is the only female principal governor in the PRC. Thus, the proportions for women’s representation in government are still far from the 30% proposed by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

Despite women’s increased participation in administrative management, few women are found in high-level decision-making positions or in the national representative bodies such as NPC. Therefore, they cannot make much impact on women’s issues. In public administration, women face challenges such as fewer posts and fiercer competition for them. At the local level, only 1% of directors of village committees are women, which is the lowest representation at any level of politics, and entrenched gender norms are still impeding the effective participation of rural women in village government.

3. Decentralization and Local Governance

The competitive village election is the most significant political reform in the PRC since the 1980s. By 1996, all provinces, autonomous regions, and cities under central jurisdiction had held at least one round of village elections. The Village Committee Organization Law (1998) notes that “the village committee should have an appropriate number of women.” Although elections to village committees and assemblies have enhanced political participation in rural areas, women are conspicuously absent in village government and their participation in village management is much less than that of men. The PRC also introduced the election of members of the urban resident committees (URCs). Women’s outcomes from urban elections are much higher than in rural areas.

Low percentage of women in village committees. Achieving the goal of equal numerical representation in village decision making is still a long way off. In most village committees, the number of women representatives has yet to reach the critical mass of 30% in decision-making bodies as advocated by the UN and the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995. The Report of the Second Sampling Survey on the Social Status of Chinese Women in 2001 notes that, in a sample of 1,178 village committees, 75% have women committee members; however, very few are elected to chair village committees or head the local CPC branch: only 1% of the heads of village committees are female (ACWF and NBS 2002).

Gender division of labor in managing village public affairs. The work of village leaders has been divided so that women are assigned responsibility for “soft” areas such as family planning and other portfolios deemed compatible with their gender roles, and men are allocated “hard” portfolios such as economic development, given leadership positions in rural administrative bodies, and tend to have the final say in village political life. These divisions serve to perpetuate gender stereotypes and exclude women from most decision making in the critical areas of village development. This limits women’s opportunities to broaden their experience in political issues.

Women in urban resident committees. The URCs were created in the 1950s to serve the needs of urban people. After the Economic Reform in 1978, URCs have taken on social services that had been previously provided through the Government. In 1989, NPC enacted a law that guaranteed women’s proportion in URCs, and women’s representation has been above 50% since 2000. The number peaked at 60.6% in 2002 (NBS 2004, 89). Historically, URCs were mainly run by women throughout the 1950s. URCs were previously called the “neighborhood committees” and had been considered “women’s work.” The URC portfolio is welfare-oriented, and includes mediating family disputes and delivering government instructions. URC staff receive some small compensation from the local government. After the reform, some URCs opened small enterprises. URC positions are increasingly used to reemploy workers laid off from SOEs, and most are women. Thus, the increasing percentage of women in URCs does not indicate a rise of women’s status in politics at the community level.

E. Public Administration Reform

The Public Administration Reform that accompanied economic reform aimed to reduce the size of government and enhance its efficiency. One of the results was the transformation of the cadre system from appointment-based to more openness and competition. Although the recruitment reform opened opportunities for women’s participation, it brought challenges as well (ACWF 1998, Chen Ruisheng 1995). Women’s participation in politics decreased sharply in the 1980s. Advocacy and mobilization of ACWF and collaborative efforts of relevant departments of the state with women’s organizations have curbed the decrease in some places during the 1990s.

Entrenched gender bias affects women’s participation in public administration. Stereotyping of women—often through the media, family, and education systems—reinforces the notion that a woman’s primary role is a caregiver (Jin 2001). The images of women as mothers feeding babies and wives cooking are common in mass media, and women are often portrayed as being emotional. In contrast, men are usually regarded as natural leaders with potential. Due to such prejudices, women cadres tend to be ascribed “soft” portfolios (e.g., family planning) that are considered less prestigious.

1. Retirement Age Policy

The Government enforced a retirement age as one of the core administration reforms in the 1980s prior to its organizational restructuring. The Government recognized that the cadre system produced under the planned economy was not able to serve the development of a market economy effectively. Early reform included a mandatory retirement age (60 for men and 55 for women) for officials at the middle ranks of bureaucracy. Officials with high ranks were exempt. The retirement policy considerably “lowered the average age of government officials, and the number of senior officials aged 60 or older dropped from 81% to 54%” (ADB 2002, 33).

However, the reduction of the average age was achieved at the expense of female civil servants’ working years. As a result, women received lower pensions than men did, and the likelihood of women joining decision-making bodies was decreased. Thus, the policy effectively discriminated against women (Chen Ruisheng 1995, Du Jie 2001, Liu Bohong 2001). Older women

cadres had to leave their posts for promising “young, well educated, professional, and revolutionary” cadres who are preferred by CPC personnel departments and government organizations. This partly explains the low number of women in high-level politics in the PRC, especially after the reform.

2. Regulations for Promotion

The two important policies for civil servants on personnel management are the “Regulations on the Work of Selecting and Appointing Leading Party and Government Cadres” issued by CPC in 1995, and “The Provisional Regulations on Civil Servants” promulgated by the State Council in 1993. These policies laid down new regulations for promoting officials with objectives of improving transparency and bringing young and able people into the high leadership.

On the surface, the regulations seem gender neutral. However, the strict requirements of length of service work against women who take time out for child-raising. Women are stereotyped as liable to be distracted by child care and family. This works against women being selected for promotion. In addition, women who deliver babies are eligible for 3 months of maternal leave and the leave may not be counted into the length of service. Women with a young child are less likely to be sent to the grassroots for leading positions; thus, they will have 1–2 years’ lag behind their male colleagues in accumulating qualifications for promotion.

3. Lack of Affirmative Action

Policy makers have largely overlooked the institutional barriers presented by the different retirement ages and regulations for promotion. Although an article in the *Regulations on the Work of Selecting and Appointing Leading Party and Government Cadres* encourages local institutions to promote women and minorities, no affirmative action in either CPC or state policies has specified quotas for women. Similarly, affirmative action is not an official policy for women in the civil service.

Recently, women’s organizations are advocating for affirmative policies in laws and policies pertinent to promotions and enforced quotas for women as NPC representatives and village leaders. However, the proposals have encountered opposition. Some officials believe that affirmative action compromises the fairness of competition and impinges on voters’ abilities to express their political opinions and wishes directly. Thus, affirmative action for women has not yet been accepted as a means to gender equality in the PRC.

F. Women in Civil Society

Women’s organizations are now one of the most dynamic elements of the PRC’s civil society. They comprise institutions, groups, and networks that are organized around gender issues and advocate for gender equality. Women’s organizations have different focuses and adopt different strategies to advocate gender issues. ACWF has been attempting to bring about gender change through legislation and policy. At the same time, new women’s organizations have been

addressing the needs of women at the grassroots level, in the field of research, in gender planning, and in raising sensitive issues.

1. New Women's Organizations

By the end of 1999, more than 7,300 women's organizations had registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The four types of new women's organizations were service-oriented, occupation-based, research-oriented, and project-based. Since 1978, the long-established women's organizations (e.g., ACWF), started adapting to the rapidly changing socioeconomic context and gender needs and issues.

Occupation-based organizations provide information and opportunities for career development among female professionals. Some of these are national-level organizations, such as The PRC Women Mayors Association and the Chinese Women's Association for Science and Technology; others are based in local areas, such as the Capital Women Journalists' Association and the Shanghai Women's Engineers Federation.

In 1991, ACWF set up the Women's Studies Institute of China, which is primarily concerned with theoretical research. Women's studies institutes at the provincial level include the Heilongjiang Women's Studies Institute (1986), Jiangsu Women's Studies Institute (1990), and Sichuan Women's Studies Institute (1994). These institutes focus on key policy issues affecting women. Many social science academies have also set up institutes or centers for women and development studies, e.g., in Sichuan (1994), Yunnan (1994), Hebei (1995), the China Academy of Social Sciences (1995), Shanghai (1995), Jiangsu (1997), and Beijing (1999). In December 1999, the Women's Studies Institute of China set up the China Women's Studies Association, an extensive network of institutions and organizations devoted to women's and gender studies. By 2001, more than 40 universities and colleges and 10 social sciences academies had women's or gender research centers.

By the end of 1999, 36 women's studies centers had been formed in universities and colleges. These have played an important role in developing women's studies courses and in establishing the academic field of Chinese women's studies. Particularly well known are the women's study centers in Hangzhou, Peking, Tianjin Normal, and Zhengzhou universities, and the Central Party School. Women's federations at different levels have also been involved in developing the capacity in women's studies.

However, the new women's groups face some constraints. They are usually small and have little access to the top echelons of the government, limiting the degree to which they can influence policy making at the macro-level. Due to limited resources, they largely depend on voluntary labor and on donations. Thus, their services (such as legal aid, shelters, and counseling) are limited in scope and coverage.

In general, women's groups have played a significant role in affecting the policy process, mobilizing public opinion, and providing direct services to women. Their influence has expanded and matured noticeably since 1995. However, their voices are still too weak and their concerns are

far from integrated into policies or laws. In civil society, gender issues are limited to women's organizations. Most NGOs have not paid full attention to gender issues in their work areas. Thus, women's organizations need to cooperate to hold the state and civil society accountable for gender equality in the PRC.

