

Action Plan for Enhancement of Girls' Rights

I. Status and challenges

At the end of December 2012, Taiwan's population of people under age 18 was 4,380,203, of which 2,282,863 were boys (52.12%) and 2,097,340 were girls (47.88%). According to statistics taken at the end of 2011, the distribution of family care, education and health care resources between genders in the under-18 group was similar to that in other age brackets. However, girls remain at a considerable disadvantage: fetal gender selection is common in Taiwan, pregnant teens face enormous difficulties, students in higher education gravitate toward traditionally "feminine" or "masculine" fields, girls are more vulnerable in terms of physical safety, and gender bias still exists in the media and in cultural traditions.

These challenges can harm a girl's self-esteem and inhibit the development of her capabilities. To protect and advance girls' rights, all of Taiwan's government agencies must continue to foster a social environment that supports girls, invests in them and encourages their participation in the decisions that affect themselves.

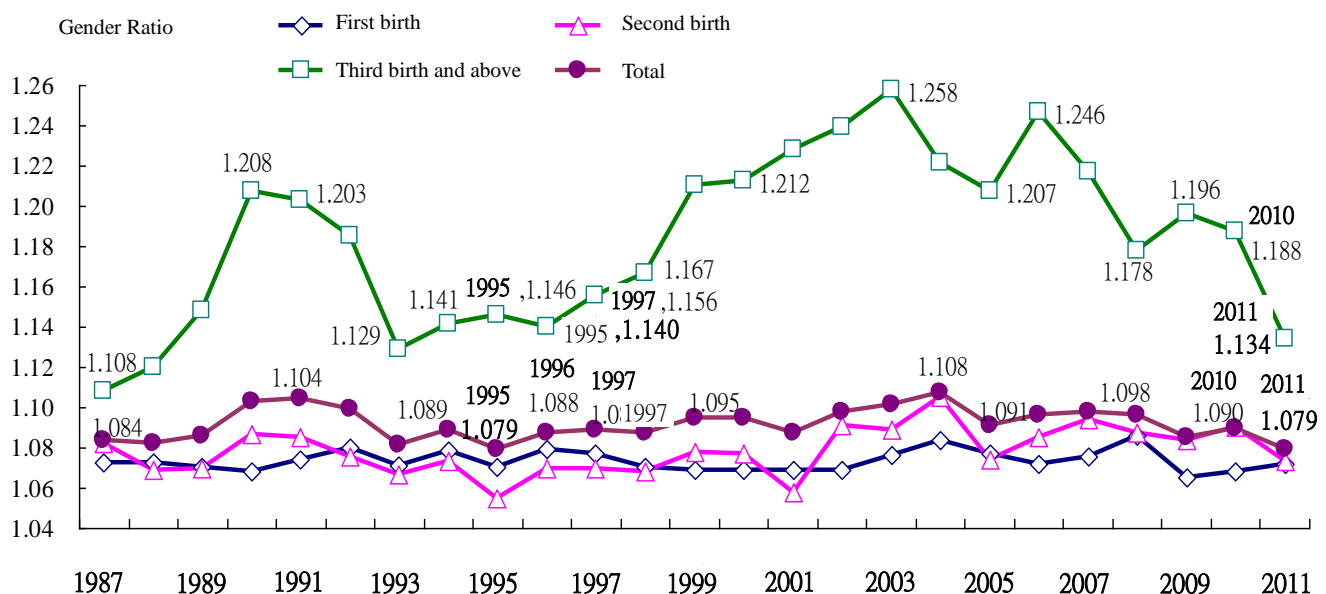
A. Physical and psychological health

(1) Gender ratio imbalance in newborns

In Taiwan, traditional favoritism for boys and the

desire of many to carry on the family name have resulted in a higher newborn gender ratio than the normal 105-106 boys for every 100 girls. Over the past few years, the government has promoted gender equality concepts, established birth gender ratio monitoring and auditing mechanisms, and passed comprehensive legislation, all of which have helped lower the ratio to 107.9:100 as of 2011. However, the ratio for the third birth and above was 113.4:100, still much higher than the normal gender ratio at birth (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Gender ratios at birth
(by order of birth)



Source: Department of Health, Executive Yuan

(2) Teen pregnancy and marriage impede education

and skill development

In the United Nation Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 21 states that the heavy responsibilities of marriage can affect the physical and psychological development of young girls. And according to the World Health Organization, underaged girls who marry and have children suffer more health risks; they face difficulty attaining education and are less likely to become financially independent.

