



**REPORT OF THE
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF AFGHANISTAN
ON THE APPLICATION
OF THE BEIJING
DECLARATION AND
PLATFORM FOR
ACTION +25**

September 2019

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ACRONYMS

AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
ANP	Afghan National Police
AREDP	Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CDC	Community Development Councils
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CoEVAW	Commission on Elimination of Violence against Women
CRAA	Civil Registration Authority of Afghanistan
DDA	District Development Assembly
DoWA	Department of Women’s Affairs
EVAW law	Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women
GoIRA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HRSU	Human Rights Support Unit
IDCO	Improvement and Development for Communities Center
IEC	Independent Election Commission
MoAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industries
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEc	Ministry of Economy
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health,
MoWA	Ministry of Women’s Affairs
MoRR	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriates
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan
NAP 1325	Afghanistan’s National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
NDS	General Directorate of National Security
NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VNR	Voluntary National Review (On SDGs)
WEE-NPP	Women’s Economic Empowerment National Priority Program

INTRODUCTION

1. As an active member of the international community, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, a member to Human Rights Council for period of 2018-2020 is considered among the leading countries to access international human rights treaties and is currently in accession to 7 out of 9 significant human rights conventions.
2. Despite the transition of the full responsibility for security and all issues regarding the administrative, judicial, and services infrastructures to Afghanistan after 2014, Afghanistan has tried to fulfill its human rights commitments regarding women and has gained considerable achievements. Afghanistan has taken measures towards implementing the voluntary pledge and commitments that has been submitted to the UN regarding the country membership to the UN Human Rights Council. It has acceded to the international human rights instruments and based on the provisions stipulated in them, is obliged to observe, support and realize human rights values and undertakes legislative, executive and judicial steps in this regard. The report of Afghanistan to the Third Cycle of the UPR was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in July, 2019.
3. Following almost a decade of reconstruction since the transformation of Afghanistan towards a state building process. The journey to becoming a self-sustaining country at peace, has not been a smooth one. Post-conflict Afghanistan is still constantly threatened by ‘new and different’ conflicts imposed by foreign backed militant groups. People in government, non-governmental, private and international finance institutions, and civil society organizations struggle under difficult residual conflict conditions.
4. All member states of the United Nations are committed to fighting poverty, hunger, inequality and injustice. By 2030, Afghanistan too, hopes to achieve a prosperous, peaceful, capable, universal and economically-empowered society. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) conducted a comprehensive consultation process to develop targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking into account the country’s specific context and circumstances. This process included a diverse group of stakeholders, including governmental agencies, civil society, women’s rights organizations, private sector, academia, international development partners, country UN agencies, the youth and persons with disabilities.
5. Pursuant to the millennium development goals, the vision for Afghanistan by 2020 consists of:
 - A stable Islamic constitutional democracy at peace with itself and its neighbors, standing with full dignity in the international family
 - A tolerant, united, and pluralistic nation that honors its Islamic heritage and the deep seated aspirations toward participation, justice, and equal rights for all.
 - A society of hope and prosperity based on a strong, private-sector led market economy, social equity, and environmental sustainability.
6. Most countries have developed mid-term and long-term plans for effective implementation of the SDGs. In developing these, Afghanistan aligned its targets and indicators for 2020

with the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework 2017-2021 (ANPDF) and National Priority Programs NPPs. At the same time, the country is in the process of designing a comprehensive development plan for 2020-2030.

7. Today's world faces major challenges. Millions of people live below the poverty line and suffer from serious hunger issues. Inequality, injustice, extremism, terrorism and violence are constantly increasing. High levels of unemployment, especially among youth, have turned into a critical concern. Health threats, natural disasters, migration and the mass return of refugees, drought, soil erosion, clean water shortages, unwanted effects on the environment and the loss of natural resources are significant challenges for the modern world, and especially for Afghanistan.
8. Observing the national and Islamic values, the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is committed to ensure women's human rights and pave the way for an environment where they can enjoy their freedoms free of discrimination and coercion.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

9. As per the guidelines provided by the CSW secretariat, the purpose of this report is to highlight achievements, to report progress and to identify challenges recorded by Afghanistan in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the UN General Assembly held in 2000. As per the guidelines this report also correlates reporting between the Beijing Platform for Action Areas of Priority and SDG 5 on Gender Equality and other SDGs where women's development and empowerment indicators have made progress. During the preparation of this report a multi-stakeholder analysis and an extensive desk review of reports from relevant government agencies, authorities and departments was conducted to ensure a participatory process and diverse information sources and voices are represented.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

10. The report includes a short introduction and description on methodology along with four sections as described below:

SECTION ONE provides an analysis of priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks, focusing on the past four years from 2015 to 2019. The last report submitted by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was in 2014 as the Beijing +20 report. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has set up an architecture with Independent and Ministry based commissions, units, cell and desks with essential focal persons to ensure reporting on human rights and women's rights treaties are supported with high quality submissions. This section provides a snapshot of achievements, challenges and any new and emerging priorities for the future, both at national and sub national level.

SECTION TWO provides a detailed analysis of the measures undertaken to advance gender equality across the twelve critical areas of concern namely: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl-child. The report endeavors to incorporate concerns of special groups of women including widows, internally displaced, returning migrants and women and girls living with disabilities. Where available, for each of the

areas, there is a concrete example of the measures taken, challenges encountered and achievements accomplished.

SECTION THREE covers the national machinery and national policy on gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as the formal mechanisms for participation of various stakeholders, especially in its correlation to work underway with the Ministry for Economy that leads the SDG alignment discourse.

SECTION FOUR highlights progress on the availability of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics while monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

LEAD INSTITUTIONS

- 11. Leadership:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) mandated for all human rights instruments reporting, in close coordination with all government departments, especially with the Ministry of Women Affairs (MOWA) that mandated for women's empowerment. UN Women supported in the report compilation and in the process of national consultations.
- 12. Stakeholder's coordination:** Through the office of MOFA, MOWA and UN Women Afghanistan, different organizations were contacted for information, including the UN bodies supporting various treaty reporting, commissions, working groups and task forces. The forum ensured that inputs from relevant ministries were drawn from routine reporting on gender equality targets. At the preparation of this BPfA +25 National report, all relevant ministries and other governmental institutions were actively included through written requests for specific updates on the questionnaire and then during a consultation the report was extensively discussed to validate the information captured in the reporting framework.
- 13. Civil Society and Ministerial Validation Workshop:** The Government of Afghanistan has ensured a wide range of consultation and a final validation of the findings of the report. The preparation of the report involved women in remote provinces with a final review of the report by technical focal persons from relevant ministries, institutions and departments. A final validation is held with steering Committee,
- 14. Access to data:** Up-to-date and disaggregated data informed this comprehensive national-level review. References to recent national level surveys and various women specific provincial and national reports supported the rich content of this report.
- 15. Role of the UN system:** UN-Women Country Team, provided support, for stakeholder's engagement and participation, and supported data collection and analysis.

SECTION ONE

PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES & SETBACKS

(QUESTIONS 1- 5)

QUESTION 1

What have been the most important achievements, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?

16. Observations and findings of the Government of Republic of Afghanistan explicitly reports that the various government implementing agencies were able to achieve significant progress in the areas of: review, amendment and adopting legislative documents, increasing participation of women in the managerial and leadership levels, supporting survivors of violence and IDPs, registering VAW cases and prosecuting perpetrators of violence as well as ensuring women's economic security.

The three highest priority areas are as follows:

- 1. Poverty reduction with a focus on provinces on women's inclusion in workforce and access to employment, while the focus in rural areas is on access to services and agricultural and manufacturing skills enhancement for meeting industry standards.**
17. The recently endorsed NAPWA 2019-22 which went through an extensive consultative and validation process across all provinces, places women's economic empowerment under its pillar of Relief and Recovery whereby implementing agencies are obliged to pave the way for employment, economic programming, resettlement, improvement of welfare and economic security of women, all with a view to empower them in political, social and cultural life. Conflict and war have had a long lasting effect on the poverty of women in Afghanistan. Major shifts in social and physical infrastructure framing are required over years.
18. Afghanistan's security threats imposed by terrorist networks have posed as a challenge for government agencies and civil society members to deliver on NAPWA 2007-17 targets, however, with sacrifices made by Afghan people, the Afghan government has revived and renewed its commitment to reducing poverty and improving access of women to economic