Chapter 6 Recommendations for Mainstreaming Gender into Poverty Reduction Strategy

While the PRC has made significant strides in reducing poverty, increased efforts are needed to promote and enhance gender equality to continue the poverty reduction programs. This chapter provides recommendations for mainstreaming gender concerns into poverty reduction activities. Appendix 10 summarizes the recommendations provided by the workshop on poverty that formed part of the country gender assessment.

A. Reduce Gender-related Issues Contributing to Poverty

The following recommendations are for reducing gender-related poverty:

- Improve the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated poverty data, e.g., collect data on households headed by women and compare them with those headed by men.
- Review the gender dimensions of macroeconomic policies and assess gender impacts of poverty reduction policies, strategies, programs, and projects.
- Develop gender-based approaches and frameworks for research and interventions in gender and poverty reduction, e.g., (i) give greater consideration to non-income types of impacts on poverty, such as on women's time and assets; (ii) introduce social development indicators that focus on women's empowerment in poverty measures at different levels; and (iii) promote gender-sensitive participatory village planning.
- Raise policy makers' and implementers' awareness of gender issues and strengthen their capacity for translating gender concepts into practice. NGO leaders and staff also need gender awareness raising and capacity building.
- Develop policies or regulations to ensure women have equal rights in resource allocation and decision making, where necessary incorporating temporary special measures including affirmative action.
- Explore synergies between implementation of international instruments and national policies, e.g., (i) create links between the implementation of MDGs, the UN CEDAW, and the Beijing Platform for Action; and (ii) incorporate gender dimensions in "building an all-around xiaokang society" and link the "xiaokang" vision with the National Women's Development Program.

B. Address Gender Dimensions of Economic Development

For women to be able to contribute fully to the economy and use their talents and capabilities they must have equal access to job opportunities integrated with family activities. Recommendations for promoting gender equality in employment are as follows:

- Formulate or improve regulations on gender equality for the labor market. Address gender equality in the process of accelerating and proceeding with the approval of the UN's Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention.
- Conduct research on the impact of trade policies on women's economic rights and security.
- Intensify supervision of the implementation of laws and policies relating to women's labor rights and interests.
- Increase technical training for laid-off women and create opportunities for their reemployment.
- Provide rural women with income-generating programs and improved access to services and resources and labor-saving techniques so that they are better prepared for the changes under way.
- Create employment consultancy services that specifically target female unemployment.

Women are often marginalized into low-paying informal employment, and may be put there and kept there by role stereotypes. They may have little or no access to training, information, or capital to start or increase a small business. Recommendations for protecting women's rights and interests in the informal sector are as follows:

- Coordinate and conduct baseline research on the rights and interests of women in the informal sector to identify their situations and concerns.
- Include in laws and policies the rights and interests of women who work in the informal sector.
- Improve the social security system by integrating stipulations relating to the rights and interests of women working in informal sectors.
- Facilitate and encourage the creation of networks and organizations among women working in the informal economy, so that they can gain self-confidence and obtain mutual support to have their concerns heard and their rights and interests protected.
- Create specific services, training, and workshops that target assisting women to build entrepreneurships.
- Systematically review the impacts of microcredit schemes. Mainstream women's development into future state programs relating to microcredit activities.

Female rural migrant workers concentrate in two large sectors: (i) labor-intensive enterprises that produce, for example, shoes, toys, and textile products, mostly in coastal areas; and (ii) domestic work in individual urban households. Female migrants in both sectors receive very low wages and enjoy no social, economic, or health insurance. Some international and local NGOs have started to try to protect female migrant workers' rights, but it is very difficult for them to enter the industry campuses or individual households where factory and domestic workers work and live. Recommendations regarding providing and safeguarding the rights of migrant workers are as follows:

- Provide access for migrants to basic social services and pensions, and educate them about their rights and the services available to them.
- Enforce labor laws to ensure that migrant workers are paid equitably and work in safe environments.
- Implement programs aimed at assuring migrant workers have redress for violence and discrimination.

C. Assure Gender Equity in Human Development

Equitable provision of basic services is essential to poverty reduction and achieving gender equity. Men and women need equal access to education at all levels. The skewed sex ratio of babies at birth, resulting from the preference for boys (except among some minorities), needs rectifying. Access to good quality and affordable health care is essential for MCH, and to improve the MMR and IMR. Reproductive health care needs to be enhanced and made widely available, and information about sexually transmitted diseases must be widely disseminated so that more people know how to avoid such diseases.

Recommendations to improve the gender balance in education are as follows:

- Provide literacy and numeracy programs for adults beyond school age, and facilitate the attendance of poor adults.
- Continue efforts to narrow the gender gaps in education by encouraging families to educate girls as well as boys. Such efforts are especially needed in low-income and minority areas.
- Encourage women to continue education through college and into postgraduate levels.

Recommendations for normalizing the sex ratio at birth and gender gaps in infant mortality are as follows:

- Improve the welfare policy for the rural areas; develop policies that benefit rural families with girl children.
- Deepen programs and projects that aim to balance the sex ratio at birth, e.g., promote the “Care for Girls” campaign widely to cover the whole country, and especially target the cultures that show strong preference for sons.
- Promote NGO involvement in initiating public campaigns to change social attitudes that discriminate against girls and women.

Recommendations for improving MCH care are as follows:

- Analyze the gender impacts of the Health Sector Reform, collect good practices, and draw lessons learned from previous experience in the PRC and other countries to build a baseline for future gender integration.
- Strengthen information, education, and communication programs on MCH.

- For poor women, reduce or eliminate user fees for maternal health services.
- Improve access to maternal and child care services in poor areas by comprehensive approaches such as increasing the national budget for health. Enhance cooperation (international and national) across provinces, government organizations, and NGOs in providing accessible, affordable, and good quality health services for women.
- Balance health service delivery between urban and rural areas, coastal and inland areas, and eastern and western regions. Develop specific policies and measures that target the reduction of high MMRs in some western and rural areas, and train midwives for home births in remote and mountainous areas.
- Assist women's organizations to play an active role in social mobilization, dissemination of relevant information and awareness, and evaluation and monitoring of the health services.

Recommendations for enhancing gender equality in reproductive health are as follows:

- Enhance the implementation of Cairo+10 (2004) and Beijing+10 (2005) by addressing women's sexual and reproductive rights. Translate the rights-based approach into reality in reproductive health programs and projects.
- Address men's responsibility in family planning and their participation in enhancing women's reproductive health.
- Integrate gender equality issues in delivering health information to adolescents, e.g., combine the delivery of health knowledge and information on reproductive health.
- Provide reproductive health services that are accessible and available for young women, e.g., deliver knowledge and information on safe sex to young people.
- Provide affordable gynecological checkups for women. Set up special programs that target women in rural areas for gynecological checkups and treatment.
- In urban areas, provide appropriate reproductive health and family planning services for women migrants.
- Provide adequate information on safe contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancy and abortion. Make information on unsafe abortion widely available.
- Enhance the role of women's organizations in making policies on reproductive health and open channels for their participation in advising and monitoring reproductive health programs and projects.
- Disseminate information on safe sex among women who are involved in providing sex services.
- Develop schemes to support men and women for their unpaid labor in caring for sick people, including those with HIV/AIDS.

D. Remedy Additional Gender Equality Concerns

The following recommendations are made for combating violence against women and sexual harassment:

- Educate women about their legal rights and services available pertaining to sexual harassment, domestic violence, and other forms of violence.
- Implement the amendment to the Women's Law to enforce systems to ensure the victims are immune to reprisals and perpetrators of violence are accountable for their actions.
- Provide free and comprehensive intervention programs for men and women to address the multiple needs of victims. Increase funding and provide services and infrastructure for victims.
- Include curriculums on combating violence against women when training health care workers, doctors, police, and legal officers.
- Involve men in programs on the elimination of violence against women; set up networks of men against such violence.
- Provide legal guarantees to protect women from sexual harassment, by formulating relevant laws and regulations.
- Strengthen the role of mass media and NGOs in combating violence against women and sexual harassment. Establish mechanisms for cooperation among government departments and NGOs to eliminate violence against women.

The following are recommended for curbing trafficking in women:

- Enhance gender responsiveness in anti-trafficking policies and laws: the Government should define and implement laws and policies to levy penalties specifically directed at buyers, and have strict monitoring devices to deter traffickers and their customers.
- Build capacities to develop a better database against human trafficking.
- Conduct research on trafficking of women to analyze underlying factors, and collect data to assess the needs and the situation of women victims.
- Develop follow-up services for victims of trafficking by providing them medical care, training, and other support.
- Coordinate cooperation among the state, NGOs, international donors, and other agencies on anti-trafficking issues.

Future directions for enhancing gender integration into social safety net policies in the PRC should include the following:

- Collect sex-disaggregated data relating to different welfare schemes.
- Conduct gender assessments and audits, analyze the implementation of the schemes, and identify different needs of men and women.

- Develop citizen-based (or rights-based) welfare schemes by transforming the employment-based and rural-urban insurance schemes into a basic scheme that will provide equitably for all.

E. Strengthen Women's National Machinery and its Impact on Policy and the Institutional Environment

The Government is responsible for policies to guard gender equality and stop gender discrimination. To formulate sound gender-responsive policies, the policy makers need to have sex-disaggregated statistics. However, at present, sex-disaggregated data is often only found in demographic statistics. The Ministry of Labor produces a yearly report for NWCCW regarding women's issues and is favorably disposed toward the collection of sex-disaggregated information. The inclusion of gender statistics in national and ministerial data collection systems would help to raise gender awareness and promote gender-sensitive policy making.

