



President's Message

Since 1983, the Korean Women's Development Institute, the overarching women's policy research institute of the nation, has enthusiastically pursued the mission of accomplishing gender equality in Korea as the top women's policy research institute. On this 25th anniversary of our foundation, we face an important turning point to reestablish our role as we witness the changes of the society and new conditions for women's policies. For example, while more women desire to participate in economic activity, their career conditions are becoming more diversified due to the increasing flexibility in the labor market. The family structure is also becoming diversified with the introduction of new types of family such as so-called 'multicultural' family. These changes do not weaken the legitimacy for women's policies, but reinforce it and nicely dovetail into the new government's vision for women's policy 'the sustainably gender equal society'. Under the new vision, we need to unearth new research agendas with more diversified and specialized topics and of a more longitudinal perspective. Still, it is our founding mission to fulfill the role of supporting the country as a think tank for women and family policy.

Korean women's economic activity participation rate has stayed in the 50% range for the last 10 years, rating 27th among the 30 OECD member countries and reflecting low gender equality sentiment in Korea. This year, the main theme of the 100th year of the International Women's Day, was the 'improvement of women's economic power'. It is globally being recognized that women's policy needs synergy in conjunction with other policy areas such as family, labor, and welfare, of not only improving women's rights but also enhancing life quality by taking harmony with males into consideration in both its implementation and practice to establish truly gender equal society. It is our mission to help realize such a goal. Thereupon, the KWDI strives to utilize the principle and strategy of 'gender partnership' to achieve a healthy society. Accordingly, proactive efforts to incorporate gender equality into national policy are in earnest need.

We believe that efforts to increase efficiency in gender equality policy based on accurate understanding of gender gap will ultimately contribute to the new government's advancement through creation of female employments, stabilizing family as the basic unit of a society, and vitalizing labor market. Some core action items set by the KWDI to realize such vision are as

follows:

First, the establishment of gender impact evaluation program. Despite the existence of sexual difference across the society, clear, systematic and statistical gender impact analyses have not been practiced efficiently. We believe that it is our role as the producer of gender equality policies to substantiate gender impact evaluation program through implementation and expansion of gender awareness statistics information system.

Second, a co-operative network with other government agencies of women's policy research is much needed. We will develop diverse policy research themes with such a network to increase practicality and effectiveness of national policy.

Third, we hope to expand our scope of research to include gender related issues and problems of the Asia Pacific region. We will upgrade the institute's status to an international women's policy center by building international network through international symposium and information exchanges and reinforcing international cooperation function.

The Gender Studies and Policy Review, which is an yearly scholarly journal in English, witnesses the publication of its first edition this year. It is dedicated to share the gender related problems and issues that Korean society faces with the international society and seek positive solutions together. We hope to watch this international journal grow to be forum for worldwide women's issues and policies discussion and encourage many national and international scholars, researchers and policy executioners to participate in its publication.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your continuous interests in and supports for the Gender Studies and Policy Reviews in advance.

Taehyun Kim

President

Korean Women's Development Institute