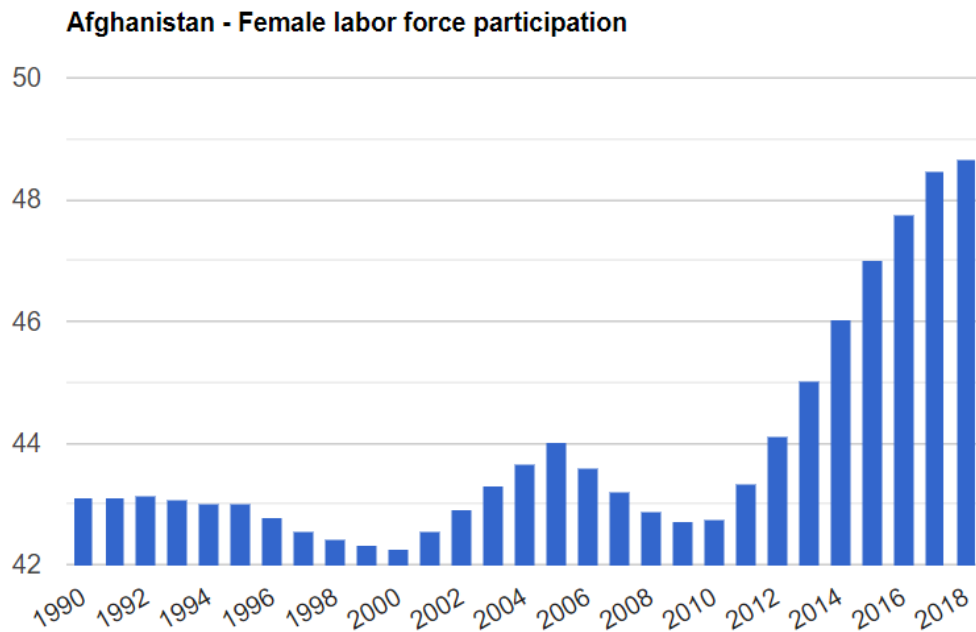
integrity. Human Development Index (HDI) and data including Gender Development Index (GDI) indicates feminization of poverty showing severe economic underdevelopment in some areas of the country due to gender discrimination and lack of gender-based targeting of economic and trade policies. National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA 2007-17) relates that “Although women are often contributors to household economy, through agriculture, livestock management, handicrafts, involvement in small and medium enterprises and civil service, their contributions are either completely non-monetized, hugely underpaid or undervalued. Many women who earn an income are not permitted to control their earnings”.

19. With the backdrop of these challenges, in order to transform the professional and social space for women in the country, the government focuses on enabling and encouraging projection of women in rural areas specifically in agriculture and manufacturing. For centuries, women in Afghanistan have been integral players in developing the agricultural keep in the rural settings of the country. However, this contribution has been left unrecorded and unchecked as well. The government also focuses on targeting women in these sectors in the rural areas to not only get them out of invisibility but also to enhance their skills so they can integrate in the innovative modern technological requirements of today.
20. The Women’s Economic Empowerment National Priority Program 2016 focuses on increasing the availability and analysis of Gender Statistics, removing legal constraints to participation, training in Literacy, business management and labor skills, ensuring inclusive access to finance, improving access to agricultural inputs, extension services, and markets and promoting access to creative economy markets. Macroeconomic stability, regional trade, and large infrastructure investments are the pre-conditions for attracting foreign investments that are likely to employ women, while improved public services such as health and education can provide women and girls access to better paying jobs. Improved market integration between the rural and urban areas will also create demand for products that are already being produced by women such as horticulture and small livestock. Finally, the stimulus role planned for government procurement also lends itself to pro-women purchasing policies.
21. Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) is a multidimensional problem and requires a multipronged approach, The WEENPP addresses these prongs with a six pillar approach as mentioned above. The enabling environment is critical to sustainable success of WEE programming is benefitting women with its two pronged approach. The enabling environment in the NPP framework introduces reforms to improve the regulatory and normative environment. These include increasing the accessibility and analysis of gender statistics and removing legal **constraints** to women’s participation in the economy. While the second prong works on the productive activities which looks at programs that provide resources directly to women. This includes training in literacy, business management and labor skills, ensuring inclusive access to agricultural inputs, extension services and markets. While promoting access to creative economy markets.

- 22.** Some extraordinary accomplishments include the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) provided micro-finance to five of the provinces and has taken several other steps to support the participation and empowerment of rural women. To name a few, a total of 5000 Saving Groups (SGs) have been established of which 2,729 fully consist of rural women, 1,257 Enterprise Groups are in place of which 814 belong to only women. MRRD has been able to introduce 510 Village Saving and Loan Associations and 61 Producer Associations where men and women can equally utilize support services and programs where most of these associations are fully dominated by women. Of 593 small and medium businesses, 91 are exclusively run by women alone. Other initiatives include effective implementation of 111 empowerment projects, employment opportunities for 960 women and Daily wage employment opportunities for 12,239 women under the Afghan-Tajik project
- 23.** So far, there are 11 gender and legal frameworks, policies and institutions which facilitate women's access to economic rights, and are as follow:
1. Export guideline for women entrepreneurs;
 2. Guideline on licensing procedures;
 3. Trademark "Made by Afghan Women" has been launched to introduce their products to the world market;
 4. Human Resource strategy at the Institute of Creative Arts to further develop women's skills;
 5. Women's Economic Empowerment - National Priority Program to Support Economic Participation, in order to, Increase Women's Participation in Development;
 6. Women's Inheritance and Property Rights Policy;
 7. Establishment of the Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
 8. Standard Operating Procedures for the Registration and process of Certification, Investment, Community Groups, Economics and Business Licenses;
 9. Policy plan for start-ups or small and medium-sized enterprises;
 10. Strategy for Crafts (Jewelry and Gemstones);
 11. Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to organize a common market for women's trade.
- 24.** Political life with a strategic objective that states “Protecting women and children affected by armed conflict” with the intent to support their resettlement and to create vocation and employment for conflict affected women. Implementing agencies will undertake legislative, executive and judicial actions in a documented, precise and detailed manner, having them prioritized in consideration of the timeline, and report them annually to the GGDHRWIA--MoFA for compilation.
- 25.** To advance progress towards the SDGs which entail women enjoy equal rights to economic resources, the Government has taken the following steps: (1) Nationalization of SDGs; (2) Alignment of SDGs with Afghanistan Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), National Priority Programs (NPPs) and all other development projects; (3) Pricing and consolidation of necessary financial resources from different sources; and (4) Creation of

the Executive Committee on SDGs, a comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism on the national level, housed under the Chief Executive Office of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Committee is divided into four working groups, two of these are Agriculture and Rural Development and Infrastructure and Economic Development.

- 26.** An example of a government initiative seen to have had better success is the Food and Agriculture Organisation-funded Integrated Dairy Schemes Project implemented in Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kunduz, and Jalalabad through MAIL. The project has created regular weekly income for female milk producers by integrating them into the milk value chain and has simultaneously organized women into cooperatives, which have had a strong impact on gendered economic empowerment in the household and community units. Despite the percentage of female milk producers in the Integrated Dairy Schemes being low (one-third overall), the project can be seen as a viable way of securing regular reliable income for women using culturally approved occupational skills from within their family or community domains.
- 27.** As part of nationalization of SDG's, the working group was responsible for aligning goals targets and indicators with budgetary sectors. This was significant as the system would ensure consistency in achievement of targets, their monitoring, evaluation and up-gradation. In addition, the government is expanding its manufacturing and agriculture sectors through systematic incorporation of Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) based on demand and interactive services as reported in the ICT Policy for Afghanistan 2018-2022. The challenge remains how these sectors plan on targeting women for the purpose of inclusion and integration. According to Afghanistan's Gender Equality Report Card, the government has also recognized that women's economic opportunities are related to social welfare and inheritance. Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2006 further commits to diversification of market-based arrangement for social protection, financial market literacy, and the introduction of community-based insurance schemes.
- 28.** NAPWA 2019-22 has been developed to decrease violence against women and women victims of violence benefit from legal, social and economic support. Policies have been developed and MOWA is the lead agency to ensure its implementation. A recognition of up-scaling programs for women's economic empowerment in provinces and districts looks at job creation and inducting women into professional schemes, especially in areas affected by conflict. In this light tracking is ensured through number of self-reliant women with the lead agency being the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Recent World Bank Data shows that women's labor force participation has increased significantly with rates as high as 48.6 percent in 2018.



29. This information also corroborates with 2018 survey by Asia Foundation reports that a 74% of Afghans feel women should be allowed to work outside of their homes, however this level of support changes based on region and the state of security. The survey also shows that less secure income sources like private companies and non-governmental organizations were less preferred while there were safety reservations for women in the police or military workforce. However, working in government, hospitals, and female only schools was higher than coed schools.

30. Challenges & Setbacks

The Government of Afghanistan is wholly committed to transforming the lives of women in the country. However, the complexity of the problem makes it harder for the state to address the transformation without getting caught up in the interlinked aspects afflicting the society. While the policy, advocacy and planning steers towards building physical and institutional infrastructure. The social fabric of the society faced by decades of conflict, war and lack of rule of law specifically in the rims will take a lot more focus. The commitment requires focused yet powerful instilling the laws that address the layers of discrimination one of this equally productive section of the society has faced. Following are the challenges in this regard;

- Strengthening of monitoring and accountability institutions in the rural areas is needed. Laws and legislation cannot maintain presence where institutions do not exist.
- Scaling up of mechanization of agriculture; while being the most practiced profession widely across Afghanistan, farming in the country still functions on traditional

methods rather than modern machines. Making modern farming techniques and methods to women in the rural areas can reduce their reliance of male members of the family for the financial support.