Although NWCCW is the PRC's official women's national organization, it plays very limited roles in the national decision-making process and runs few day-to-day programs and activities. ACWF acts as quasi-national women's machinery, although it is a mass organization. However, ACWF nationwide suffers from serious constraints on funding any independent programs and activities. Thus, the women's national machinery has to be strengthened. The following recommendations pertain to strengthening national machineries for women:

- Enhance the capacities of national machineries on gender equality to provide (i) access to the highest possible level in the government, (ii) sufficient budget and professional capacity to carry out their mandates, and (iii) opportunities to influence the development of all government policies.
- Examine how national machineries function in other countries and how these might be applied to the roles of NWCCW and ACWF in women's advancement in the PRC.
- Strengthen the role of NWCCW, OWYW, and WGWC in integrating gender equality into laws and national plans, and their functions in monitoring the implementation of policies and laws concerning women's and children's rights.

To promote gender equality in legislation and implementation, the following are recommended:

- Make systematic efforts to integrate gender considerations into legislation, e.g., conduct gender analysis and review legislation, develop tools for gender assessment of laws and policies, and convene relevant training workshops to enhance awareness among legislators and policy makers, in line with UN CEDAW.
- Use the new amendment of the Women's Law as an entry point to address issues of most concern to women, such as domestic violence, women's land rights, and women's political participation, through programs and projects.

To enhance programs for gender equity, strengthen the synergies in the implementation process between MDGs, CEDAW, and the Beijing Platform for Action. The implementation is currently compartmentalized with tasks divided horizontally among ministries and without effective coordination on gender issues.

Recommendations to improve enforcement of gender laws are as follows:

- Develop a litigation strategy for enforcing women's equality as a matter of constitutional law.
- Use the amended Women's Law as a starting point to promote the best-known practices.
- Strengthen legal supervision and increase the government's budget for legal aid for women.
- Enhance the capacity of women's NGOs to provide legal aid for women, disseminate information about women's rights in communities so that women are aware of how to claim them, and deliver gender awareness training for policy makers and implementers.
- Conduct a gender awareness program for judges and law enforcers.

Women need to be aware of their rights and of how to achieve them. Recommendations to improve women's legal literacy and their presence in legal system are as follows:

- Review previous efforts for raising women's legal literacy to assess their effectiveness. For example, recently, the Ministry of Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee and the Ministry of Justice jointly issued a notice to review the implementation of the 4th 5-Year Legal Awareness Campaign.³⁵ This provides a good opportunity to assess gender issues in national legal publicity, which may involve analyzing whether previous legal publicity has disseminated information on national legislation on women's rights and whether the approaches and materials are easily accessible for women.
- Strengthen women's presence in the legal system. This is imperative to channel the legal system toward gender equality. It may involve introducing quotas for women in the legal system and establishing capacity-building programs or projects that are specifically targeted to female professionals.
- Build coordination and cooperation between government, NGOs, and development agencies, to sustain the efforts in human rights effectively. Enhance education to make women more aware of their legal rights.

F. Incorporate Gender in Governance

Participatory village planning is essential in formulating poverty reduction and development plans. The State Council Leading Group for Poverty Reduction has identified some

³⁵ Issued in 2005 as Ministry of Justice No. 2 Document. The Chinese version is available at www.legalinfo.gov.cn/ggl/2005-1/connect_179184.htm. Accessed on 27 June 2005.

demonstration villages for implementing participatory village planning, and they have shown promising output from the participatory processes. However, the level of gender mainstreaming is not monitored and therefore not reported. A framework has been proposed for identifying and classifying poor villages and households to better target rural poverty reduction assistance. Eight indicators are suggested for poverty village assessment, and two of them are gender-sensitive. The promotion of gender mainstreaming requires continued efforts at implementation and close attention to gender-sensitive monitoring.

The following should be considered for enhancing women's political participation:

- Introduce affirmative action measures and assure they are implemented.
- Increase public awareness of the importance of increasing women's political participation. Mass media in particular has an important role in increasing awareness within political parties and among voters.
- Increase the awareness and capacity of officials to address gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the administrative and political arenas.
- Strengthen the capacities of women leaders in policy making, in particular their capacities in addressing women's needs and interests in policies and programming, through training, workshops, and networking with female leaders and all women.

The following should be considered for public sector reforms:

- Assist decision makers at national and local levels to increase their understanding of gender gaps in budget allocation and program outcomes. Integrate technical training for gender budgeting into current public service training.
- Develop measures and indicators to ensure employment equity and sexual harassment considerations are brought into the civil service reform process.
- Reform health care systems so they are gender responsive, especially targeting the most vulnerable groups.

The following should be considered for civil society and NGOs:

- Assist NGOs and civil society organizations that are led by and focused on women to play an active role in launching campaigns of publicity and education to increase gender awareness. Direct the campaigns to society as a whole, and especially at the policy makers, to help them understand the significance of promoting women's political participation.
- Support women's organizations in their advocacy for a rights-based approach and gender equality in poverty reduction and make efforts to involve them in strengthening the monitoring of poverty reduction initiatives at community levels.

A. Focal Areas of the Country Partnership Strategy

The initiating paper for the ADB Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for 2007–2011 for the PRC identifies the following focal areas: (i) promoting rural development, (ii) fostering sustainable urban development, (iii) encouraging environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, (iv) catalyzing efficient investment by enabling private sector development, and (v) advancing regional cooperation.

ADB's long-term strategic framework and policy statements highlight the need to consider gender equality concerns as crosscutting themes in country strategies and programs. ADB lending and technical assistance operations and commitment to continued policy dialogue on poverty reduction provide some concrete opportunities to mainstream gender at both the strategic and operational levels. Ensuring that women participate fully in project activities can secure their equitable access to economic opportunities. It can also allow women to improve their capabilities (accessing improved education and health services), contribute to decision making regarding projects and community development (empowerment), and significantly improve their security (particularly to combat gender-based violence).

The sections below provide a general framework for gender mainstreaming activities as well as suggestions for strengthening project interventions in 2007–2011 CPS sectors of focus. The framework and suggestions support the narrowing of gender gaps and empowerment of women so they can benefit equitably from ADB operations.

B. Gender Mainstreaming in Strategic Program Areas Identified in the Country Partnership Strategy Initiating Paper

This section examines sectors of focus from the CPS to identify gender entry points and mechanisms for gender mainstreaming. It begins by listing mechanisms that have proven essential in project design and monitoring for gender mainstreaming to contribute to achieving results effectively, particularly those associated with poverty reduction. General recommendations for strengthening gender mainstreaming in projects are as follows:

- Carry out a detailed social and gender analysis during project design. The analysis will systematically identify constraints to men and women participating in and benefiting from projects and will recommend how the constraints might be addressed.
- Develop a gender action plan or gender strategy for gender-related projects that includes specific realistic targets, linked to loan objectives, through step-by-step progress. It is essential that adequate resources (financial and human) are allocated for the implementation of the plan or strategy. The gender targets should be

incorporated into the overall project monitoring framework, objectives and corresponding indicators identified to ensure systematic monitoring and reporting on these aspects of the projects implementation, and sex-disaggregated baseline data collected.

- Include gender capacity building in the gender action plan or gender strategy to ensure that the executing and implementing agencies are familiar with the rationale for mainstreaming gender concerns and to understand how they can contribute to and promote gender-related project targets. ADB resident mission staff could also benefit from gender training to facilitate monitoring of projects and awareness of gender concerns to be incorporated into policy dialogue.
- Support and encourage the employment of women on project management teams, particularly at senior levels, and ensure that all employment opportunities, including in areas such as construction, are available to women on an equitable basis. Special facilities (separate toilets, safety gear of suitable sizes, etc.) and conditions of employment may be needed to ensure women can work equitably with men.
- Ensure wage parity for female and male staff on project teams and employed under project contracts.
- Ensure that a gender specialist is contracted to participate in regular ADB monitoring of project progress to facilitate identification of constraints to the implementation of the gender action plan or gender strategy and resolution of problems as they occur.
- Work with women’s NGOs wherever possible or NGOs with an active female constituency. Engaging with women in NGOs provides opportunities to support women’s leadership and participation in forums beyond a project’s immediate scope, and hence promotes women’s empowerment.
- Monitor key gender gaps in poverty reduction and raise these concerns regularly in policy dialogue. This will give impetus to people in government and civil society seeking to increase the visibility of gender issues.
- Seek specific ways that ADB operations can support the Government’s women’s machinery such as NWCCW. Consult regularly with NWCCW and ACWF regarding gender priorities in different sectors.

C. Strengthening Sectoral Results through Gender Mainstreaming

1. Fostering Sustainable Urban Development

The CPS (2007–2011) initiating paper indicates that sustainable urban development will be achieved by improving transport linkages; by improving access to efficiently supplied power, clean water, sewerage and sanitation services, and other basic urban infrastructure; and by building capacity for financially and environmentally sustainable municipal management, particularly in the many medium-sized cities. The shortage of access to clean water and sanitation services impacts particularly upon the poor and women. Women are usually responsible for collecting and transporting water and caring for household members who fall ill because of unhygienic water and

sanitation facilities. As both managers and users of water, women are usually aware of water-related issues and have concrete suggestions for their improvement.