According to official statistics in 2011, there were 2,620 young married girls aged 15-19 in Taiwan, and 2,847 babies born to mothers of the same age group. In 2007, there were 128 recorded cases of pregnancies in senior high school students or below, of which 111 students continued to pursue education; in 2010 those numbers rose to 163 and 135, respectively. The problem of teen pregnancy and marriage continues to exist, and the number of pregnant students is rising. Some girls even choose to drop out of school, which negatively impacts their development (see charts 1 and 2).

Chart 1 Individuals aged 15-19 with spouses

	Males		Females	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Aged 15-19 with spouses in 2011	573	17.95	2,620	82.05

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of the Interior

Chart 2 Infants born to mothers aged 15-19

	1 st birth	2 nd birth	3 rd birth	4 th birth	Total
Infants born to mothers aged 15-19 in 2011	2,437	375	31	4	2,847

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of the Interior

B. Education and capability building

(1) Low participation in sports activities

Regular exercise is vital to maintaining fitness and health. However, gender stereotypes and limited sports options have kept many women away from such activities. Not only does this have an impact on the physical and psychological development of girls, it also makes it difficult for them to develop a regular habit of exercising. A disparity is seen in the number of male and female students participating in elementary and junior high school sports teams (see Chart 3).

Chart 3 Number of sports teams and participants in elementary and junior high school in 2009

	Number of school sports teams			Number of schools with sports teams			Number of students on sports teams			Number of schools participating in interscholastic competitions		
	Male	Female	Co-ed	Male	Female	Co-ed	Male	Female	Co-ed	Male	Female	Co-ed
Total	6,233	5,066	576	5,707	4,691	507	77,643	47,964	10,632	5,453	4,367	453

Junior high	2,091	1,575	55	1,997	1,511	50	25,334	11,924	976	1,930	1,418	43
Elementary	4,142	3,491	521	3,710	3,180	457	52,309	36,040	9,656	3,523	2,949	410

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Education

(2) Gender divergence in higher education

Among various fields of study at universities and colleges in 2011, females accounted for 34.39% of students in the sciences and merely 14.02% in the engineering, manufacturing, and construction fields. This reveals a clear “males in engineering and females in the humanities” divergence at the higher education level. Without adequate investment and training in science and engineering, these young girls may be put at a disadvantage in reaching their full potential (see Chart 4).

Chart 4 University and college students in 2011– by field, level, and gender

Unit: %

School year	Level	Total	Education	Humanities and arts	Social sciences, business, and law	Science	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Agricultural studies	Medicine, health, and social work	Services	Other
2011	Total	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
		Male	50.54	34.87	30.87	40.88	65.61	85.98	50.17	24.28	41.29
		Female	49.46	65.13	69.13	59.12	34.39	14.02	49.83	75.72	58.71
	PhD	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
		Male	70.34	48.86	47.97	61.44	72.95	88.29	62.10	53.77	67.74
		Female	29.66	51.14	51.14	52.03	38.56	27.05	11.71	46.23	32.26
	Master's	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
		Male	56.59	32.73	34.28	49.19	65.76	83.54	50.41	30.73	50.59

	Female	43.41	67.27	65.72	50.81	34.24	16.46	49.59	69.27	49.41	64.86
Under-graduate	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	Male	51.06	34.76	30.63	39.25	65.62	86.26	49.60	29.11	41.88	53.47
	Female	48.94	65.24	69.37	60.75	34.38	13.74	50.40	70.89	58.12	46.53
Associate	Total	100.00	-	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	-
	Male	27.67	-	23.08	30.97	59.06	90.20	49.53	11.78	32.27	-
	Female	72.33	-	76.92	69.03	40.94	9.80	50.47	88.22	67.73	-
Notes:	1. This chart was re-categorized according to the Standard Education Attainment and Course of Study Classification (4th amendment) implemented on July 4, 2007. 2. Other includes 990101 "human sexuality graduate programs" and 990199 "no major specified."										

Source: Department of Statistics, Ministry of Education

C. Physical safety

(1) Sex crime victims are mostly female

Girls are at higher risk of sexual assault or harassment because they may not be physically strong enough or sufficiently aware of their rights to defend themselves. Stereotyping and gender bias in society also propagate disrespect for the female body.

According to 2011 statistics from the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Education, girls accounted for a significantly higher percentage of victims than boys in sexual assaults, sexual harassment incidents on campus, and sex transactions. In addition, over 60% of missing teenagers (12-17 years old) were girls. More attention must be paid to keeping girls from being lured away from home (see charts 5 and 6).