- Bolstering energy to facilitate synchronized of electric powered water canals; water remains the crucial ingredient to Afghanistan's performance in agriculture. It also is the most widely utilized resource by women. Lack of synchronization and proper planning of water-management infrastructure including canals and channels can hamper the ability of women to access water efficiently. In addition, scarcity of energy remains a critical element in creating agricultural production.
- Fighting Illiteracy and insecurity; illiteracy and insecurity go hand in hand. They not only define the lives of the women themselves but also the outcomes in the lack of these components produce long term repercussions in the society. Discrimination is largely connected to illiteracy of the masses and insecurity of the minorities. While the government has implemented adequate legislation to address both of these challenges. The rural women still live in the space that is inadequate in security, openness and acceptance.

2. Elimination of violence via strengthening of implementation of legislation and training of service providers.

31. The Government of Afghanistan with the support of the international community has been working to uplift the status of women of Afghanistan through introduction of necessary legislation and institutional instruments. The government of Afghanistan has introduced good initiatives to fight violence against women in the country.
32. Codification of Law on Violence Against Women (EVAW); scripted in the light of article 24 and 54 of the Afghan Constitution provisions and is composed of four (4) chapters and forty-four (44) articles. This landmark legislation criminalized for the first time in Afghanistan 22 acts of violence against women and harmful practices including child marriage, forcing or prohibiting marriage, forced marriage, rape and beating. The law also specified punishments for perpetrators. Passed by presidential decree in 2009, the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) law has criminalized "customs, traditions and practices causing violence against women and which are against Islamic Sharia". The law emphasizes the state's protection and prosecution role, requiring the police to register complaints and protect victims and courts and prosecutors to prioritize such cases. Law enforcement agencies are required to apply the EVAW law and inform MoWA about incidents. Each provincial headquarter and large district is meant to have a Family Response Unit (FRU), staffed by policewomen. There are 17 such units in Kabul, and as of May 2013, 184 in 33 provinces.
33. Establishment of High Commission on EVAW; has 12 competent representatives from different organizations and was established in accordance with Article 15 of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women. The focus of the Commission is to fight against crimes of violence effectively and ensure coordination between government and non-government entities on the issue.

34. Establishment of Provincial Commissions on ERAW; Under the ERAW law, all provinces are mandated to have a commission of elimination of violence against women (CoERAW). These commissions are to coordinate, plan and measure the implementation of the law. They have been established in 32 out of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Terms of reference have been developed for the commissions.
35. Establishment of Persecution Office for ERAW; The prosecution office for elimination of violence against women was established in 2009 to follow cases of sexual violence, family murders, family violence, sexual harassment, suicide, self-burning, cutting part of body, forced prostitution, preventing from right of work, preventing from inheritance and non-payment of alimony. So far it is functioning in 10 provincial offices.
36. Women Protection Centers and Regulation on Women Protection Centers (WPC); this regulation is based on five chapters and 33 articles. The main goal of this regulation are;
 - Provide access to safe shelters for female victims of violence/women who are exposed to violence;
 - Provide access to justice to female victims of violence/women who are exposed to violence;
 - Provide physical and psychological support to female victims of violence/women who are exposed to violence.
37. The Government of Afghanistan has established specialized ERAW units in eight of thirty-four provinces. These units have had a positive effect on reporting and registration of ERAW cases. Having a dedicated unit to ERAW cases has led to speedy resolution of cases. Due to lack of resources, these units have not been established in all the provinces; however, the Government plans to gradually establish these units in all provinces.
38. The ERAW law has also strengthened the rights of women to employment by criminalizing any interference on rights of women to work. This is being done by promoting ethos of Non-discrimination based in Article 22 of the Afghan Constitution. This is also being done through major awareness raising programs to inform common people about the rights of women within the Constitution and Islam. The awareness raising programs have aimed at various levels, from raising awareness of women to raising awareness of religious leaders and tribal elders. As a result, the message is being given in the communities through mosques and Takayas. In Afghan society messages given through mullahs and religious leaders have significant impact.
39. National Strategy of Legal Sector; points out the capacity development of legal and judicial staff, especially those of women, and emphasizes the need for the presence of women at all levels. Provision of maximum resources through legal and judicial resources for the courts, interrogation and defense for women, ease in fair custody for women in accordance with international human rights standards, gender balance in recruitment, and protection of sexual harassment victims are all stipulated in this strategy.
40. The Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) through its gender department convened a Gender and Diversity Curriculum Training of Trainers (TOT) on August 26, 2019 for three days. The attendees of the workshop are provincial gender specialists from a USAID funded initiative called Institutional Strengthening of Local Administration (ISLA) and IDLG gender department. A total of 33 participants (11 females and 22 male) attended

the TOT. They learned of Gender and gender mainstreaming; Gender Gaps; Approaches to women's involvement in development; Equal opportunities for women and men; Discrete tools for gender mainstreaming; budgeting; Gender sensitive evaluation and inclusion of gender initiatives in Provincial Development Plans, as per the IDLG website update on activities.

Challenges & Setbacks

41. Challenges for the Government of Afghanistan in achieving its objectives in making the country free of GBV are manifold yet cyclical. These challenges will be repeated multiple times in this report and address the core of the country's issues. They emanate from;
 - High rates of Illiteracy and awareness of women rights among people poses as a challenge for protection and promotion of women rights,
 - Security challenges and attacks by terrorist organizations threatening vulnerable groups particularly women in public sphere,
 - Lack of the rule of law in remote areas under attached by terrorist groups,
 - Prevalence of traditional norms that discriminate and bar women from seeking legal assistance.

3. **Women's inclusion in peace and security dialogue and architecture with a supplementary contribution to women's role and leadership in disaster risk reduction and resilience.**

42. The advancement of Afghan Women remains a core element of the State's effort on the sustainable peace, security, reconstruction and development. Afghan women have had active participation in formal talks in peace including local peace initiatives. Women can play an effective role in solving disputes, promulgation and consolidation of a peace culture, establishment of security, and struggle against threats against women in public and private life.

43. The Ministries of Defense (MoD) and Interior (MoI) are responsible for increasing the presence of women in the security sector. Under the supervision of MoWA, MoI and MoD have increased women's partnerships, training and capacity and gender mainstreaming of women in the security sector.

44. The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP), started in 2010, was created for the promotion of peace, reconciliation and security in Afghan communities. The High Peace Council, as a body of the APRP, was established to negotiate with the Taliban. The program continued to support the strategy of Afghanistan for peace, reconciliation and reintegration.

45. There has been considerable progress in the contribution of women at the HPC leadership level and in the peace negotiations with the deputy High Peace Council, two senior advisors, and an executive member of the council being women. The peace and reconciliation strategic committee is headed by a woman (Deputy Chief of the Council) and the HPC advisor is also an active member of the committee which depicts the active decision-making contribution of women in the peace process. In particular, the number of women in the HPC has increased to 18 out of 65 members in 2019 and 63 members of the provincial peace committees are women.

46. The Elite Women Advisory Board, consisting of 66 members from 34 provinces, participate in the peace process representing Afghan women. Additionally, the HPC has developed its new strategy to establish this voluntary Board for women to consult with the HPC, the peace process executive secretariat, and the government. The Board can monitor different phases of the peace process.
47. International efforts by OHCHR, UNAMA, UNDP and UN Women combined with efforts by the government have resulted in participation of women in the peace process in Afghanistan. 30% of the women participated in the *Loya Jirga* peace talks that held in Kabul in 2019. In addition, women chaired 13 of the 51 committees and were elected as two of the five Deputy Heads of *Jirga*. Integration of women in the peace process in Afghanistan goes through structural and social challenges. The institutional efforts for women's inclusion in the peace and security dialogue are commendable. However, there are integral challenges that need to be addressed in the future.
48. The NAP 2019-22 also stresses women's participation at the managerial and leadership levels by integrating 14 indicators. Implementing agencies are mandated to anticipate practical actions aimed at elevating women's social, political and cultural roles with a view to realize their human rights. Women's full representation and participation, expand women's access to human services, and help identify negative impact of conflict on women and has a significant role in reduction of violence. Through the NAP 2019-22 aims to enhance women's participation and increased representation in decision making through the following:
 - 1- Women's participation in peace negotiations and peace settlement;
 - 2- Women's participation in civil service institutions and security agencies;
 - 3- Women's participation in elections processes.
49. Promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights is not only the responsibility of all government agencies, but also civil society, the private sector, and the individual citizens. Government will strengthen its relationship with the private sector in order to improve economic opportunities for women. Civil society organizations will remain key partners in advancing the role of women. MoWA is planning to establish a multi-stakeholder Gender Mainstreaming management system that serves as a mechanism to monitor government actions relating to women's concerns, as well as changes in the lives and situation of women. Just as women are represented in the National Assembly, so they will serve in all representative bodies to oversee gender equality investments in all government program.
50. The Women leadership positions in the parliament and electoral commission can effect women inclusion in all peace talks' efforts. To influence peace also emerge from parliament, to support this action UNDP Afghanistan, through The UN Electoral Support Project (UNESP) provides direct assistance to the Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) as well as the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) to effectively conduct electoral cycle in Afghanistan from October 2017 to December 2019. Various other UN-led projects to support Afghan electoral projects are a part of UNESP for instance, the UNDP Project Initiation Plan of 2015-2017. With UNESP's support, IEC was able to launch the Voter Registration (VR) process across country on April 14 and was extended to July 24, 2018. This program has special provisions for women to increase their engagements as voters and candidates. In 2018, almost 3.1 million women registered themselves to cast