Operations to improve transport linkages and provision of clean water provide opportunities to ensure that women benefit equitably from increased access to markets and social services. Men may see improved access to markets and personal mobility as a primary benefit, whereas women will also appreciate improved access to health services and to education for their children. To track the full impact of integrated urban development, it will be important to include social development and health indicators in monitoring frameworks that specifically track benefits beyond economic growth. Strengthened project interventions to be considered are as follows:

- Provide gender awareness training to executing and implementing agencies to ensure that they have the skills to consider and address gender issues at the policy as well as project implementation level.
- Set targets for women's employment on infrastructure projects as appropriate, particularly in the areas of operation and maintenance.
- Ensure that assessments of the impact of reform on water and wastewater tariffs and structures take into account the different uses of water and energy by men and women for commercial and domestic purposes.
- Work with local NGOs familiar with risks presented by human traffickers to build resistance against these risks among those most vulnerable (for example, poor women and commercial sex workers). These NGOs can help assess potential risks and changes in migration flows during the project planning phase and make recommendations regarding additional project initiatives to ensure human trafficking concerns are addressed.
- Build a combined information campaign to encourage safe sex and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and to counter trafficking in project areas (i.e., along proposed routes and other areas for transport workers), to raise public and official awareness and understanding of these issues. Build collaboration between local NGOs and national NGOs experienced in these areas, with a view to building local NGO capacity.
- Raise awareness among government and law enforcement officials of the potential impacts of increased volumes of vehicles and flow of goods and migrants, particularly regarding human trafficking and health risks such as sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS from mobile populations (transport workers, etc.). While training of officials on these issues may not be within the scope of a particular project, it may be possible to create avenues for collaboration between government and other organizations addressing migration and related issues.
- Incorporate social as well as economic performance indicators (for example, including non-income poverty impacts such as improved access to health services) into projects and other assessment frameworks. This will increase the opportunity to raise women's priority needs and benefits, and hence, the potential for women to influence the selection of priorities for planning. It will also contribute to women's empowerment and potential to participate in community decision making.

2. Promoting Rural Development

The CPS initiating paper notes that poverty will be reduced as rural livelihoods and finance improves, urban-rural connectivity improves, critical infrastructure barriers in rural areas are removed, and skill training is provided for rural migrants. As noted in the country gender assessment, women in rural areas are particularly vulnerable to living in poverty and have few opportunities to access economic resources or decision makers who are developing and implementing poverty reduction programming. Women make up a majority of the agriculture labor force and contribute significantly to food security, especially in economically depressed regions, through household production. The limited return on women’s labor is compounded by a growing wage gap reinforced by attitudes that women are less efficient and knowledgeable workers than men, with additional downward pressure on average wages as the female labor pool far exceeds the work available.

Women may be left alone when their husbands migrate looking for employment, with limited extra time available to take on additional responsibilities in caring for the household or small farming operations. Women are also responsible for finding and managing household water resources, which takes up considerable amounts of their limited time.

The pressure on women’s time is intensifying with the deterioration of social services, which is sorely felt in more remote rural areas where infrastructure has yet to be rehabilitated. Living conditions are deteriorating. The consequent negative impacts on the health and well-being of family members increase the pressure on women to care for the sick while having to contribute to family livelihoods.

Small and micro enterprises are forming in rural areas, but women lack access to resources and face discrimination from officials and other entrepreneurs, discouraging women from increasing the return on their labor. Special care must be taken to ensure women are aware of new financial services, as bank officials may not communicate with women or small entrepreneurs frequently, or may consider women unimportant as future customers despite their potential. Women’s access to new opportunities to increase productivity needs to be assured. Special measures may need identifying to ensure that women participate fully in the design, implementation, and operation and maintenance of infrastructure, particularly water supply and sanitation infrastructure.

Strengthened project interventions to be considered are as follows:

- Ensure that women participate in the planning of all future projects and that gender issues are taken into consideration as priorities are set. Having women participate fully in project activities and decision making can lead by example. This may require additional efforts by the executing agencies and gender training for all team members can help explain how women can contribute to achieving project results more effectively.
- Ensure women participate fully in all phases of design, implementation, and operation and maintenance of new water supply and sanitation projects. This can

be achieved through measures such as preparing a gender action plan that sets out appropriate proportions for women's participation in specific project components (e.g., water user committees and training of technicians for operation and maintenance of water infrastructure). The gender action plan should also provide for capacity building of project team members on gender issues and gender awareness training for local government and other stakeholders. This will encourage the effective participation of women in project and community decision making for the development and management of water resources. The gender action plan should also establish key monitoring indicators that track impacts of the project in areas such as women's time use to ensure that participation in project activities is not conflicting with other important household responsibilities.

3. Enabling Private Sector Development

The CPS initiating paper (2006) indicated that the PRC needs to create jobs to absorb about 16 million to 20 million people annually, including new market entrants, redundant SOE and government workers, and rural migrants. Because women are increasingly responding to unemployment by establishing businesses in the informal sector, the private sector, particularly SMEs will be the main engine for job creation. Women have cited complex entry and tax regulations, restrictive access to credit, and corruption as key obstacles to establishing SMEs in the formal sector. Policies and programs focused on promoting private sector development would benefit considerably from analyzing and addressing the reasons for women's low levels of participation in the formal private sector. Strengthened project interventions to be considered are as follows:

- Analyze the reasons for women's low participation in SMEs, with a focus on identifying constraints and strategies for overcoming them.
- Analyze proposed financial sector/governance reforms from an SME and gender perspective, identify actual/potential gender biases, and ensure that these are effectively addressed.
- Develop strategic interventions designed to increase the incentives for women to shift their businesses from the informal to the formal sector, including providing technical and advisory support and services to start businesses.
- Consult with women business traders, owners, and vendors and others engaged in both formal and informal sector enterprises on their credit needs and the factors discouraging them from accessing lending institutions.
- Develop service delivery mechanisms and products that respond to these needs and/or constraints.
- Ensure that women have equal access to credit facilities and services.
- Provide training, retraining, and special education programs to strengthen women's entrepreneurial skills.
- Promote mechanisms to develop supportive business networks.

4. Encouraging Environmental Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

The CPS initiating paper supports environmental sustainability and energy efficiency by strengthening the regulatory framework for addressing land degradation and water resource management, introducing innovative mechanisms, adopting clean technologies and renewable energy, and improving the efficiency of energy production and use. Women find it more difficult than men to overcome the effects of environmental degradation. It is vital that women are encouraged to participate in the design and implementation of any programs that address environmental degradation. Poor water management has had significant impacts on the population, especially on women. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that the lack of safe drinking water and effective waste treatment are the principal causes of 60% of water-borne diseases, particularly diarrhea among young children. Recommendations for enhancing environmental sustainability and energy efficiency are as follows:

- Ensure that assessments of the impact of reform on water, sanitation, and energy tariffs and structures take into account the different uses of energy by men and women for commercial and domestic purposes.
- Consult with women regarding their priorities for investments in new or alternative energy sources and seek ways to invest in labor-saving technologies that can improve energy efficiency within the household.
- Ensure that women participate in the planning of projects and that gender issues are taken into consideration as priorities are set. Access to household drinking water must be balanced with improved management of water resources for agriculture and industry. This should involve consultation on a regular basis with key stakeholders, in particular the local government and NGOs that are led by women and work in mid-size cities to identify emerging issues of concern to women.
- Ensure that women participate in water resource management and training opportunities. This can provide opportunities for women to build their skills and experience in decision making and will encourage more women to become involved in a wider range of resource management activities.

5. Advancing Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation can be advanced by:

- addressing policy and institutional barriers to regional integration;
- reducing infrastructure and other barriers to cross-border trade and investment;
- fostering regional financial market integration;
- expanding the remit of regional cooperation;
- conducting regional workshops to share lessons and practices on gender mainstreaming;
- promoting regional exchanges of lessons learned, challenges, and good practices on CEDAW implementation; and
- assisting the Government's investment efforts in other countries.

Several regional initiatives are ongoing in areas such as HIV/AIDS and road and energy infrastructure. All these initiatives offer opportunities to ensure that gender concerns are identified and systematically integrated into project activities and targets.

Appendix 1. Progress Toward the Millennium Development Goals

Goals and Targets	Status in the PRC
<p>Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1/day. Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.</p>	<p>Rural population below \$1 per day: 31.3% in 1990; 11.5% in 2000 Undernourished people: 16.0% in 1990; 9.0% in 2000</p>
<p>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education. Target 3: By 2015, children everywhere—boys and girls alike—will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net primary enrolment ratio: 97.0% in 1990; 93.0% in 2001 • Youth literacy rate: 95.3% in 1990; 97.9% in 2001
<p>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of girls to boys in primary education: 86% in 1990; 92% in 2001 • Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education: 83% in 2001
<p>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality. Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-5 mortality rate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births): 49 in 1990; 39 in 2001 • Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births): 38 in 1990; 31 in 2001
<p>Goal 5: Improve maternal health. Target 6: Reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births): 88.9 in 1990; 39 in 2001 • Proportion of births attended by skilled health workers in hospital births: 50.6% in 1990; 89.0% in 2001
<p>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. Target 7: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS. Target 8: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.</p>	<p>HIV/AIDS incidence rate (age 15–49) as of 2001 is 0.11%, around 790,000 cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaria (per 100,000 people): 1 in 2000 • Tuberculosis (per 100,000 people): 107 in 2001
<p>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability. Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land covered by forest: 15.6% in 1990; 17.5% in 2001 • Carbon dioxide emissions (per capita): 2.1 tons in 1990; 2.3 tons in 1999
<p>Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural population with clean water source: 60% in 1990; 66% in 2000 • Urban population with clean water source: 99% in 1990; 94% in 2000
<p>Target 11: Have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p>	<p>Urban population with access to improved sanitation: 56% in 1990; 69% in 2000</p>

Goals and Targets	Status in the PRC
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development.	
Target 12: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures.	Total debt service (as a percent of exports of goods and services): 10.6% in 1990; 4.2% in 2001
Target 13: Provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.	Population with sustainable access to affordable essential drugs: 80–94% in 1999
Target 14: Make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.	Telephone mainlines and cellular phone subscribers (per 100 people): 0.6 in 1990; 24.8 in 2001

HIV/AIDS = human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; PRC = People's Republic of China;
Source: Asian Development Bank, 2003.

