### Advancing the Role of Women in Politics and Civil Society

**By: Ahmad Shah Karimi**

Indisputably women are an influential and inspiring class of society. They are a change and shining examples of diligence and endurance who are able to push the country towards development. Besides, their contributions toward a strong and fertile society are increasingly well documented, there is an underlying understanding of why women’s meaningful participation is essential for building and sustaining development. Because women’s participation results in tangible gains for democracy, including greater representation to citizens needs, more sustainable governance, and political stability. Therefore, their productive abilities, skills and participation should be shaped at the society and at the family level. Women’s political participation has promoted positive and democratic impacts on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizen’s lives. Secondly, women are deeply committed to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and have a vital role to play in peace negotiations. Women often suffer disproportionately during armed conflict and often advocate strongly for militarization, reconstruction and the prevention of further conflict. Peace agreements, post-conflict reconstruction and governance have a better chance of long-term success when women are involved. Furthermore, establishing sustainable peace requires transforming the post-conflict environment including advancing and capable gender relations. For instance, when women are empowered as political leaders, countries often experience higher standards of living with positive development results, better infrastructures and employment, and concrete steps being taken to help make democracy deliver. Despite these impressive achievements, women still require considerable time and changes in order to meaningfully participate. Political participation and holding institutional positions, especially in the current age of a 21st century democracy, does not necessarily mean that women are automatically considered in the same way as men. Therefore, the need for women leaders is obvious and the role they play in the society must be considered and they need to lead, creating the opportunity for advancement and helping build networks of like-minded men and women, and ensuring that women’s legal rights are firmly entrenched, a pathway to power can be developed. Next, transparency in the political and legislative processes is critical to the advancement of women in political and civil society. The lack of openness in political decision-making and understanding of internal processes are crucial for fostering the growth of women leaders. Similarly, the complex hierarchies in political parties and legislatures represent a barrier to many women to enter politics at the local level or in the national legislature. Moreover, there must be the willingness of citizens-specially men to accept women leaders, and women leaders must be able to represent and work on women’s issues. There will be challenges in doing that because there are still possibilities in discouraging women from competing directly with men or consider childrearing and housekeeping to be the exclusive domain of women. As such, it is common to seek women with the world to see active participation, supporting democratic activities at the grassroots level, yet to see few women at local and national leadership positions. From the grassroots to the nation level, one can see women from whom to draw for higher levels of political leadership. Conceived efforts must be made to raise awareness of gender equality and the need for gender political roles cannot emerge without genuine norms. The support of male political leaders is also a key ingredient in a political climate that encourages women’s political participation. Moreover, there are many more effective approaches to encourage women’s political participation in political arena. Conducting ongoing communications trainings, focusing on building leadership skills, training in conflict and compliance with the laws, enforcing the code of conduct and principles of elected women, and urging help to change social and political attitudes and behaviors.

Participation of women in civil society organizations (CSOs) and particularly where women hold leadership positions can play a key role in increasing women’s political participation. Furthermore, they can advocate for issues concerning them and provide much-needed expertise on key policy issues and help illustrate how policies may affect men and women, and boys and girls differently. Women’s leadership can influence and gain visibility, credibility and respect, and to promote peace and good governance. In many regions, civic organizations are led by women, and are often viewed as vehicles for women’s leadership, they have emerged as important structures for anchoring the movement for gender equality. Creating strong partnerships among women in civic organizations and civil society organizations can increase the recognition of the women’s leadership and, simultaneously, the common women’s agenda in a coordinated way. Furthermore, partnerships among women in civil society organizations provide the opportunity to influence government and gain visibility, credibility and respect, while working in a coordinated and unified way. The government, influential political leaders, political parties should increase the political participation of women because women are the same as men with whom, inevitably they are in greater strategic need of a sustainable political future. Such an approach will help to create and push the country towards equality and prosperity because women leaders have a very significant role to play in promoting the role of women and action. Ahmad Shah Karimi is the emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghani- stan. He can be reached at ahmadshakarimi21@gmail.com.

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### The Global Impact of a Chinese Recession

**By Kenneth Rogoff**

When China finally has its inevitable growth recession – which will almost surely be amplified by a financial crisis – the world economy’s response will be more muted than one might expect. With US President Donald Trump’s trade war hitting US-China growth at just the right time, this is no idle concern. Typical estimates, for example those embodied in the International Monetary Fund’s assessments of country risk, suggest that an economic slowdown in China will be less severe than expected. But the actual slowdown will be larger than expected. Furthermore, to the extent that China has already sold off (and not bought back at the same rate) large-scale Chinese manufacturing imports are intermediates that end up being embodied in exports to the US and Europe, foreign firms nonetheless still get the benefit as sales in China slide. Investors today are also concerned about rising interest rates, which not only put a damper on consumption and investment, but also reduce the market value of companies (particularly tech firms) whose valuations depend heavily on profit growth far in the future. A Chinese recession could again the situation worse.

I appreciate the usual core question: if any economy anywhere slows, this lowers worldwide aggregate demand, and therefore puts downward pressure on the global economy. But modern theory is also more nuanced. High Asian savings rates over the past two decades have been a significant factor in the low overall level of real (inflation-adjusted) interest rates in the US and Europe. As the US has built up a surplus, Chinese government savings have financed much of the deficit. And as China slows, the US deficit will increase, which is a headwind for US growth. Former US Federal Reserve chair Ben Bernanke famously characterized this mechanism as such an example of global savings. “The US current account deficit and the Chinese slowdown that spreads across Asia could potentially lead to higher interest rates elsewhere – especially if a second US recession is realized.”

Moreover, the US’s trade deficit with China is shrinking, so that China’s economy matters even more than many people thought. Kenneth Rogoff, a former chief economist of the IMF, is a Professor of Economics and Finance at Harvard University.

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