votes, a 34% of the total registered voters. Similarly, in three provinces of Afghanistan, Bamyan, Daikundi and Jawzjan there were more women registrants than men. Of 33 provinces and two constituencies, women candidates constituted 27% of the selected winning candidates. Furthermore, the Commissions appointed for IEC and ECC in March 2019 are being headed by women where 2 out of 7 commissioners in IEC are women and 1 out of 5 in ECC is a woman as well. In addition, 288708 women participated in the 34,451 public outreach campaigns for VR processes where women constituted 24% of those reached. This positive trend in influential and mobilized women's numbers will lead to strengthening women's leadership in a peaceful Afghanistan.

51. The Afghanistan National Action Plan 2017-22 for the Women of Afghanistan is a national inclusive mechanism to ensure women's continued participation in the peace process, security sectors, and the national framework for empowering women. It is one of the many necessary structures designed to change the future for Afghan women. The 1325 NAP consists of 4 pillars (Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief & Recovery) and 39 indicators. The 1325 NAP aims to increase the participation of women in the peace process, security sector, women's protection, prevention from conflicts and violence, and provide relief and recovery services for women.
52. Building women's capacities and ensure their leadership and equal participation in all aspects of national development is a priority in the government's agenda as articulated in the Afghanistan relevant policies.

Challenges & Setbacks

- Despite very strong and articulated political commitments to women's inclusion in peace talks, the government still facing with restrictions emanating from extremist views.
- Social and patriarchal sensitivities relating to gender issues, as well as under development in parts of the country and lack of education affect the pace and acceptance of government reforms.
- Obstacles to education for girls due to conservative social norms and unavailability of enough schools and female teacher pose as a challenge.
- Women's participation is hampered by the constant security threat and safety issues prevalent across Afghanistan. In areas of greater peace women have demonstrated their skills and numbers in participation and discourse.

QUESTION 2

Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programs? (Please check relevant categories)

- I. Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice**

53. Article 22 of the Constitution of Afghanistan lays down the principle of equality before the law. The Constitution denounce inequality or discrimination on the basis of gender and/or religious affiliation and the state is required to act upon any unequal treatment that may arise.
54. With the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all kinds of Discrimination against Women, it becomes imperative for the government to create the necessary structures to the promotion and protection of the rights of women in Afghanistan. Also efforts are taken to deconstruct decades of socio-cultural infiltration by raising awareness on women's rights specifically pertaining to their position in Islam. The Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs has formed a committee of mobile preachers consisting of scholars of the Ministry to raise awareness in the capital and the provinces on women's rights in Islam. The campaign also seeks to educate on gender equality by revising school curriculum.
55. MoWA has reviewed the following laws and policies to ensure women's access to justice and to prevent discrimination;
 - Adoption of new Penal Code 2018,
 - Anti-harassment Law on women and children 2015,
 - Law on reconciliation *Jirgas* for civil disputes 2016,
 - Amendment
 - Advocacy for EVAW Law during 5 past years.

Policies/Programs:

Ministry of Women Affairs has recently adopted major policies and programs to ensure women rights are protected in three pillars of security, good governance and the rule of law and economic and social development as followings;

1. Security Policy;
 - a. Mandatory review of major security policies and programs from a gender perspective
 - b. Assessment of existing gender tools, mechanisms and approaches
 - c. Affirmative action policy
 - d. Eliminating violence against women in public and private spaces
 - e. Raising awareness of human rights, especially women's rights, and gender based violence,
 - f. Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence
2. Governance Rule of Law and Human Rights which includes legal protection and human rights, Leadership and Political Participation;

This pillar is divided into two chapters - one, on legal protection and human rights and another on leadership and political participation. The strategy to protect women's human rights and their rights under the Constitution includes:

 - a. eliminating discrimination against women in law;
 - b. improving women's access to justice;
 - c. reforming law enforcement; and
 - d. Promoting legal and religious awareness of/on women.

The strategy to advance women's leadership and political participation includes:

- a. adoption and implementation of comprehensive leadership and capacity building programs for women;
 - b. partnership building between and among women and men; and
 - c. Increasing opportunities and mechanisms for women’s leadership and participation in their communities.
3. Economic and Social Development which looks at Economy, Work and Poverty, Health and Education;

Health - The strategy to improve women’s health includes:

- 1. improving and expanding medical services and infrastructure, particularly for rural women;
 - 2. promoting women’s representation in the health sector;
 - 3. promoting a culture of health care and an understanding of basic health;
 - 4. reducing maternal mortality; and
 - 5. Promoting access to family planning.
- a. Education - The strategy to increase the quality of education for women includes
- 6. creating an affirmative action approach and an incentive structure for female education;
 - 7. improving women’s access to education and education infrastructures;
 - 8. improving the organization and structure of education;
 - 9. addressing issues of safety and security;
 - 10. addressing social factors impeding women’s access to education;
 - 11. reducing illiteracy; and
 - 12. Promoting alternate education, accelerated learning, and vocational training.

II. Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls

56. The NAP 2019-22 highlights that women will be targeted under Pillar 3 focused on Economy, Work and Poverty - The strategy to improve women’s economic status includes:
- I. Increasing access to education, vocational training and employment;
 - II. Promoting recognition of women as economic agents;
 - III. promoting leadership in the economic sector;
 - IV. Developing and adopting policies that address the particular needs of women working in the informal economy.
57. The National Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) Strategy for Afghanistan (2013-18) recognizes the importance of agriculture through education and gender equity “is a main principle of the National TVET Strategy, especially in providing equitable educational opportunities and service delivery to women and girls.” “The gender balance in TVET has improved from 0.03 in 2002 to 0.15 in 2013, but it was and still is poor.”

58. As per UNICEF Afghanistan, an estimated 3.7 million children are out of school in Afghanistan of which 60% are girls. This low female enrollment rate could be due to the lack of female teachers especially in rural areas of the country. Yet, there are only 16% girls-only schools in Afghanistan. Similarly, various socio-cultural factors or traditional practices may also have undermined female education. However, the government of Afghanistan is striving to provide education opportunities to women and girls across the country through various technical and vocational education training (TVET) courses and thereby programs.
59. Based on Constitution article 43, the Afghan government is committed to provide free and equal education for all up to undergraduate level. Ministry of Education has formulated a child-friendly strategy in 2017, to provide inclusive education for all. Furthermore, based on SDG's 4 indicator the government of Afghanistan has obliged to provide high quality education for all and eliminate gender discrimination in education up to 2030.
60. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in compliance with SDG's 4 adopted Human Capital National Priority Program 2019-2023 in November 2018 to meet the following objectives:
- Expand the scope, quality, relevance, and coverage of health and education services provided to the population, particularly to the most vulnerable.
 - Invest in youth to equip them with skills and competencies in order to reduce youth unemployment and its serious adverse social impacts.
 - Prepare for future labor market needs, including labor exports.
 - Bridge the gap between gender and regional disparities in the country.

III. Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security

61. The government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has taken significant measures towards eradication of poverty, food security and agricultural development with special focus on women, including the following;
1. Empowerment Plan for Afghan Women (2018-2021)
 2. National Program on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (2016)
 3. Citizen Charter (2016-2025)
 4. Women's Inheritance and Property Rights Policy
 5. Establishment of the Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2017)
 6. Standard Operating Procedures for the Registration and process of Certification, Investment, Community Groups, Economics and Business Licenses;
 7. Policy plan for start-ups or small and medium-sized enterprises;
 8. Strategy for Crafts (Jewelry and Gemstones);

VI. Eliminating violence against women and girls with women’s role in peace and security and resilience building

62. EVAW Law identifies 22 specific acts of violence against women as punishable criminal offences. The Penal Code also includes gender-based violence offences, including sexual offences against men and boys. Protection Law 2019 (Child Act) offers legislative protection for child survivors of gender-based violence.
63. All 34 provinces of Afghanistan have EVAW Prosecution Units headed by female prosecutors. Special EVAW Courts were established across Afghanistan since 2015. These initiatives combined with UNCT- and donor-supported awareness raising and capacity building, resulted in an increase in reporting of incidents of violence against women to the formal justice system. In 2017 AIHRC reported that of the 4340 VAW incidents, 2286 cases were registered. Of the registered cases, they observed the following outcomes:

OUTCOME	NO. OF CASES
Settled with mediation	361
Referred to a safe shelter	153
Complainant canceled	94
Referred to police	194
Referred to AGO	168
Referred to Courts	545
Provided with legal advice	611
Referred to health centers	54
Cases which were not criminal and referred to the local justice structure	106

- **Laws: the followings are the legal frameworks of Afghanistan which have been adopted to eliminate gender-based violence;**
 - EVAW Law 2009
 - New Penal Code 2018
 - Child Protection Law 2019
 - Anti-Harassment law to protect Women and Children 2017
- **Policies/Programs: to eliminate violence against women and girls, the government of Afghanistan has created the following structures and institutions for protection of women against gender based violence as followings;**
 - EVAW Prosecution Units in all prosecution offices across country,
 - Family Response Units within Ministry of Interior structure,
 - Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBV-IMS) in justice sector

- Child Protection Information Management Systems (CP-IMS) in Attorney General Office.
- The Committee on the elimination of harassment against Women and children.

V. Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

64. Extensive work and strategies have been formulated to ensure health indicators especially that for Reproductive Maternal Child Neonatal and Adolescent health are tracked by health entities. The government provides programs for increasing access to healthcare for Afghan women. Afghanistan's health system has been steadily progressing over the last 17 years, with increasing coverage of health services throughout the country. In 2018, a total of 3,135 health facilities were functional. This ensured access for almost 87% of the population with a two-hour radius. National Health Policy 2015-2020 of Afghanistan continues to focus on five policy areas; governance, institutional development, public health, health services and human resource. It is complimented by National Health Strategy 2016 – 2020 aiming to provide equitable and accessible healthcare services to the women of Afghanistan.

➤ **Policies/Programs: followings are policies and programs that ensure access to health care services ;**

- National Health Policy 2015-2020
- National Health Strategy 2015-2020
- Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Strategy 2017-2020
- Nursing and Midwifery Strategy 2015-2020
- National Public Nutrition Policy 2015-2020
- Family Health Houses (FHHs)
- Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS)

QUESTION 3

Over the past five years, have you taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination?

◆ **Women living in remote and rural areas**

65. The education sector covers 14 targets and 41 indicators in the A-SDGs, demonstrating the government's commitment to improving education nationwide, and currently indicators suggest that reduce gender inequality, increase literacy and skills among men and women, improve access for children and the disabled to educational opportunities, provide

scholarships, attract qualified teachers, promote a culture of peace and follow human rights laws.

◆ **Women living with disabilities**

66. The Afghan government ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2012. State ministry for disabilities and martyrs addresses needs of Martyrs and Disabled as the focal ministry to work on providing services to disabled persons and families of martyrs. In 2004, 3.7% (over 850,000) Afghan population suffered from various forms of disabilities, which by 2015 increased to 1.5million (1,500,000) out of population of 33Million as per report of ICRC. On average one household in every 5 has a family member with disability. A large number of women live with some form of disability and are severely discriminated in fields of education, health, employment.

◆ **Women living with HIV/AIDS**

67. Afghanistan has a low HIV prevalence among the general and key population groups except for injecting drug users (IDUs). HIV prevalence among IDUs has been as high as 4.4%. In 2017, the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Afghanistan was estimated to be 5,900, of which 23.7% were women and 3.4% children.

◆ **Younger women**

68. Population of Afghanistan comprises of large segment of young population. The total population of Afghanistan in the year (2017-18) was estimated around 29.7 million of which 51 percent are males and 49 percent females. 47.5 percent (14.1 millions) are under the age of 15 years, the proportion under 15 is among the highest in the world and significantly higher than that of the neighboring countries. According to *Girls not Brides website for Afghan statistics*, 35% of girls are married before or by age of 18. Girls who are not in schools are 3 times more likely to marry before age of 18. Young women are often married to older men who are able to pay dowry or support bride's family financially.

◆ **Returning Refugee and internally displaced women**

69. In 2018, more than 550,000 Afghan were internally displaced, 713,000 returned from Iran and Pakistan because of political issues, 77,000 people were displaced because of sudden onset of natural disasters. There are estimated 5.2 million Afghan refugees who have returned home since 2000 with support of UN agencies as per the Humanitarian Needs Overview 2018. A large number of returning refugee comprised of women and girls. Large internal displacements occurred in recent drought affected provinces of Afghanistan, where families had to migrate because of onset of climatic changes. Ministry of Refugee and Returnees has formulated a national policy on IDP's and an action plan to implement that.

◆ **Women in humanitarian settings**

70. Armed conflicts, forced displacements and natural disasters cause humanitarian situation in areas where these factors are present. Women and girls are largely affected by these humanitarian situations. Such conflicts hampered 75% women at maternal and child care stages. Conditions for women both in and outside the home have comprehensively

deteriorated as suicide attacks, recruitment of male family members into the armed forces, and economic migration in country and abroad have deprived them of breadwinners, social support networks and even, in some cases, security.

QUESTION 4

Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country? YES

71. As per the last Humanitarian Needs Overview, published in November 2018 by the Organization for Humanitarian Coordination Affairs UN OCHA, 6.3 million people require some form of humanitarian and protection assistance including 3.7 million in severe and major need due to a convergence of factors arising from exposure to escalating violence, displacement, the loss of essential livelihoods and limited access to basic services.
72. The government in close collaboration with UN, national and international civil society and with support from bilateral and multi-lateral donors ensures relief and protection for its humanitarian impacted population. Access to basic services (Health & Education) measured for quality and accessibility. In 2018, 335,000 medical consultations missed because of forced closure and destruction of health facilities during armed conflict. Essential MNCH care is therefore supported by national CSO and covered under the humanitarian activities of UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO in coordination with Ministry of Public Health and its sub national departments of Public Health.
73. The humanitarian community has also undertaken numerous women-only focus group discussions to supplement the collection of quantitative data with qualitative information so as to better articulate and address their needs within the response. Efforts to reach more women and girls by increasing the number of female frontline workers – be it in healthcare delivery or protection from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) – are also being actively pursued. Good practices from partners operating outside the HRP are currently being explored as potential models, although expectations must be tempered given the limited mobility of women, particularly in rural areas, when not accompanied by a male family member.

QUESTION 5

Which of the following does your country consider to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the coming five years through laws, policies and programs?

74. Consultations with women in decision making seats and desk research show that for pushing progress for women and girls, Afghanistan foresees a strong commitment and priority to following areas:
- I. Access to affordable quality health care, education and skills enhancement
 - II. Poverty eradication with more results around tailored streams of economic empowerment for rural and urban women,
 - III. Eliminating violence against women and girls demonstrating more results around reported cases of violence and their expedient access to justice and legal services,
 - IV. More results on gender responsive budgeting,
 - V. Women's political participation with leadership in peace and resilience.

I. Access to affordable quality health care, (including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights) education and skills enhancement

75. The health sector is committed to implement objective 3 of the SDGs which concerns health improvement based on its 13 specific indicators including women's health. Additionally, the MoPH is totally committed to comply and implement all relevant international documents such the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, 2016-2030 and family planning.
76. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) provides women's access to health services through targeted public health services directed towards:
- Victims of gender-based violence and their families by setting up protection and family support centers for women survivors of violence and their families.
 - For women detainees by providing free health services in coordination with MoJ and MoI. With assistance from UN Organization for Drug Control UNODC and Corrections System Support Program CSSP they have prepared the health strategy for detentions and prisons, with the provision of health services for women being an important part of this strategy.
 - The MoPH has established a psychological health clinic for refugees returning from European countries and ordinary people. Around 10,012 psychosocial counseling sessions have been held in groups and 16,056 psychosocial counseling sessions have been held for individuals, with 538 awareness raising sessions held for 16,888 people.
 - Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) for basic healthcare in remote and rural areas.