Appendix 2. Sex-disaggregated Illiteracy Rate in 2000

Province/Region	Male (%)	Female (%)	Ratio of Female and Male Rate
Beijing	2.02	8.10	4.0
Tianjin	2.80	10.23	3.7
Hebei	6.47	10.76	1.7
Shangxi	3.21	8.31	2.6
Inner-Mongolia	6.98	16.53	2.4
Liaoning	2.93	8.72	3.0
Jilin	3.46	8.12	2.3
Heilongjiang	3.68	9.08	2.5
Shanghai	2.35	10.28	4.4
Jiangsu	3.49	12.27	3.5
Zhejiang	4.35	12.92	3.0
Anhui	7.55	19.50	2.6
Fujian	5.57	13.96	2.5
Jiangxi	3.09	11.04	3.6
Shandong	5.53	15.98	2.9
Henan	4.25	11.67	2.7
Hubei	4.44	14.49	3.3
Hunan	2.76	9.45	3.4
Guangdong	1.72	8.60	5.0
Guangxi	2.07	8.85	4.3
Hainan	3.84	16.11	4.2
Chongqing	4.56	13.53	3.0
Sichuan	5.37	14.62	2.7
Guizhou	9.96	30.61	3.1
Yunnan	9.32	22.15	2.4
Tibet	34.38	60.47	1.8
Shaanxi	5.65	14.24	2.5
Gansu	12.04	27.81	2.3
Qinghai	15.69	35.87	2.3
Ningxia	9.47	22.25	2.3
Xinjiang	5.74	9.87	1.7
3 highest GDP municipalities	2.40	9.50	4.0
3 lowest GDP provinces	8.00	22.40	2.8
6 minority regions	11.30	23.40	2.1

Note: The three highest GDP municipalities are: Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin.

The three lowest GDP provinces are: Guizhou, Gansu, and Guanxi.

Six minority regions/province are: Tibet, Ningxia, Yunnan, Inner-Mongolia, Guanxi, and Jinjiang.

GDP = gross domestic product; % = percent

Source: Asian Development Bank and World Bank, 2005.

Appendix 3. Enrolment Rates of School-age Children (above 7) in 2000 (%)

Province/Region	Male	Female	Province/Region	Male	Female
Beijing	100.0	100.0	Guangdong	94.1	91.8
Tianjin	97.8	98.1	Guangxi	92.9	95.8
Hebei	98.6	99.3	Hainan	89.7	88.2
Shanxi	97.9	98.0	Chongqing	98.8	98.0
Inner Mongolia	95.8	96.8	Sichuan	95.4	96.2
Liaoning	96.7	97.8	Guizhou	91.9	87.3
Jilin	94.1	96.2	Yunnan	93.6	91.0
Heilongjiang	97.6	98.6	Tibet	57.7	68.0
Shanghai	98.5	100.0	Shaanxi	98.1	95.6
Jiangsu	99.6	98.8	Gansu	92.3	91.0
Zhejiang	99.0	98.2	Qinghai	84.3	76.1
Anhui	97.4	97.1	Ningxia	91.1	94.3
Fujian	96.1	97.8	Xinjiang	92.9	94.2
Jiangxi	98.2	97.6	3 highest	98.8	99.4
Shandong	97.4	96.4	GDP municipalities		
Henan	99.2	98.8	3 lowest	92.4	91.4
Hubei	98.9	99.5	GDP provinces		
Hunan	97.5	98.0	6 minority regions	87.3	90.0

GDP = gross domestic product.

Source: Asian Development Bank and World Bank, 2005.

Appendix 4. Laws Pertaining to Women's Rights

Constitutional protection of women's rights. Article 48 of the 1982 Constitution of the PRC, states that "Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social, and family life. The State protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work to men and women alike, and trains and selects cadres from among women." At the same time, Article 49 stipulates that: "Marriage, the family, and mother and child are protected by the State. Both husband and wife have the duty to practice family planning...violation of the freedom of marriage is prohibited. Maltreatment of old people, women, and children is prohibited." (All China Women's Federation [ACWF] 2002a, 1-2).

During the 2nd Session of the 10th NPC in 2004, the clause specifying that "the State respects and safeguards human rights" was put into the Constitution, which has been hailed by scholars on human rights issues. Calls for a law on human rights and the concept of protecting human rights to be referred to in legislation have increased (Xinhua News Agency 27 Mar. 2004), which provides further entry points to enshrine women's human rights in the legal and policy framework.

Women in law professions. The Law for Protecting the Legal Rights and Interests of Women (the Women's Law) was promulgated in 1992. It has six prime and basic rights for women, pertaining to (i) political rights, (ii) rights and interests relating to culture and education, (iii) rights and interests relating to work, (iv) rights and interests relating to property, (v) rights relating to the person, and (vi) rights and interests relating to marriage and family.

The Women's Law reflected the PRC's commitment to fulfill its obligations under CEDAW, which had called on governments to formulate anti-discrimination clauses for women. It is the first PRC law to focus on women's legal rights and interests in a comprehensive and systematic manner. However, many Chinese scholars on gender and women's studies as well as the CEDAW Expert Group Committee were concerned at its failure to enshrine the spirit of anti-discrimination endorsed by CEDAW. They noted that the strategies and approaches adopted by the Women's Law were heavily focused on the protection of women seen merely as victims of development rather than agents of change (de Silva-de Alwis 2003a).

The Women's Law was revised to adapt it to the new requirements for the protection of women's rights and interests. This provided a good opportunity for women's organizations to incorporate gender equality, in particular the comments of the CEDAW Expert Group Committee, into legislation. The ACWF took the lead in organizing the revision of the Women's Law. It led an expert group in completing the draft amendments and successfully convened several influential meetings and forums to invite suggestions from the public. In 2005, at the 17th session of the 10th NPC Standing Committee, the draft amendment of the 1992 Women's Law was passed.

The new provisions of the draft amendment in securing women’s rights include

- (i) adding the national policy of gender equality as one of the general principles;
- (ii) addressing the responsibility of the state in promulgating a national women’s development program and promoting its integration into the overall national economic and social development program;
- (iii) clarifying and reinforcing the responsibilities of government departments in protecting women’s rights, and standardizing the function of ACWF;
- (iv) reaffirming the improvement of representation of women in government, and addressing women’s educational, work, and personal rights; and
- (v) clearly forbidding domestic violence and sexual harassment against women, and introducing important supplements to women’s rights in labor, social security, and contracting of land.

The provision has been hailed by many officials and scholars as a significant step forward toward gender equality in legislation. However, others note that the provision gives only general guidelines rather than specific measures and retains the notion of protecting rather than empowering women. Many feminists feel it does not have sufficient binding force for implementation. Examples are that it has not given a specific quota for women’s entry onto top-level decision-making positions and, although the amendment makes sexual harassment unlawful, the definition and context are unclear (*China Daily* 12 Aug. 2005).

Legal clauses relating to women’s rights. The PRC’s legal system, seriously undermined during the “cultural revolution” (1966–1976), was restored in the late 1970s. Its development has been accelerated in recent years. Since the strategy of “the rule of law” was written into the Constitution in 1999, the PRC has been transforming from a country with few laws into one with a comprehensive legal system. In 2002, the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China set a goal of building a well-off society with “a socialist legal system of laws with Chinese characteristics by 2010” (CPC 2002). The 10th session of NPC formulated a plan in which 76 laws are to be developed or amended (Appendix 5). During the two decades to 2004, over 500 laws and legislative decisions were formulated (*China Daily* 16 Apr. 2004).

