



Chinese Women's Research Association Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Relation to the Performance of the Chinese Government in Promoting Women's Health Services

Chinese Women's Research Association

1. We are pleased to note that the Chinese government has actively implemented the "elimination of discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services" mentioned in Article 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Women's health, as a priority area in promoting gender equality and women's development, has been incorporated into the overall layout of economic and social development and into various policies. As a result, an increasingly improved women's health system has been formed, and has been providing women with all-round and full-cycle health services. Women's health has been improved significantly.

2. We are appreciative of the efforts made by the Chinese government in increasing investment in the construction of maternal and child health care institutions to improve conditions of grassroots women's health service facilities. From 2016 to 2020, the government has allocated an investment of 11.08 billion yuan to support the construction of 617 maternal and child health care institutions. More efforts have been made to strengthen the network of medical service communities at county level to improve the service capacity of township and village health centers. The government also strengthens the standardization of rural medical and health institutions, and basically set up one clinic in each administrative village, giving priority to basic medical equipment in township and village health centers. By 2018, there were 71,586 health centers at township and community level. By 2020, there were 3,052



maternal and child health care institutions nationwide. There were 807 maternity hospitals, twice the number in 2010. There were 285,000 obstetricians and gynecologists, an increase of 55.7% over 2010.

3. We are pleased to see that public health services for women are constantly improving. In 2020, the national in-hospital delivery rate was 99.9%, and the maternal system management rate was 92.7%. China Women's Development Foundation has continued to carry out the charity project "Mother Health Express" for 20 years, providing convenient services for pregnant women in remote and impoverished areas to seek medical treatment, benefiting more than 78.7 million people.

4. We appreciate that the Chinese government has continuously strengthened the urban and rural maternal and child health service network. The government has relentlessly invested in grassroots maternal and child health service, established annual report mechanism and built a monitoring network. The maternal and child health care network has been gradually integrated into the national medical security network covering 1.4 billion people in urban and rural areas. Moreover, the government has vigorously applied digital technologies and continually strengthened capabilities in information collection, analysis and utilization. Self-service equipment and service facilities have been improved. Women have been guided to seek medical treatment in an orderly manner, and women's medical experience has been effectively improved.

5. We are pleased to see that Chinese women's health has been continually improved. The average life expectancy of Chinese women increased from 79.43 years in 2015 to 80.88 years in 2020. According to the *United Nations World Population Prospects*, the average life expectancy of Chinese women ranked 62nd among 184 countries in 2020, four years higher than the world average for women. In 2020, maternal mortality rate in China was 16.9 per 100,000, 22.1% lower than that of 2014, ranking among the world's middle and high-income countries. The maternal mortality rate in urban and rural areas was 14.1 per 100,000 and 18.5 per 100,000, respectively, a

decrease of 31.2% and 16.7% compared to 2014.

6. We note that women's health still faces challenges, and the fairness, accessibility, and inclusiveness of women's health services need to be further improved. Cervical and breast cancer still threaten women's health. Women of all ages face an increase in mental health problems. The number of women of advanced maternal age is increasing, which brings forth growing pressure to the safety of mothers and infants. In addition, neither the capacity of grassroots service nor the capability of the medical personnel is sufficient to meet women's needs.

7. We suggest that Chinese government continue to strengthen the maternal and child health service systems, by increasing investment in underdeveloped areas to improve infrastructure and quality of the services. The government needs to establish more health service projects targeting to women in remote and poor rural areas. Moreover, the government needs to make every effort to provide more cervical and breast cancer screening program for women in poverty in rural or urban areas.

8. We recommend the establishment of a comprehensive management model for women's health services throughout their life cycle. The government needs to focus on improving women's nutrition throughout the life cycle, provides targeted sexual health education for adolescents, continues to strengthen efforts to ensure safe childbirth, and strengthens health services that address the health needs of older women. The government should continue to improve the public mental health service system, pay attention to the mental health of women at different ages.

9. We suggest further strengthening women's health promotion and education. The government needs to mobilize the enthusiasm of medical professionals to participate in health promotion and education, and encourage them to carry out public education and institutional training. In addition, the government needs to coordinate various resources and communities to provide training for women to increase their health knowledge, awareness and ability.