77. It is integral for Afghanistan to provide affordable healthcare for maternal and child health. Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has been instrumental in this regard. Afghanistan is part of the global “Focus FP2020 Country” movement to provide an additional 120 million women in the poorest countries of the world with access to voluntary family planning by the year 2020. Family Health Houses (FHHs) have been established to provide essential reproductive, maternal and child health services to around 300,000 people annually living in remote areas with no or limited access to the BPHS.
78. The reproductive health situation in Afghanistan is a complicated synergy of social, demographic, medical, economic, and cultural and gender factors. However large differences still exist between rural and remote access versus urban access to healthcare for women especially reproductive health.
79. Education and Skill enhancement focused capacity building are currently key priority areas for the Government of the Islamic republic of Afghanistan. According to the 2016 study on Women and Men in Decision Making, women were more likely than men to obtain vocational education: 20 percent of women had a vocational degree compared with 13 percent of men. However, Women were less likely than men to have a bachelor’s level education: 24 percent of women were not educated up to this level, compared to 20 percent of men. Women (nearly 23 percent) were more likely than men (14 percent) to have achieved a Bachelor’s degree in law, they were also more likely to have studied literature.
80. Very few women have specialized in traditionally male-coded fields (and, presumably, their related occupations) such as engineering and agricultural science, while a larger proportion of women than of men had studied the newer field of computer science, probably correlating to the population of young women in their twenties.
81. These figures illustrate both the significant slowly changing the social fabric of the society as well as how far do the women of Afghanistan need to go. Education has been an integral area of work for the government. Thus it seeks to;
 - Focus on GBV in order to remove physical constraints on women’s education with special emphasis on early child marriages and physical harassment. In addition, it also focuses on increasing their physical access to education and capacity building infrastructure.
 - Due to the popularity of vocational education and entrepreneurship, the government seeks to take advance skill development programs and institutes to the rural areas of the country. Thus reducing their chances of being invisible in their contributions towards the development of the country.
 - Adopting an affirmative action approach and an incentive structure for female education.
 - Adoption of a comprehensive economic assistance program for women to include essential assistance for self-employment, income generating projects, and entrepreneurship.

II. Poverty eradication with more results around tailored streams of economic empowerment for rural and urban women

82. Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) is a plan of the government to achieve self-reliance and the welfare of the people. It seeks to build a productive and broad-based economy by creating new jobs and a thriving private sector economy. The Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy put forward by the ANPDF combines investment to improve growth and productivity with targeted programming to help the poor improve their skills and access opportunities. The strategy seeks to utilize CDCs at the micro-level. One of the components of the strategy; The Citizen's Charter will build the capacity of CDCs and put in place necessary downward-accountability measures to help ensure that vulnerable groups like IDP and returnee women, widows and persons with disabilities are included in the process. Specifically targeting women, the strategy seeks to utilize USD 20 million in women's economic empowerment program which will include improving women's mobility, quality of gender statistics and reducing or eliminating regulations that block women's access to credit and markets. The Strategy is aligned with Afghanistan's gender strategy to ensure gender mainstreaming of all of its programming. This latest development shows there is increasing focus on the poverty reduction goals of the government. What can ensure sustainability and consistency of these strategies is its mainstreaming not only sensitive to gender proportions and issues but also to the work and performances of other institutions of justice, equality and security.

III. Eliminating violence against women and girls demonstrating more results around reported cases of violence and their expedient access to justice and legal services

83. With the passage of EVAW Law, new penal code 2018, legal services and access to justice has improved for women in Afghanistan. One of the important goals of the law aims to create inclusivity in the legal process for justice. Thus inclusion of women as actors, decision-makers and facilitators of the legal process ensures transparency and ease of access for women seeking justice against violence and discrimination. For this reason, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is enabling the deployment of more women prosecutors to the provinces and districts including expansion of women-headed prosecution units across 34 provinces.

84. The Strategy and National Action Plan for the Elimination of Violence against Women (SNAP EVAW) 2016-2020 has been specifically designed to expand and increase the frequency of delivery of justice to the women of Afghanistan. However, for most women in the remote and rural areas, the process of justice is not only slow but also in many instances still relies on traditional justice mechanisms.

85. Therefore, it is imperative that the government prioritize shaping reporting and legislative mechanisms for adequate delivery of services and preserving the sanctity of human rights and dignity of the victim and the accused. For this reason, a monitoring mechanism has been introduced within the system. Afghanistan Attorney General Office has established a monitoring mechanism on the implementation of EVAW law within its offices.

86. The mechanism for prosecution of EVAW cases has four steps: the first step is after registration of the reported case. The case is handed over to an assigned prosecutor and then

he/ she will submit the case to the court through primary prosecution office after collecting the evidence and required documents. After receiving the court's order, the documents will be submitted to the court of appeal on violence cases through secondary/appeal prosecution office. In the final step, the high prosecution office will oversee all other required steps under primary and secondary prosecution office and take legal action on the case. Also, in addition to the four steps within the prosecution office on EVAW, there is an office of audit and control at the level of Attorney General Office for such cases.

87. Designates from all organizations/entities including Supreme Court, Ministry of Justice, Attorney General Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, National Department of Security (NDS), and Afghanistan independent Bar Association (AIBA) enter all their findings and the steps they have gone through in their relevant parts in the form and enclose them in the file for a proper record of the case in the database. The cases are entered and recorded in the system for the purpose of monitoring, follow up and procedure of trials in all stages, transparency and expediting the cases, and also for better coordination among judiciary bodies.
88. Case Management System has the capacity to record and archive important and key documents of suspects. This is for time efficiency and a safe record of the documents in the system. The registration and recording of cases, is monitored by a body consisting of authorized representatives of relevant entities/ governmental organizations based on the regulation which define the legal status of the system and explains responsibilities of each entity. Based on the criminal procedure law and EVAW law, the perpetrator of the crime is pursued and punished in accordance with criminal cases reflected in the law. All cases are registered in registration form by a comprehensive electronic system and the registration includes all stages such as criminal cases and the arrest of suspects by police, releasing from prison, submission of legal petition to the Department of Hoquq (Rights) within MoJ or to the courts, and restoring the rights of plaintiffs, and all steps through the courts, including reconsideration of the cases.
89. The cultural as well as socio-economic situations require dependence on traditional institutions of justice. These institutions have been functioning since the ancient times and create a familiar cultural space that is integral to maintaining identity. While the women and men of Afghanistan welcome development and modernization with open arms. It is also integral for them to hold on to their traditional institutions and customs that constitute their identity. For this reason, a draft Conciliation of Civil Disputes Law was developed in 2017/2018 by MoJ. The law aims to codify the jurisdiction of *Jirgas* and *Shuras* and integrate their relationship to national justice institutions.
90. Women's access to the formal justice system continues to be challenging as most FRUs are inadequately staffed and equipped, the EVAW prosecution units are located in the provincial capitals and security situation limits women EVAW court judges only work in Kabul. Similarly, these security concerns have marred full participation of trained policewomen are rarely deployed outside the four large cities of Afghanistan – Kabbul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad. These are the realities of the society in which Afghan women work. Yet the Government of Afghanistan and the women of Afghanistan are relentless in the face of bigotry and violence. The government continues to work through all

challenges and prioritize programmes to expedite the process of justice for victims of violence.

IV. More results on gender responsive budgeting

91. The GRB Strategic Plan prepared by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Afghanistan aims at establishing enabling processes to move forward in implementing Gender Responsive Budgeting, to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the national development priorities. The NAP 2019 -2022 underscores strengthening government human rights institutions by ensuring women and men's basic needs are resolved by all government entities with Units established at each government entity to have gender responsive budgets with quarterly reporting to Administrative Office of President AOP, Ministry of Finance MoF and MoWA.
92. The plan is premised on strengthened partnerships and coordination with Ministry of Finance and line ministries recognizing that Ministry of Finance is to support and promote gender equality and women's empowerment through the process of Gender Responsive Budgeting. A detailed log frame with delineated responsibilities is devised in the governments Gender Responsive Budgeting Strategic Action Plan 2015:
 - To provide innovative programming and financial support to all Ministries to achieve gender equality in line with the national priorities, and
 - To strengthen capacity, understanding, and actions of the MoF and Budgetary units on gender equality across the Ministries and agencies.

V. Women's political participation with leadership in peace and resilience

93. The government has shown strong commitment towards political participation of women in peace and resilience. However, this remains a top priority area for Afghanistan as women and girls are the biggest group (half of Afghan population) to be affected with conflicts.
94. The Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme presents a key initiative towards increasing women's role in peace. Implemented from August, 2010 to March, 2016, two important achievements of the programme were:
 - i. Development and endorsement of a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325
 - ii. Nomination of 12 women to High Peace Council (HPC) and 102 women to the Provincial Peace Councils (PPCs).
95. Increasing women's political participation especially towards leading peace is an important commitment necessary for changing the lives of the women of Afghanistan. Data shows an increase in the participation of women in civil service. Data shows that of the 399,574 employees in the Afghan civil service, women currently comprise 89,822 or 22.5% of the total. Of these female employees, 7916 are contract staff, and 81,906 are official members of staff. Women make up 8.85% of contract staff, and 26.41% of official staff, demonstrating that women are relegated to more precarious contractual employment in the civil service.

96. In addition to the variance between women's levels of participation in different ministries, there is also variance in leadership and decision-making roles within the civil service. While women make up 22.5% of the total civil service, they represent only 10.3% of decision makers.
97. With support of international development agencies and women ministry, Afghanistan government had started integrating women in climate change policies; like in 2002, UN has taken leading role in laying environmental foundation for sustainable development in Afghanistan. Women who travel long distances to collect water from underground wells and wood for fire face harsh climatic effects and therefore, Afghanistan government has taken initiatives to training and mentoring of government staff, induction of women and gender aspects into environment policies especially at times of emergencies and climatic disasters. Under Afghanistan Resilience Consortium (ARC), Afghanistan government has started efforts towards women integration into climate protection and natural resource management.