Appendix 5. Legislation Program of the 10th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (76 Laws, March 2003–March 2008)

Category and Title	Proposing or Drafting Agency
A. Law Drafts to be Reviewed by the Current Session (59)	
1. Constitution and Related Laws (10)	
Amendment of the Constitution	
Law on Emergency Status	State Council
Organizational Law of Military Court	Central Military Committee
Organizational Law of Military Procuratory	Central Military Committee
Election Law (revision)	Legislation Work Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee
Local Organizational Law (amendment)	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Organizational Law of People's Court (amendment)	Supreme People's Court
Organizational Law of People's Procuratory (amendment)	Supreme People's Procuratory
Organizational Law of Urban Neighborhood Committee (amendment)	State Council
Rules of NPC Standing Committee (amendment)	General Office of the NPC Standing Committee
2. Civil and commercial laws (10)	
Civil Law-Law on Ownership of Property	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Civil Law-Law on Obligations to Violation of Rights	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Civil Law-Law on the Application of Laws in Foreign-related Civil Relations	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Commercial Affairs Registration Law	State Council
Bankruptcy Law	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
Law on Bond Investment and Fund (already adopted)	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
Company Law (amendment)	State Council
Partner Business Law (amendment)	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
Commercial Bank Law (amendment)	State Council
Securities Law (amendment)	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
3. Administrative Laws (16)	
Administrative Permission Law (adopted)	State Council
Administrative Charging Law	State Council
Administrative Enforcement Law	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
National Defense Mobilization Law	State Council and Central Military Committee
Civil Servant Law	State Council
Citizen Identity Card Law (adopted)	State Council
Passport Law	State Council
Notarization Law	State Council
Illegal Action Correction Law	Legal Affairs Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Preliminary Health Care Law	State Council
Public Security Administration and Punishment Regulation (amendment)	State Council
Compulsory Education Law (amendment)	State Council
Science and Technology Advancement Law (amendment)	State Council
Infectious Disease Prevention Law (amendment)	State Council

Category and Title	Proposing or Drafting Agency
Solid Waste Pollution Prevention Law (amendment)	NPC Environment and Resource Committee
Construction Law (amendment)	State Council
4.Economic Laws (14)	
State-owned Assets Law	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
Foreign Currency Law	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
Anti-monopoly Law	State Council
Anti-dumping and Anti-subsidy Law	State Council
Protective Measures Law	State Council
Enterprise Income Tax Law (applicable to all kinds of enterprises)	State Council
Bank Monitoring and Administration Law	State Council
Chinese People’s Bank Law (amendment)	State Council
Budget Law (amendment)	Budget Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Personal Income Tax Law (amendment)	State Council
Audit Law (amendment)	State Council
Land Administration Law (amendment)	State Council
Foreign Trade Law (amendment)	State Council
Anti-improper Competition Law	State Council
5.Social Laws (6)	
Social Security Law (or separate laws on insurance for pensions, medical benefits, unemployment, and injury at work)	State Council
Social Relief Law	State Council
Labor Contract Law	NPC Agriculture Committee
Law on the Protection of Farmers’ Rights	NPC Agriculture Committee
Law on the Protection of Women’s Rights (amendment)	State Council (All China Women’s Federation [ACWF])
Law on the Protection of the Minor (amendment)	NPC Internal and Legal Affairs Committee
6.Criminal Laws	
Amendment of the Criminal Law will be reviewed when the need arises	
7.Prosecution and Nonprosecution Procedure Laws (3)	
Criminal Prosecution Law (amendment)	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Civil Prosecution Law (amendment)	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Arbitration Law (amendment)	State Council
Title of Law	Proposing or Drafting Agency
B. Laws to be Researched, Drafted, and Reviewed at the Appropriate Time	
Farmer’s Economic Comparatives Law	NPC Agriculture Committee
Time Bargain Law	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
Real Estate Registration Law	State Council
Financing Tenancy Law	NPC Financial and Economic Committee
Administrative Procedure Law	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Law on Access to Information on Government Affairs	State Council
Anti-drug Law	State Council
Basic Law on Taxation	NPC Financial and Economic Committee and Budget Committee
Financial Transfer Payment Law	Budget Committee of NPC Standing Committee (State Council)
National Economic Mobilization Law	State Council

Title of Law	Proposing or Drafting Agency
Law on the Promotion of Development in the Western Region	State Council
Anti-Money-laundering Law	Budget Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Law on Natural Preservation Zone	NPC Environment and Resource Committee
Law on the Protection of Ocean Islands	NPC Environment and Resource Committee
State Compensation Law (amendment)	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Administrative Prosecution Law (amendment)	Legislation Work Committee of NPC Standing Committee
Law on Monitoring	General Office of NPC Standing Committee

Source: www.happyhome.net.cn/read.asp?subjectid=214&infoid=11957&forumid=49554, translated by the UN Gender Theme Group “China Gender Facility for Research and Advocacy.”

Appendix 6. The National Working Committee on Children and Women under the State Council

The National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW) under the State Council was founded on 22 February 1990.¹ It is in charge of work pertaining to women and children. It coordinates and promotes among relevant government departments the implementation of laws and regulations and policy-related measures concerning women and children.

The basic functions of NWCCW are to:

- coordinate and promote among relevant government departments the maintenance of the rights and interests of children and women;
- coordinate and promote among relevant government departments the drawing up and implementation of programs for the development of children and women;
- coordinate and promote among relevant government departments the personnel, finance, and material necessary for work on women's and children's causes; and
- guide, supervise, speed up, and inspect NWCCW work in the provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central Government.

Current leaders of NWCCW are as follows:

- Chairperson: Wu Yi (Vice-premier of the State Council); and
- Vice-Chairpersons: Xu Shaoshi, (Vice Secretary-general of the State Council); Huang Qingyi, (Vice-President and First Member of the Secretariat of the All China Women's Federation); and Li Shenglin, (Vice-Minister of the National Development and Reform Commission).

The member units of NWCCW were approved by the State Council and comprise 33 ministries, commissions, and NGOs. NWCCW's office is in the building of the All China Women's Federation. The 33 members include the:

- Ministry of Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China;
- National Development and Reform Commission;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ministry of Education;
- Ministry of Science and Technology;
- State Ethnic Affairs Commission;
- Ministry of Public Security;
- Ministry of Civil Affairs;
- Ministry of Justice;

¹ Source: www.cinfo.org.cn/language/english/aboutus/001.js.

- Ministry of Finance;
- Ministry of Personnel;
- Ministry of Labor and Social Security;
- Ministry of Construction;
- Ministry of Water Resources;
- Ministry of Agriculture;
- Ministry of Commerce;
- Ministry of Culture;
- Ministry of Health;
- National Population and Family Planning Commission of China;
- State Administration for Industry and Commerce;
- General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine;
- State Environmental Protection Administration;
- State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television;
- State General Administration of Sports;
- National Bureau of Statistics;
- State Press and Publication General Administration;
- State Forestry Administration;
- Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council;
- The PRC's Disabled Persons' Federation;
- All China Federation of Trade Unions;
- Central Committee of Communist Youth League;
- All China Women's Federation; and
- China Association of Science and Technology.

Since its founding, NWCCW has implemented the basic state policy of equality between men and women and devoted efforts to the protection and development of children and women. NWCCW assisted the State Council to draw up and promulgate the National Program for Women's Development (1995–2000), the National Program of Action for Child Development in China in the 1990s, and the National Program for Women's Development (2001–2010). The main thrusts of NWCCW's activities are as follows:

- Coordinate with and encourage relevant government departments to strengthen legislation and work out measures pertinent to children and women, reinforce relevant government functions, implement programs for children and women, and advance their interests as a whole.
- Push relevant government departments to implement the United Nations' CEDAW and Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions on protecting women and children's rights and interests.
- Establish and strengthen the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of women's and children's programs. Design the system for and carry out state-level monitoring and assessment.

- Organize training for and strengthen the Government's capability in leading and implementing the programs.
- Focus on solving the key and difficult problems in children's education, women and children's health care, and provision of potable water and sanitary lavatories in the middle and western poverty-stricken regions and areas inhabited by minority ethnic groups, to improve the survival and quality of life of their children and women.
- Coordinate and discuss official business, coordinate relevant departments to solve prominent problems in the development of women and children, and protect women and children's legal rights and interests.

Appendix 7. Guidelines for the Monitoring and Evaluation System of the Program for the Development of Chinese Women (2001–2010)

National Working Committee on Children and Women under the State Council 2003

Objectives and Indicators	Leading Ministries and Organizations
A. Women and the Economy	
1. Ensure women's equal right and equal access to economic resources (assessment).	Women's federations Ministry and departments of agriculture Ministry and departments of labor and social security
2. Make efforts to eliminate gender discrimination and promote gender equality in employment, and safeguard the right of women to work, seeking to ensure that women account for over 40% of the total employed population.	
a. Employed population (national) (sex disaggregated)	Bureau and departments of statistics
b. Employed population (in cities and township in urban areas) (sex disaggregated)	Bureau and departments of statistics
c. Ratio of females employed, by sectors	Bureau and departments of statistics
d. Registered unemployed population (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
e. Employed population with disabilities (sex disaggregated)	Disabled persons' federations
f. Average annual wages in main enterprises (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
g. Professional and technical personnel (sex disaggregated)	Organizational Department of the Central Committee (of the Communist Party of China [CPC]) and its branches Ministry and departments of personnel
h. Professional and technical personnel in mid and high levels (sex disaggregated)	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches Ministry and departments of personnel
3. Ensure that women enjoy equal rights with men to social security and that over 90% of female urban workers are covered by maternity insurance.	
a. Number of people with Old-age Insurance (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
b. Number of people with medical insurance (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
c. Number of people with unemployment insurance (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
d. Number of people with insurance for work-related injuries (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
e. Number of women with maternity insurance (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
f. Coverage of unemployment insurance (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
g. Number of people with social old-age insurance in rural areas (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
4. Ensure special labor protection for female workers.	
a. Proportion of enterprises that have implemented special labor protection for female workers	Federations of trade unions
b. Proportion of enterprises that have implemented the regulations that restrict female workers from doing hazardous work	Federations of trade unions
c. Number of lawsuits by female laborers on infringement of their special labor protection rights	Women's federations

