

Opening Remarks

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Delivered at the Learning Workshop on Gender Equality and International Development Cooperation on Tuesday, 5 December 2023

Excellencies, Distinguished speakers and participants. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Learning Workshop on Gender Equality and International Development Cooperation. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is crucial to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. International Development Cooperation has been a driving force to advance this agenda, and Official Development Assistance, or ODA, plays a crucial part in this effort.

Although ODA is an essential source of financing for gender equality and women's empowerment, the reality is that the share of ODA for gender equality has been stagnating. Overall, only 4% of bilateral ODA designates gender equality and women's economic empowerment as their *principal* objective. While the share increases to 40% when it comes to bilateral ODA that *mainstreams* gender in their policy objectives, the need to maximise both the quantity and quality of development financing for gender equality is clear.

Today's forum is particularly significant for the 2023 Development Cooperation Week, commemorating the Republic of Korea's inclusion into the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. It is also important to highlight that the Republic of Korea's 2024 ODA budget will increase by more than 40 percent, compared to this year. Advancing gender equality through international development cooperation stands out as one of the key priorities for our Centre in the coming years. We are eager to collaborate closely with key stakeholders like government representatives, development partners and civil society organizations on this important topic.

Our commitment involves identifying compelling ODA efforts that implement gender equality as their principal objectives, as well as sharing gender-transformative ODA strategies implemented by OECD countries. Furthermore, we aim to support strengthening the monitoring framework to make sure that gender mainstreaming is to be effectively reflected in the design and implementation of ODA efforts.

I would like to thank all the speakers, especially Janelle Weissman from UN Women regional office for Asia and the Pacific, for joining us and sharing your expertise and invaluable suggestions. My special thanks also go to Dr. Minah Kang who has been a proactive advocate for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women around the world. I am sure that she will do a lot more going forward.

Last but not least, I want to thank our donor – the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea, for their generous support for this important work. Thank you, and I wish you all a fruitful discussion.