SECTION TWO

PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

(QUESTIONS 6- 31)

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK

QUESTION 6

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?

98. As per the Ministry of Women's Affairs' (MoWA) preliminary gender statistics on women and men in Afghanistan, poverty has a direct impact on the well-being of women and girls. Even though, women in rural areas are greatly involved in household activities such as cooking, cleaning, bearing children. However, they also take part in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, and livestock, carpet weaving, fuel wood harvesting, embroidery and sewing. Notably, 72.4% of women family supporters work outside the house.

99. Ministries have shown strong commitment in advancing gender equality in employment in Afghanistan. For instance, the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) are including female candidates in the recruitment process and contributing to rebuild kindergartens for children and the Ministry of Education (MoE) is rigorously working towards meeting the shortage of female teachers by recruiting more across the country. In addition, initiatives are taken by the Ministry of Economy to integrate development programmes in the national budget to empower women in rural areas. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) has launched horticulture livestock and livelihood projects and quality food production techniques to empower women in Agriculture. Similarly, various women's associations are backed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI). Likewise, The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MoRRD) successfully has launched Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme with an aim to encourage small holder groups (SHGs) and small-scale business being run by women.

◆ **Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation.**

100. As per the Third Periodic CEDAW Report 2018, on the Implementation of law on the Elimination of Violence Against women, article 22 of the Constitution prohibits any form of discrimination or advantages between Afghan citizens including women and men. Various commitments have been made by the government on women's rights and gender equality to achieve economic stability. As per the 2018 Universal Periodic Review UPR on Afghanistan, the National Action Plan of 2008 to 2018 for the Women of Afghanistan was designed with the sole purpose of improving the lives of Afghan women by shifting focus on health, education, financial security and political participation. The MoI and MoD are also responsible for including female candidates in their recruitment process and thereby workforce. Their progress can be seen in the BPFA +20 Report. The MoE has designed a plan to meet the shortage of female teachers with the financial support of Development Partners such as Women Economic Empowerment to recruit 3000 teachers who will be recruited across the country in 34 provinces while catering to the need of each province. Progress and other examples are captured in the NAP Report.

101. Ministry of Women's Affairs highlights that so far, there are 11 gender and legal frameworks that cater to women's access to economic rights and thereby activities. These may include, export-related guideline for women entrepreneurs, guideline on the licensing procedures, launching of trademark "Made by Afghan Women" to increase women's credibility in the global market, similarly, a Human Resource Strategy at the institute of Creative Arts to enhance women's development skills, additionally, the establishment of the National Priority Program to assist and thereby increase women's economic empowerment and participation. There is also women's inheritance and Property Rights Policy as well as the establishment of Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Similarly, there are Standard Operating Procedures made for the registration and process of certification, investment, economic and business licensing and community groups. Of these 11 frameworks, there is a policy plan in place for start-ups or small and medium-sized

enterprises; there is also a Strategy for Crafts (Jewellery and Gemstones) to achieve value addition. Finally, the Afghanistan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry has successfully signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) in order to establish and thereby organise a common market for women's trade activities.

102. Moreover, it has been reported by the Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry that they have reviewed the procurement laws, public and private partnerships along with income taxes. As per their preliminary findings, they found the laws to be very general due to which most miss out on specific rules for women's trade in Afghanistan.

◆ **Introduced/strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)**

103. As per the CEDAW shadow Report, the Government of Afghanistan is working towards increasing the participation of women holding public office where all ministries are encouraged to appoint at the minimum 1 female Deputy Minister, currently, there are 5 [currently it is (12), 2019] females. The Government strives to achieve a balance academic education and higher education. Data shows a positive increase in the number of females seeking education opportunities. There have been capacity building activities for a total of 266 female staff, along with training sessions of 200 government staff members to get familiar with gender-related issues. Lastly, the government has been able to send more than 1,584 female staff abroad through mid-term and long-term scholarships. Further contributions by the MoE can be found in the Shadow Report.

104. According to MoWA, the recruitment of women in civil services has procedures that grant five points to women during the supportive examinations and encouragingly there is one gender representation in the Government Employment Committee. However recently, a policy has been approved by the Government of Afghanistan to increase the percentage of women in civil services by 2% annually which is one of the Geneva commitments.

◆ **Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace**

105. As per the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Law if a person harasses or annoys a woman, he shall, depending on the circumstances be sentenced to short-term imprisonment of not less than 3 months and if such a crime is committed based on the misuse of status and position, the offender shall, again, depending on the circumstance, be imprisoned medium-term imprisonment of not less than 6 months. The Afghan Government has taken several steps to ensure the safety of women in the workplace, to name a few, the enforcement of the Law on Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the year 2016 and the provisions in the penal code on prevention against harassment of women. Furthermore, committees for the prevention of harassment have been established to ensure safety of women in the workplace. A monitoring mechanism has been established by Afghanistan Attorney General & the total cases registered by Attorney General's Office (AGO) can be seen in the NAP Status Report of 2017. The Report further explains issues found in such cases.

106. According to the 3rd periodic CEDAW report, committees have been established for the prevention of harassment in most government institutions to ensure the safety of women in workplace. Under such committees, female victims can register their complaints. Furthermore, in 2017, the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) developed a guide on sexual harassment in order to ensure safety of police women and reinforce the Anti-Harassment Law.

◆ **Strengthened land rights and tenure security**

107. The 3rd Periodic CEDAW Report notifies that The Ministry of Economy (MoE) has initiated development programmes from 2013 to 2017 and included them in the national budget which has resulted in economic growth and empowerment of women residing in villages and rural areas. As per the CEDAW Shadow Report for 2018, The National identity cards (*Tazkira*) have also been issued to all Adult Afghans which not only help to prove a person's identity but provide the card holders with right to education, ownership of property and land, right to participation in political arena and right to other entitlements under the law.

108. As per the report on the adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +25 by Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MoUDL), the ministry has undertaken following activities for the effective adoption of the Platform for Action +25 by influencing government policies towards women in order to support women who constitute half of the populace of the country.

109. There has been a regulation of affairs related to the Informal Urban Properties, the regulation has two main purposes; firstly, to appoint women members to the council of Cadastral regions in order to identify squatters who have informally built and occupied public land for residence within urban areas and at least, presence of 4 women in this council is deemed necessary and essential. Secondly, under this regulation, an agreement letter as part of the contract will be signed by occupants in the unofficial areas of the state-owned lands, these residence ownership documents issued to the occupants contain names of both of the couple.

110. Similarly, the decree no. 305 of the Office of the President issues the following ruling with regards to identification and distribution of the appropriate lands to reintegrate and build affordable housing for returnees, displaced residents and families of the martyrs of the security and defines forces of the country; this decree is aimed at preventing corruption and injustice. This is a clear and responsive decree that has provision to support women in the country in accordance with the Article 13 and 14 of the decree, it mandates that the issue of the agreement based on which the house is assigned to the righteous owners is too be registered under the name of the husband and wife. Based on this decree more than 94236 acres of state-owned lands are included in the state land bank with qualitative and quantities descriptions and with their coordinates in 11 provinces of the country and are ready to be distributed to the occupants in accordance to the decree.

111. There is the National land policy and according to the principles this Policy, all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, ethnicity, and civil status towards access to land are prohibited. As per the policy, protection of the rights of men and women property holders is one of the fundamental tasks of the government and

programs should be incorporated on a regular basis to protect the state from individuals who wish to forcefully acquire the property and from those who wish to unlawfully seize these lands/properties. This policy ensures protection of human rights throughout the process of land distribution and thereby allocation and identifies any discrimination against women's property rights that are based on outdated customs and traditions, the government guarantees to provide women's rights to property in accordance with Islamic Sharia and law. The policies of the past two years, including the National Housing Policy and the Urban Non-formal Development Policy are prepared on the basis of equality for men and women both.

112. Moreover, The Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MoUDL) has formulated a rental procedure in order to strengthen the social and economic conditions of the country and to provide an investment-friendly environment on state-owned lands for citizens in various regions. This procedure gives high to investment made by women where 224 acres of land is facilitated to women for investment in agriculture for both short-term and long-term rentals. Hence, this procedure attracting and persuades Afghan women to invest. According to data, US\$ 734237 have been invested by women only. Furthermore, a total of 31 rental contracts of state-owned properties are handed over to women for investment and establish businesses. Similarly, approximately, 71 women have been employed with a total investment of US\$ 395645.7 as mentioned by MoUDL.
113. Likewise, MoUDL, in order to protect the ownership rights of the citizens especially women have for the first time focused on the ownership rights of women-owned land/property total of 1000 documents have been issued so far in 8 provinces under this regulation, similarly, the distribution of land for returnees, displaced residents and families of the security and defines forces has also been laid out in the decree no 305.