Objectives and Indicators	Leading Ministries and Organizations
d. Number of lawsuits on infringement of women’s special labor protection rights that have been dealt with by departments/institutions on labor and security.	Ministry and departments of labor and social security
5. Reduce poverty among women and bring down the number of women living in poverty	
a. Population in poverty (urban and rural)	Bureau and departments of statistics
b. Ratio of population in poverty (urban and rural)	Bureau and departments of statistics
c. Number of people receiving social relief (urban and rural)	Ministry and department of civil affairs
d. Number of people receiving the Minimal Standard of Living Guarantee (urban and rural)	Ministry and department of civil affairs
B. Women in Decision Making and Management	
1. Enhance women's participation in the administration and management of and decision making on state and social affairs.	
a. Number of representatives at the National People’s Congress (NPC) at the national level (male and female)	NPC at the national level.
b. Number of representatives at the People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at the national level (male and female)	CPPCC at the national level.
c. Bills (proposed to NPC) led by female NPC representatives	NPC at the national level.
d. Number of NPC representatives at provincial and prefecture levels (male and female)	People’s congresses at the provincial level.
e. Number of CPPCC representatives at provincial and prefecture levels (male and female)	CPPCC at the provincial level.
2. Raise the proportion of women in the administration. Try to ensure that there is more than one woman in the leading bodies of governments at all levels and that women are represented in the leading bodies of more than half of the ministries and commissions under the State Council and in the leading bodies of more than half of the government departments at the provincial and prefecture levels; introduce measures to ensure a significant increase in the number of women holding posts of major importance.	
a. Number of women at the minister or higher level	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
b. Number of female leading cadres at the prefecture level	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
c. Number of female leading cadres at the county level	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
d. Proportion of ministerial leading bodies (CPC and government) that have female leaders	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
e. Proportion of prefecture leading bodies (CPC and government) that have female leaders	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
f. Proportion of county-level leading bodies (CPC and government) that have female leaders	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
g. Proportion of governmental leading bodies of ministries and departments that have female leaders	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
h. Proportion of governmental leading bodies of provinces that have female leaders	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
i. Proportion of governmental leading bodies of prefectures that have female leaders	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches
j. Proportion of governmental leading bodies of counties that have female leaders	Organizational Department of the CPC Central Committee and its branches

Objectives and Indicators	Leading Ministries and Organizations
b. Literacy rate of young and middle-aged people (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of education Bureau and departments of statistics
4. Raise the level of life-long education of women	
a. Number of students in adult schools/institutes of high education (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of education
b. Number of students in adult schools for middle education (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of education
c. Number of students in adult schools for primary education (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and departments of education
4. Number of students who have received education for "green certificate" ¹ (sex disaggregated)	Women's federations Ministry and departments of agriculture
5. Increase the number of years of education that women receive on average to the advanced level in developing countries: Average years of education (sex disaggregated)	Bureau and departments of statistics
D. Women and Health	
1. Ensure that women have access to health-care services throughout their life cycle, and enhance women's life expectancy.	
a. Ratio of medical checkup before marriage	Ministry and department of health
b. Increased rate of examination and treatment of common gynecological diseases	Ministry and department of health
c. Incidence of gynecological diseases among rural women	Ministry and department of health
d. Average life expectancy (male and female)	Bureau and departments of statistics
2. Improve women's reproductive health	
a. Increased rate of prenatal medical examination	Ministry and department of health
b. Increased rate of childbirth in hospital	Ministry and department of health
c. Increased rate of childbirth in hospital in rural areas	Ministry and department of health
d. Increased rate of childbirth in hospital by pregnant and high-risk women in rural areas	Ministry and department of health
e. Increased rate of attendance by trained midwives at childbirth outside hospitals	Ministry and department of health
f. Reduced maternal mortality rate	Ministry and department of health
g. Degree of knowledge about reproductive health care among women of reproductive age (assessment)	Ministry and department of health
3. Ensure the right of women to family planning.	
a. Proportion of women using contraceptive methods	National Population and Family Planning Commission of China (NPFPC) and its departments Ministry and department relating health, NPFPC, and its departments NPFPC and its departments
b. Incidence of abortion	NPFPC and its departments
c. Incidence of complications from birth-control operations	NPFPC and its departments
d. Rate of increase of knowledge about reproductive health care among people of childbearing age	NPFPC and its departments
e. Proportion people receiving education on informed choices and methods of family planning	NPFPC and its departments
f. Proportion of men adopting birth-control measures	NPFPC and its departments
4. Ensure that migrant women have equal access to the same level of health-care services as registered resident women.	Ministry and department of health

¹ A practical course introduced into junior high school education to enable girls to acquire more comprehensive knowledge and production skills.

Objectives and Indicators	Leading Ministries and Organizations
5. Bring the rate of women infected with HIV/AIDS under control at a low level.	
a. Reported number of people newly diagnosed with HIV, annually (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and department of health
b. Total number of people with HIV (sex disaggregated)	Ministry and department of health
c. Reported number of persons infected by sexually transmitted diseases (annually, sex disaggregated)	Ministry and department of health
d. Proportion of people who have to be informed of preventive knowledge on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (urban and rural areas).	Ministry and department of health
6. Enhance awareness among women about health maintenance to promote women's physical fitness: Number of facilities per 10,000 people	Women's federations
E. Women and the Law	
1. Reinforce and improve the laws and regulations that promote equality between men and women.	Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council, NPC.
2. Develop programs to disseminate the laws and regulations for the protection of women's rights and interests.	Ministries and departments of the judiciary, women's federations
3. Protect women's rights over their persons and prohibit all forms of violence against women.	
a. Number of cases of rape that have been criminalized	Ministry and departments of public security
b. Number of cases of trafficking in women that have been criminalized	Ministry and departments of public security
c. Number of cases of enforced prostitution that have been uncovered.	Ministry and departments of public security
d. Number of women and children that have been rescued from trafficking.	Ministry and departments of public security
e. Reduced number of women victims of criminal offenses.	Ministry and departments of public security
f. Anti-domestic violence (assessment)	Women's federations
4. Safeguard the rights of women to property, as equal with men.	
a. Number of cases of violations of women's property rights	Women's federations
b. Number of civil law cases of divorce and breaking of cohabitation relationships	Courts
5. Protect women's lawful right of complaint, right of appeal, and various rights and interests in legal proceedings. Number of social workers from women's federations who are specially invited as jurors	Women's federations
6. Provide legal aid to women.	
a. Number of legal services that support women and children	Ministry and departments of the judiciary
b. Number of women and children that have received support from the legal services	Ministry and departments of the judiciary
c. Number of legal services set up by women's federations	Women's federations
F. Women and the Environment	
1. Create a social environment that enables the overall development of women.	Women's federations Ministries and departments of culture, radio, film, and television
2. Enhance the level of the social welfare enjoyed by women.	
a. Number of welfare establishments oriented to adoption	Ministry and departments of civil affairs
b. Number of welfare beds/10,000 people	Ministry and departments of civil affairs

Objectives and Indicators	Leading Ministries and Organizations
c. Number of community services facilities/10,000 people	Ministry and departments of civil affairs
d. Number of establishments of web of services with easy access/10,000 people.	Ministry and departments of civil affairs
e. Coverage of welfare institutions adopting elder people in rural areas	Ministry and departments of civil affairs
3. Enhance family virtues, and encourage equal, healthy, harmonious, and stable family relations.	
a. Number of “Five-Good Civilized Families” ² at different levels	Women’s federations
b. Number of the parent schools.	Women’s federations
c. Beneficiaries of the parent schools (annual)	Women’s federations
4. Work to create a favorable living and working environment for women.	
a. Ensure sanitary toilets are available and accessible to a greater proportion of the people in the rural areas	Associations and organizations for disease control and prevention
b. Rate of decrease of using fields for defecation in villages	Associations and organizations for disease control and prevention
c. Safe drinking water is available and accessible to a greater proportion of the rural people	Associations and organizations for disease control and prevention
d. Availability of tap water in rural areas	Associations and organizations for disease control and prevention
e. Ensure that water is available and accessible to a greater proportion of the people living in the rural areas where water is scarce	Ministry and departments of water resources
f. Increased rates of sewage centralized disposal	Ministry and departments of construction
g. Increased rates of sanitary garbage disposal.	Ministry and departments of construction
5. Enhance women's participation in environmental protection and decision making.	
a. Number of bases of “March 8 Green Projects” ³ above county level nationwide	State forestry administration and its departments
b. Area covered by March 8 Green Projects bases above county level	State forestry administration and its departments, Women’s federations
c. Number of women participated in planting trees voluntarily at national level	State forestry administration and its departments, Women’s federations.
d. Number of trees planted by women voluntarily (annual)	State forestry administration and its departments, Women’s federations
e. Women’s participation in decision making in environmental protection	State Environmental Protection Administration and departments Women’s federations