Chart 5 Sex crime victims under 18 years old

Statistic (Source/period)	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage

Victims of sexual assault crimes (National Police Agency/Jan. to Jul. 2012)	169	6.6	2,402	93.4
Victims of campus sexual harassment (Ministry of Education /2011)	203	14.9	1,159	85.1
Victims of sex transactions (National Police Agency/2011)	5	0.99	501	99.01

Chart 6 Missing persons under 18

Statistic (Source/period)	Male		Female	
	Number of individuals	Percentage	Number of individuals	Percentage
Missing persons 0-11 years old (National Police Agency/2011)	843	60.13	559	39.87
Missing persons 12-17 years old (National Police Agency/2011)	4,309	37.08	7,312	62.92

(2) Victims' judicial rights need stronger protection

In judicial proceedings for sexual assault cases, the victim may easily be retraumatized during the investigation process and under repeated questioning by different agencies. Many young girls, often lacking legal knowledge

and the ability to state their case clearly, need assistive measures to ensure their judicial rights. Friendlier procedures and facilities can help alleviate their pre-court anxiety and stress. These and other protective measures should be continually strengthened.

D. Gender bias in media and cultural traditions

(1) Discriminatory perspectives in traditional customs

Some of Taiwan's traditional culture and customs are male-centered and they negatively impact girls' physical and psychological development. Such impacts include difficulty building self-esteem, and having fewer resources invested in them by families and society. These cultures and customs should be re-examined and changed.

(2) Media perpetuating gender stereotypes

Modern society offers a multitude of pathways to education. Aside from school, the media is another major avenue of learning for children and teens, and it also has profound influences on impressionable young girls learning about life values. Media content that convey gender stereotypes, objectification of women, and sexualized consumerism can all lead to low self-esteem and anxiety in girls and hurt their overall development and skill building.

II. Vision

This action plan contains 14 visions for girls in the four areas of physical and psychological health, education and capability development, physical safety, and media and cultural traditions. In addition to supporting the U.N. International Day of the Girl Child initiative, the action plan also aims to build social support for empowerment and investment in girls, and encourages girls to participate in the making of policies that affect themselves.

A. Ensuring physical and psychological health

- (1) Improve the newborn gender ratio imbalance, foster a social environment that respects the fetus' right to life regardless of sex
- (2) Increase body awareness and body autonomy in girls, instill the "healthy is beautiful" belief and boost their self-confidence
- (3) Provide girls with comprehensive physical, psychological, menstrual, and sex education; nurture positive physical, psychological, and sexual attitudes; promote harmonious relationships between the sexes
- (4) Protect and care for underaged pregnant girls, help them overcome social, educational, and developmental obstacles

B. Investing in education and capability building

- (1) Educate parents and family members about gender

equality, foster a gender-equal family view and growth environment

- (2) Empower girls to develop their potential and leadership capabilities, encourage self-actualization
- (3) Promote, research, and develop appropriate sports and facilities for girls, enhance their physical and psychological health
- (4) Reduce gender divergence in choice of studies, break traditional gender molds, plan appropriate career and development paths for girls
- (5) Increase investments in girls from disadvantaged families, promote stability in their home and school lives, enhance their competitiveness and development within society

C. Guarding physical safety

- (1) Eliminate violence and discrimination against girls, establish safe learning and living environments
- (2) Protect the judicial rights of child and teen victims of sex crimes
- (3) Implement sex offender supervision mechanisms; strengthen therapy, treatment, and supervision of the offenders to lower recidivism rates and minimize the number of girls victimized

D. Rooting out bias in media and cultural traditions

- (1) Root out gender bias from cultural traditions, foster a gender-sensitive traditional culture
- (2) Break stereotypes and gender molds in news and television programs, advertisements, newspapers and magazines; eliminate objectification and commercialization of girls' bodies; develop gender-equal media content

III. Strategic measures

The 14 visions for enhancing girls' rights will be realized through 75 strategic measures implemented by government agencies.

