

Speech of Alexander I. Ageev in Baku on April 8, 2011

The female Renaissance is inevitable

Your Excellency, dear ladies and respected gentlemen!

Women are the key factor of economic growth and agent of innovative changes. The share of female employment in the economy increases every year and will soon reach 100 % women's involvement in economy.

Sometimes men talk about women's role in life, society and economy like this. I think we should not speak in this way. More appropriate another style.

More than a hundred years ago one poet said the following about a woman:

You are a woman, you are a book amongst the books,

You - like a convolute imprinted scroll;

The lines of which contain an overflow of thoughts and words,

And every moment of this paper makes me sore.

One hundred years later a modern poet, addressing to his beloved woman, said the following:

You are carelessness and resignation,

You are intrigue and solitaire,

You are cascade of inspiration,

You are a violin and bass viol.

So there were millenniums, when the best texts of the world literature and poetry were dedicated to women. Thus, we can fix from the very beginning that women have been dominating minds and feelings of men for a long time. However, this power caused a lot of compensatory reactions from the part of men. Another poet who lived in Caucasus, mentioned:

Wrote verses poet to his wife:

"You are my light and star, and dawn,

*When you're nearby, I 'm fine,
When I don't see you – life is bitter!"
But when his wife - the star and light –
Appeared and remained in doorway.
"Again you're here! - our poet cried, -
Let me write verses, for the sake of Heaven!"*

Thus, in these verses we see men's attitude to women - it is sublime and hypocritical, reverential and cowardly at the same time. But it is wrong to say that the status of women in modern society was always like this. There were times of matriarchy, there were times described, particularly in the Old Testament Book of Judges, when male commanders, not coping with their responsibilities, appealed to women-judges and woman assumed the mission, was courageous, protecting society, people and families from the cowardice of men.

But over the last few centuries men really consolidated their positions, introduced quotas in legislation for woman, and we see our current. And this is sad. I will name four challenges, which bring us to the effects, mentioned by Her Excellency - the need for global ethics and the fact that regardless of men's wishes and, moreover, regardless of women's wishes the role of women will be inevitably increasing.

The first challenge: we live in the world where there will be more and more natural and technological disasters. Suffice it to recall the disasters in the Gulf of Mexico, at Sayano-Shushenskaya power plant, or at "Fukushima". And there will be more and more of them. Any catastrophe causes tears, any disaster means sorrow and death. In this sense, who is more able to compassionate and empathize with the others than women? Of course, any father suffers when he loses a son or a daughter, but who can compare feelings of a father with those of a mother who bore this child and brought him up. This is the first cause, which will increase the role of women.

The second reason is no less important: we are becoming more and more numerous. Every ten years about one hundred million new people appear on the Earth. Before children have time to become adults, the population is growing more and more. And that is why how these people are being educated, how these societies are organized, how they are filled with new immigrants (we see that the proportion of migrants increases in every society, especially in Europe) - it all depends on how a woman is capable to carry out maybe her most important vital role - the role of a mother. That is why not by accident we are now in Russia actively raising the question of giving the professional status to motherhood, because raising children is no less important work than any other.

Thirdly, any restrictions that impede women to develop, to acquire education, to achieve the necessary cultural and political level, of course, should be eliminated. Yesterday at various improvised round tables we were conducting examination of this situation, and our female colleagues told us a lot new about the situation. Frankly speaking I was shocked, but the important point, which should be reflected here – is the glass ceiling syndrome referred to by Gulshen Pashayeva, our yesterday speaker. Glass ceiling means that a woman on her way up the career ladder has got a ceiling that is not existing on the way of a men. And it is necessary that these glass ceilings on the way of women should be broken by men. The man who will do it first, without waiting for women to force him to do it, will become a hero. Because this is not women's work – to break the glass ceilings.

And finally the fourth, very important, thing, happening now in the economy. Existing economic crises and conflicts, of course, require the growing participation of women in the negotiation process. Where men will continue to cherish their pride, women are capable to apply quite different negotiation strategies and tactics. But more important is the fact, that the world passes to new technological mode in which nanotechnologies, nanomaterials, new attitude to information are becoming more significant, but the most important, happening right before our eyes – is what's called

cognitive revolution (changes in the way of thinking, happening in everybody's minds).

Just recently, science has discovered three very important laws relating to our consciousness and our brain. Firstly, each person has got a so-called matrix of standards, that is each of us by nature, from birth and from God has got a program of good behavior, good life, but because we have freedom of choice, we occasionally violate these rules. For this we are given either diseases or accidents, or misfortunes, but in any case, we are possessing initially this right targets, so the idea of global ethics is deeply rooted not only in religious texts, but also in the very structure of the brain. And this is a very important argument for what Her Excellency was speaking about. And, secondly, in each human brain there is the so-called "error detector" – this is a system that sends us back to the correct behavior. Let you call it conscience, call it ethics, it does not matter - it is the deepest structure of the brain. But the most important recent discovery of science is the fundamental difference between men and women, and this discovery just like a bell strikes on for the need to increase the role of women. The fact is that man initially has one dominant in the brain, it is the great illusion, that Julius Caesar could do three things at the same time... He could do them, but with the loss for the other two things. A man can do only one thing at a moment, think of only one matter at a time. A woman has got what is called "dual-consciousness", i.e. she can simultaneously without losses to every thought and deed make these two things. In other words, women are twice as effective in the brain than men.

And one more idea. Now the world is actively debating about the measurement of economic growth and gross national product index no longer reflects what people are doing in life in general and in economics in particular. Not accidentally, Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, created a commission which was examining this subject. They offered some concepts for measuring human capital. But last year it became clear that even this approach does not reflect what actually is. It is no accident that in China scientists are actively working on the reconciliation of GDP

with indicators of happiness. Happiness can be measured, and happiness cannot be reduced only to how much time we spend at work, it depends on how much time we spend stuck in traffic jams, how much time we spend on children and how this time is filled with what provides happiness. And who understands happiness better than a woman? I am afraid that men in this respect are much more superficial than women. Because life satisfaction was originally set in a woman, but not in a man. Therefore, the female factor is extremely important to measure the very indices of our progress.

And the last. I am extremely happy to be on this podium in the minority, but this happiness is combined with deep concern, which I have keenly felt today. This anxiety was revealed by one great poetess about hundred years ago, when she said the following words:

Could Beatrice have written like Dante,

or Laura have glorified love's pain?

I set the style for women's speech...

God help me shut them up again!

These are the verses of Anna Akhmatova, a man would not dare to say something like this. What is the modern meaning of these words? I have no doubt that in the nearest future women will achieve all the objectives specified in all declarations of UNESCO or in the European Union's Charter of Human Rights. It's inevitable. And when this time comes, when we reach absolute social and political equality of men and women, in the light of the fact that we – men – are initially weaker in our minds and our actions, more cowardly than women, I am concerned about the rights of men.

So I would like to ask all the participants while adopting the program with regard to the role of women, not to make a mistake, which was made by men, because three or five hundred years ago, having gained power, they consolidated their weakness by the power of law. We ask women on their way towards these vertices not to forget our rights – the rights of men, because in this biological and cultural

diversity, supported by laws and declarations of UN and UNESCO still some place should be allocated to us. Thank you!