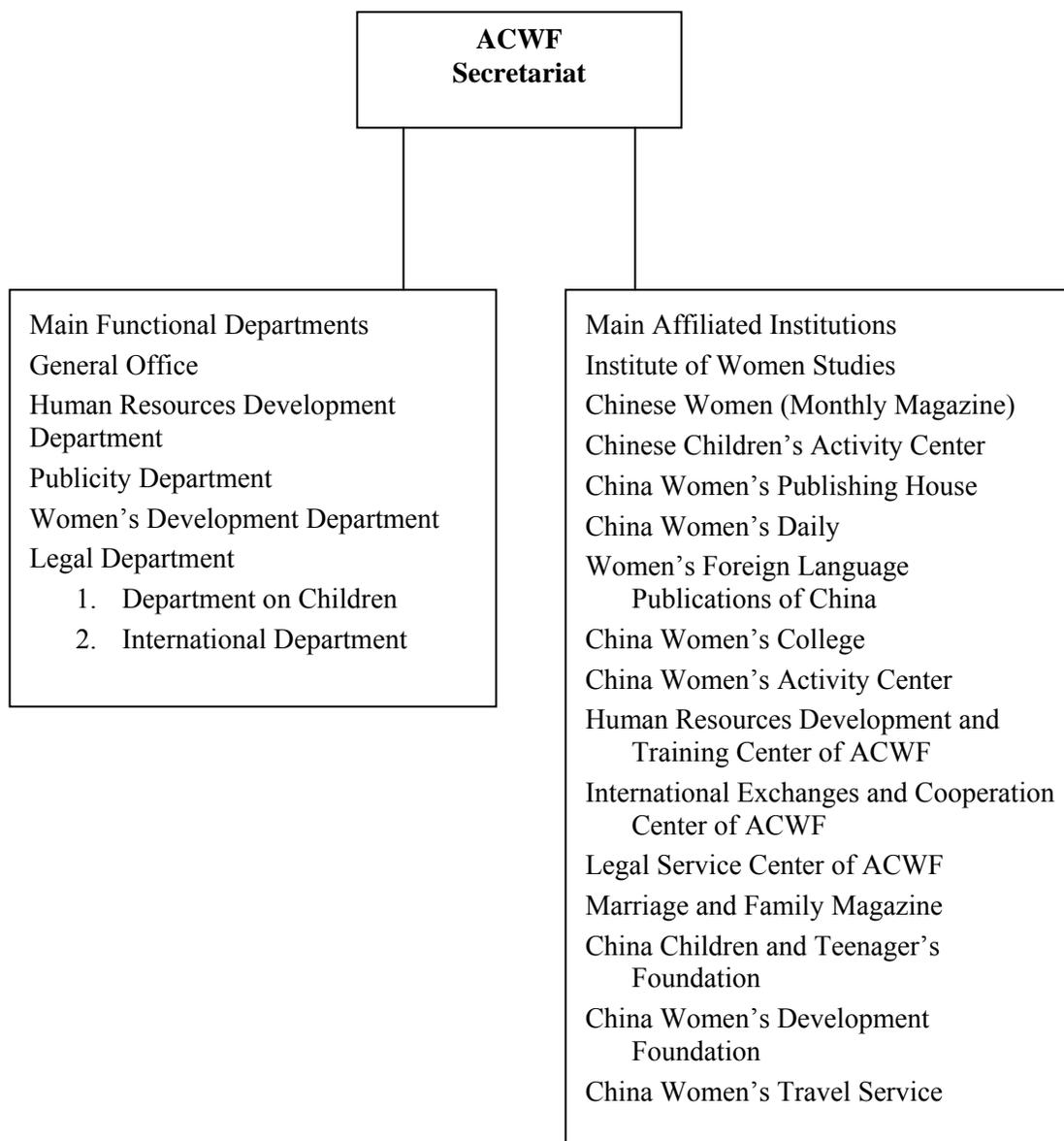
² This campaign, initially called the “Five Good Families,” was introduced by the All China Women’s Federation in the 1950s. This campaign, supported by similar activities such as selecting model, harmonious, and good families, has deeply involved families throughout society. In 1996, the All China Women's Federation, together with 18 relevant government departments, set up the National Coordinating Group for the Campaign of Five-Good Civilized Family. Coordinating groups were set up in all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central Government.

³ A social mobilization campaign for environmental protection and publicity campaigns initiated by the All China Women's Federation in the beginning of 1990s. With the support of the Government, the project involves over 100 million women volunteers a year in tree planting, shelterbelt construction, and small drainage area control (/20050824/8.htm).

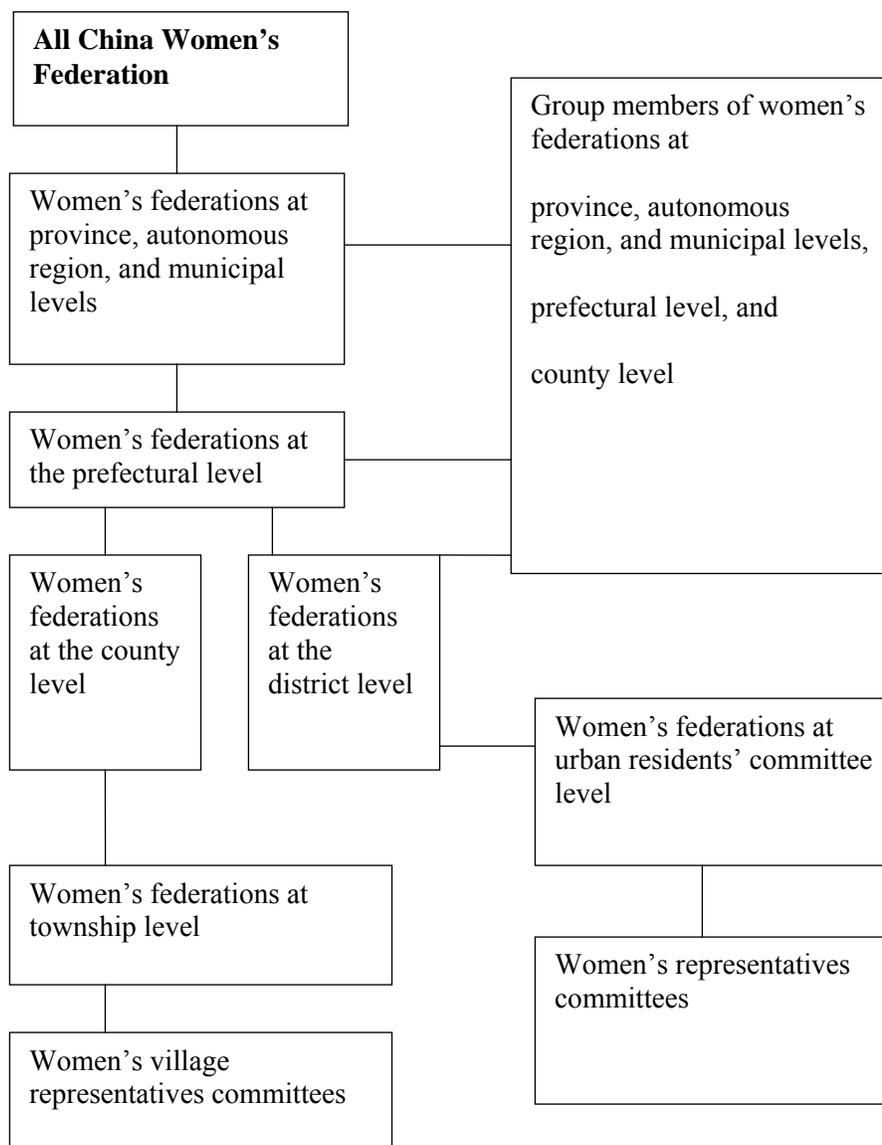
Objectives and Indicators	Leading Ministries and Organizations
f. Spreading of knowledge about environmental protection (assessment)	State Environmental Protection Administration and departments, Women's federations.
6. Seek to increase the amount of time that women may budget for their own pursuits (assessment).	Bureau and departments relating to statistics, Women's federations.

Source: Chinese version is available at www.nwccw.gov.cn/show/.

Appendix 8. Organization Chart of the All China Women's Federation at the Central Level



Appendix 9. Structure of the All China Women's Federation



Appendix 10. Recommendations from the Workshop on Gender and Poverty

The workshop on gender and poverty was held in Beijing on 6 September 2005. ADB, College of Humanities and Development of China Agricultural University, NBS, and the World Bank, cosponsored the workshop. Recommendations from the workshop are as follows:

1. Impacts of international agencies on promoting gender equality
 - Assess the impacts of the United Nations system on promoting gender equality.
 - Assess donors' programs and projects for their gender impacts.
 - Promote use of the gender mainstreaming methods and tools of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).
 - Share the experience of ILO in its 3+1 Project.
 - Build effective mechanisms to promote gender equality among government, donors, mass organizations, and NGOs.
2. Mainstreaming the national machinery for gender equality in government system
 - Mainstream gender equality in government agencies.
 - Increase the status of national machinery for gender equality.
 - Develop sector-specific gender mainstreaming strategies.
 - Identify entry point for donors and government agencies to collaborate on mainstreaming gender.
3. Gender awareness education
 - Provide gender analysis training for government officials, researchers, etc.
 - Raise awareness of the need for gender equality through workshops, the media, etc.
 - Making available brief versions of policies on promoting gender equality for the public and policy makers to read.
4. Policy dialogue on gender equality
 - Organize workshops on gender equality for government agencies.
 - Involve NGOs in policy dialogue.
 - Hold high-level gender policy dialogue among ministries.
5. Disseminate key findings of the country gender assessment

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