A. Ensuring physical and psychological health (19 measures)

Strategic Measures	Supervisory Organization
(1) Improve the newborn gender ratio imbalance, foster a social environment that respects the fetus' right to life regardless of sex	
1-1-1 Strengthen the monitoring of birth gender ratio, establish real-time birth reporting system.	Department of Health
1-1-2 Strengthen inspections of medical institutions with abnormal birth sex ratios, check for advertisement violations. Set up cross-departmental work groups and solidify the legal basis for inspection work, include	Department of Health

Strategic Measures	Supervisory Organization
inspections in performance evaluation indicators of local governments.	
1-1-3 Continue promoting equality of both girls and boys, and protect baby girls.	Department of Health
(2) Increase body awareness and body autonomy in girls, instill the “healthy is beautiful” belief and boost their self-confidence	
1-2-1 Establish and promote knowledge of body type standards for girls, help build their confidence and self-esteem.	Department of Health, Ministry of Education
1-2-2 Implement healthy eating indexes as part of the elementary and junior high school health and fitness curriculum.	Ministry of Education
1-2-3 Strengthen education on body type awareness and physical/mental health.	Department of Health, Ministry of Education
1-2-4 Promote correct ways of maintaining health. Enhance girls’ knowledge of healthy body types through various channels and prompt healthy behavioral changes.	Department of Health
(3) Provide girls with comprehensive physical,	

Strategic Measures	Supervisory Organization
psychological, menstrual, and sex education; nurture positive physical, psychological, and sexual attitudes; promote harmonious relationships between the sexes	
1-3-1 Strengthen efforts to help children, teenagers, and parents develop proper and healthy attitudes toward sex.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, Department of Health
1-3-2 Promote sexual health education for adolescents. Work with school health committees to plan sex education topics and implement “Health-Promoting School” programs.	Department of Health, Ministry of Education
1-3-3 Institute health education in all schools and include it in annual performance evaluations.	Ministry of Education
1-3-4 Implement mental health education at all levels of education, promote the mental health of adolescents.	Ministry of Education
1-3-5 Enhance gender equality training for school administrators, teachers, and health education teachers.	Ministry of Education
1-3-6 Set up a sex education resources	Ministry of

Strategic Measures	Supervisory Organization
network that provides lesson plans, reference materials, and sex education manuals.	Education, Department of Health
1-3-7 Provide a wide range of sexual health inquiry/counseling services for adolescents, promote outpatient clinics with youth-friendly physicians.	Department of Health
1-3-8 Integrate women's medical treatment facilities and procedures, set up integrated outpatient clinics for women, provide a medical environment friendly to women.	Department of Health
(4) Protect and care for underaged pregnant girls, help them overcome social, educational, and developmental obstacles	
1-4-1 Protect pregnant students' right to education in accordance with the School Guidelines for Sex Education and Care of Pregnant Students.	Ministry of Education
1-4-2 Integrate the central and local governments' social work, education, and health agencies to create single-window service. Establish and promote resource networks, help channels and assistance measures to serve pregnant teens.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, Department of Health

Strategic Measures	Supervisory Organization
1-4-3 Step up service of the national teenage pregnancy hotline to provide unwed pregnant teens with immediate access to counseling.	Ministry of the Interior
1-4-4 Provide disadvantaged pregnant teens or teen mothers and their babies with shelter, medical and living expense assistance, child care subsidies, and other necessary assistance.	Ministry of the Interior

B. Investing in education and capability building (27 measures)

Strategic measures	Supervisory Organization
(1) Educate parents and family members about gender equality, foster a gender-equal family view and growth environment	
2-1-1 Strengthen gender sensitivity and incorporate gender empowerment concepts into family education, end stereotypes in childrearing.	Ministry of Education
2-1-2 Develop gender-equal family teaching materials as needed by society and parents.	Ministry of Education
2-1-3 Encourage more mothers and fathers to attend parenting courses together, enhance	Ministry of the Interior

their knowledge of child care and gender equality.	
2-1-4 Include gender equality courses in the training of kindergarten teaching and child care personnel, enhance their awareness of the concept.	Ministry of Education
2-1-5 Include gender equality courses in the training of child care providers. Gender equality concepts should also be incorporated in the training seminars, parenting courses, as well as support group and other activities organized each year by community child care provider systems.	Ministry of the Interior
(2) Empower girls to develop their potential and leadership capabilities, encourage self-actualization	
2-2-1 Work with private organizations to provide diversified programs for nurturing girls' leadership abilities.	Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Interior
2-2-2 Encourage girls to take part in community service, development groups, and social programs.	Ministry of the Interior
2-2-3 Promote youth empowerment programs, encourage girls to participate in equal rights conferences and forums.	Ministry of the Interior
2-2-4 Conduct leadership training for senior	Ministry of

high and vocational school students, encourage girls to participate and include gender issues in the training courses. Establish a mechanism for older students to share their experiences, construct a comprehensive personnel training system, build a human resources database.	Education
2-2-5 Organize college/university leadership training for female students, strengthen their leadership abilities, enhance their interest in and knowledge of international affairs.	Ministry of Education
(3) Promote, research, and develop appropriate sports and facilities for girls, enhance their physical and psychological health	
2-3-1 Implement “Health-Promoting School” programs and mandate all schools up to senior high and vocational schools to promote physical health. Design physical health promotion programs for female students, protect girls’ rights to play sports, include gender views into the programs.	Ministry of Education, Department of Health
2-3-2 Research and develop sports activities, equipment, and facilities that promote the physical and mental development of girls. Provide appropriate equipment and facilities for girls.	Ministry of Education
2-3-3 Help schools set up or expand sports	Ministry of

facilities and venues suited for girls.	Education
2-3-4 Provide and design a wide range of fitness activities and courses to promote girl participation in sports.	Ministry of Education
2-3-5 Limit the boys-to-girls ratio on coed elementary and junior high school teams to give girls more opportunities to participate.	Ministry of Education
2-3-6 Integrate school and community sports resources. Create accessible community space for sports and other activities, allowing girls to develop regular exercise habits after school.	Ministry of Education
2-3-7 Include gender issues in training and study programs for physical education teachers.	Ministry of Education
2-3-8 Organize gender-sensitive sporting events, open more opportunities for girls to play competitively.	Ministry of Education
(4) Reduce gender divergence in choice of studies, break traditional gender molds, plan appropriate career and development paths for girls	
2-4-1 Organize educational programs and activities that counter gender stereotyping. Encourage high school students to join talent training programs and select fields of study based on aptitude rather than gender.	Ministry of Education

2-4-2 Examine institutional elements that inhibit girls from choosing engineering, develop response strategies.	Ministry of Education
2-4-3 Raise awareness of gender equality in career development or guidance counseling.	Ministry of Education
(5) Increase investments in girls from disadvantaged families, promote stability in their home and school lives, enhance their competitiveness and development within society	
2-5-1 Provide scholarships and subsidies for children from disadvantaged or unemployed families to ensure their right to education.	Ministry of Education
2-5-2 Provide after-school care services for children of disadvantaged families.	Ministry of Education
2-5-3 Devote greater attention to disadvantaged students in remote areas.	Ministry of Education
2-5-4 Work with private organizations to raise gender sensitivity in children from aboriginal, new immigrant, and disadvantaged families.	Ministry of Education
2-5-5 Increase investments in girls from disadvantaged families. Subsidize private-sector programs that provide focused care services, address deviant behavior, or conduct family outreach.	Ministry of the Interior

2-5-6 Provide medical, education, child care and living expense subsidies for children from low and low-to-middle income families and single-parent families.	Ministry of the Interior
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C. Guarding physical safety (20 measures)

Strategic Measures	Supervisory Organization
(1) Eliminate violence and discrimination against girls, establish safe learning and living environments	
3-1-1 Follow the CEDAW and its general recommendations; offer gender-equality courses that challenge traditional male and female roles and teach elimination of discrimination against women; protect girls from sexual violence.	Ministry of Education
3-1-2 Strengthen schools' administrative mechanism for handling sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual bullying on campus. Increase schools' knowledge of notification, prevention and handling procedures.	Ministry of Education
3-1-3 In gender-equality courses, teach students to protect their bodies, advocate respect for physical boundaries, and instill appropriate concepts in teachers and	Ministry of Education

students.	
3-1-4 Strengthen teachers' in-service training, establish online courses on protecting children and youth at schools.	Ministry of Education
3-1-5 Organize mass media programs to increase public awareness of sexual assault prevention, related laws and regulations, and assistance resources.	Ministry of the Interior
3-1-6 Organize juvenile sexual assault prevention programs, develop prevention and advocacy teaching materials.	Ministry of the Interior
3-1-7 Strengthen notification of child and adolescent sexual assault cases, establish multiple notification channels.	Ministry of the Interior
3-1-8 Improve crisis management mechanisms, strengthen gender sensitivity and professional knowledge among front-line law enforcement officers, strengthen their awareness of sexual abuse cases. Increase efficiency in interviews of minors and mentally disabled victims, fight for the victims' justice.	Ministry of the Interior
3-1-9 Strengthen prevention of child sex transactions, weave a protective network, improve protection measures.	Ministry of the Interior
3-1-10 Encourage family communication, promote physical safety concepts, prevent	Ministry of the Interior

adolescents from being lured away by online predators.	
(2) Protect the judicial rights of child and teen victims of sex crimes	
3-2-1 Improve the interview environment for sexual assault victims, guard victims' physical safety throughout the investigation process.	Ministry of Justice
3-2-2 Reduce the number of interviews of sexual assault victims; integrate the workflows of prosecutors, police, social workers and medical personnel to provide victims with timely treatment, protection, and legal assistance. Reduce the need for victims to repeat their statements during investigations.	Ministry of Justice
3-2-3 Strengthen prosecutors' in-service training, reduce the need for victims to repeat statements. Protect the judiciary rights of victims, enhance investigative efficiency by mastering essential skills.	Ministry of Justice
3-2-4 Deepen the professional knowledge of judges overseeing sexual assault cases. Organize professional courses each year on sexual assault trials, inviting experts to teach on gender awareness and protection of women's rights and interests.	With assistance from Judicial Yuan
3-2-5 Establish sexual assault trial procedures	

as reference for courts.	
3-2-6 Produce videos describing court procedures, environment, and protective measures for sexual assault cases. Play the videos in waiting rooms to help ease victims' anxieties.	
3-2-7 When a child victim of sexual abuse is required to testify, the court should notify the governing agency to dispatch an official escort, use remote interviewing equipment, and assign a knowledgeable psychiatrist, social worker or physician to oversee the procedures.	
(3) Implement sex offender supervision mechanisms; strengthen therapy, treatment, and supervision of the offenders to lower recidivism rates and minimize the number of girls victimized	
3-3-1 Reinforce treatment for sex offenders, hire more therapists and enhance their professional knowledge. Implement treatment in prison and compulsory treatment after prison.	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of the Interior
3-3-2 Provide treatment and counseling to sex offenders who have returned to society. Step	Ministry of the Interior,

up management and supervision of ex-offenders in communities.	Ministry of Justice, Department of Health
3-3-3 Require sex offenders to register and check in periodically with authorities. Those who fail to do so should be penalized and ordered to comply by a specific time, or the case may be referred to prosecutors for investigation.	Ministry of the Interior

D. Rooting out gender bias in media and cultural traditions (9 measures)

Strategic Measures	Supervisory Organization
(1) Root out gender bias from cultural traditions, foster a gender-sensitive traditional culture	
4-1-1 Promote gender-sensitive customs and activities, reduce propagation of male-centered views, create a girl-friendly society and culture.	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of the Interior
4-1-2 Examine demeaning and discriminatory practices in religious and folk ceremonies, develop strategies for change, foster gender equality in traditional culture.	Ministry of Culture, Ministry of the Interior

4-1-3 Examine gender perspectives in folk cultural assets as a reference for preservation groups to engender change.	Ministry of Culture
(2) Break stereotypes and gender molds in news and television programs, advertisements, newspapers and magazines; eliminate objectification and commercialization of girls' bodies; develop gender-equal media content	
4-2-1 Promote the ideals and activities of the U.N. International Day of the Girl Child, bring about equal treatment in society, empower girls with correct perspectives.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, Department of Health, Ministry of Culture
4-2-2 Create comprehensive measures for monitoring gender-related issues on TV, supervise TV programs for violations of gender-related laws.	National Communications Commission

4-2-3 Guide media operators to comply with gender-equality principles in production and broadcasting, or help them set up self-regulatory mechanisms to remove contents harmful to children and teens.	National Communications Commission, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of the Interior
4-2-4 Subsidize gender-equality activities and training organized by private groups and self-regulatory news organizations. Encourage media companies to disseminate content that promotes gender equality.	National Communications Commission, Ministry of Culture
4-2-5 Hold gender-sensitivity seminars for media companies, promote understanding of gender issues among media companies and employees.	National Communications Commission, Ministry of Culture
4-2-6 Gather public complaints via the Broadcasting Content Complaints website or the print media complaint channel. Expand public participation in media supervision and encourage citizens to report inappropriate content. Urge the media to exercise self-regulation and disseminate gender-sensitive content.	National Communications Commission, Ministry of Culture

IV. Progress tracking mechanism

Responding to the U.N.'s International Day of the Girl Child initiative calling on all countries to empower and invest greater resources in girls, Taiwan's government agencies will document the results of their respective policies every six months as a demonstration of the nation's commitment to girls' rights. Results from each calendar year will be reported to by the end of the following January, and from the first half of each year by the end of July. The Executive Yuan's Department of Gender Equality will review and compile this information into a progress report annually before the International Day of the Girl Child (October 11) to ensure that the rights and interests of girls in Taiwan are being protected.