◆ **Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women**

114. The National Action Plan Critical Assessment of 2013 to 2018 indicates that under the Constitution of Afghanistan, Article 22 seeks to carry out a policy of non-discrimination and equality in rights between men and women. As per BPF + 20 Report, the Afghan Government and NAPWA have taken actions to promote economic empowerment of women.
115. The activities and functions of the MoUDL in realizing issues related to property include; providing mental and visual security for women in work, leisure and in residential spaces, increasing women's participation in urban planning, designing and management, allocating fair and equal job opportunities for women and men especially in impactful job positions, introducing women capacity building programs in urban planning, increase women's social participation in all spheres of urban life, reflecting the needs of various groups of women in different stages of urban planning, utilizing women's skills and abilities while making urban plans and thereby programs, paying great attention to equity while planning urban and rural residencies, similarly, meet women's needs by adjusting the quality and quantity of urban planning, providing women with access to public services, educational, health and leisure facilities across country, reintegration internally displaced women and returnees in the

process of urban development and For the first time formulating supportive policies to provide affordable and reasonable housing for women who are heads of their households.

116. As per the MoUDL, in order to improve the economic status and persuade carpet industry practitioners most of which are women, the government of Afghanistan established the carpet weaving project in the year 2017, this project was designed to provide families that are involved in the carpet industry with state-owned land to utilize for residential purpose. This project is valued at US\$ 121 Million, of which US\$ 30 Million of the funds are provided by the Ministry of Finance (MoF).
117. According to a research on *Women in Agriculture in Afghanistan in 2017*, women's associations have also begun to emerge. For instance, a network of 36 village women food processing centres employs a total of 700 workers in west of the *Herat* province who produce food products to sell in the *Herati* markets. Establishment of other associations are also captured in the research. For instance, the Women Saffron Growers Association. Therefore, the presence of these associations, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are very important for the economic empowerment of Afghan women and Afghanistan in general. The followings are some examples:
- Laying the ground for establishment of 6 soya bean companies in four provinces of the country (Kabul, Badakhshan, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif);
 - Establishment of practical mechanisms for implementation of MoWA's infrastructure and economic projects for Ministry of Economy;
 - Marketing for women in industry.
118. Even though, every time that a government project targeted women's traditional occupations including marketing and business development a number of difficulties rose regarding women's collateral or credit to start up an agri-business as male family members had assets on their names, However, several commitments have been made by the government, these may include the Rebuilding Agricultural markets Programme (RAMP) and the Horticulture Livestock Project's National Agriculture and livelihood projects introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). The research further discusses initiatives taken by CSOs, international Organizations and World Bank.
119. During early 2000s the Self-help groups' regained importance as discussed earlier. According to the Government of the Afghanistan Central Statistics authority for 2014 to 2015, there were 2,420 active agriculture cooperatives with a total of 324,000 members however, 398 got dissolved in 2015. Conducted women handicraft exhibitions inside and out of country.
- ◆ **Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension)**
120. MAIL is working closely with the member of Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) to improve the quality of food production and preparation practices to empower women in agricultural sector. The National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Programme of 2016-2021 also gives a Strategic Framework for Agriculture Sector Development and Reform.

121. Several projects took place over the last ten years for instance, the National Horticulture and Livestock Project (NHLP), Afghanistan Agricultural Inputs Project (AAIP) in 2013 to 2018. Various other projects and their purposes are captured in the Report. Furthermore, the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework for 2017-2021 puts great emphasis on multi-sectorial investments for agricultural productivity in areas such as irrigation, water management, improved harvesting methods, and improved seeds, environment-friendly technology. As per research conducted by Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) 2017 on Agriculture, the Afghan government is taking steps to strengthen its ICT industry. Similarly, the Citizen's Charter National Programme Agriculture of 2016 notifies government's commitments in introducing extension services.
122. Likewise, MoWA highlights that the government is committed towards developing mechanisms for equal participation of women for instance, mechanisms under the Ministry of Commerce and Finance, Central Banks and the National Economic Commission. There are various other mechanisms as well.
- ◆ **Supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment**
123. As per the National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Programme for 2016-2021, a strategic framework has been developed for Agriculture Sector and Reform. Additionally, MAIL is responsibly committed towards improving the health of animals to increase productivity by supporting the role of women in this sector. As per the Economic and Social Vision of Afghanistan's National Development Strategy of 1400/2020, all Afghans especially women will have equal opportunity to participate in activities that encourage sustainable economic growth. Even though, it is argued that currently almost 80%-90% of the economic activities are taking place in the informal economy of the country due to which such activities largely remain un-taxed however, the 2020 Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) seeks to transform the economy from one that is, for the most part, illegal and informal to an economy that is legal and registered.

QUESTION 7

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?

124. Improvements have been made in this area by the government in recognizing, reducing and thereby redistributing unpaid care and domestic work along with promoting work-family conciliation. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MoRRD) launched an Economic Empowerment Rural Development Programme with an aim to increase the overall socio-economic status of poor rural women through effective policies and thereby techniques.

- ◆ **Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)**
- 125. As per the 2007 to 2017 National Action Plan on Women of Afghanistan, women’s work for the most part, is unpaid due to which it can be difficult for the Government of Afghanistan to introduce programmes and thereby policies that encourage women’s social protection in the informal sector.
- 126. According to the CEDAW Shadow Report of 2018, the National Civil Registration document known as *Tazkira* is an essential document which protects the rights of all Afghan citizens including the frail elderly persons. The report also highlights that Civil Registration Authority of Afghanistan (CRAA – *a charity organisation*) has appointed 10 staff members who provide information to women and the elderly and help them in receiving the civil registration document. Based on Social Protection Law 2018, Afghan government formulates a plan to provide shelter and means of living for frail elderly women who have no care takers.
- 127. The ANPDF report of 2017 -2021 argues that although investments are being made in youth population, there is still a need to invest in vulnerable, disabled widowed and elderly Afghan population through proper assistance, pensions, safety nets etc. For instance, the MoLSMD seeks to establish an agency for cash transfers for pensions and other social protection services.
- ◆ **Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave**
- 128. In the Afghanistan Labour Code, Chapter 1, Article 54, it is said that a female employee is entitled to 90 days of paid maternity leave of these 90 days, 30 days of the leave are granted to the woman before her delivery while the remaining 60 days are granted to her after she has given birth, however, under this code, there is no such provision for paternity leaves. However, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) strategy of 2019 to 2023 among other gender equality measures, mentions that men and women will be facilitated as per gender specific needs that include both maternal as well as paternal leave before and after a child’s birth.
- ◆ **Invested in time- and labor-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women**
- 129. The government of Afghanistan seeks to invest in infrastructure, transportation services, water and sanitation which will prove positive especially for rural women involved in unpaid agriculture activities. As per the NAPWA, estimates on female-male Gross Domestic Product(GDP) on the bases of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) show that for women the PPP per Capita was \$402 while for Afghan men it was \$1,182 which indicates disparity in women and men’s economic status. Investment in time saving infrastructure will support women’s effective role in the economy.
- ◆ **Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers**

130. The ANPDF of 2017 to 2021 touches upon the future of returning migrants and internally displaced people (IDPs) along with the challenges and opportunities they face while living in Afghanistan.

131. The national Policies on IDP's 2013 and on Repatriation 2017 and the Action Plan for its implementation likewise, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation 2015-2018, is a guidance for the government to manage the situation of IDP's and returnees in Afghanistan. Additionally, the National Development Strategy seeks to find an appropriate solution to cater returning migrants and the displaced. Furthermore, it discusses how the IDPs and migrants can positively contribute in the country provided that reforms are made that allow them to join vocational training programmes.

◆ **Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work**

132. *HeforShe* Campaign was launched in 2015 by UN Women in Kabul, Afghanistan, under the slogan "A Brave Man Stands for Women". This campaign was aimed at initiating dialogue in the Afghan society especially among the Afghan boys and men in order to raise the issues being face by the women of Afghanistan. The purpose of this particular initiative was to encourage men to understand and thereby support gender equality in their everyday life. Encouragingly, more than 24,000 people, 67% of them being men participated in the events that took place in 9 other provinces, universities and high schools. As of May 2016, 785 men have officially signed up for this campaign. The discussions involved women's unpaid care work and securing their rights in both public and private arenas.

133. The government entities in particular the ministry of women affairs have also taken measures in conducting the campaign of awareness raising to encourage men and women in unpaid care and domestic works in numerous occasions.

◆ **Introduced legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women's unpaid contribution to the family during marriage**

134. Ministry of Women Affairs, has designed a strategy to amend the existing laws that are discriminating towards women for instance; laws on citizenship, marriage, property, inheritance and divorce. This strategy aims at taking serious measures on the registration of marriage and divorce so justice is served to both parties. At the national and provincial level, the Supreme Court has introduced new measures in accordance with Article 61 of the civil law for the registration of marriage. Similarly, on procedures concerning divorce or separation, Articles 135 and 211 of the law are applied.

135. Likewise, civil courts in all provinces of Afghanistan regulate marriage registration and divorce-related processes. Furthermore, an awareness campaign has been launched by Ministry of Women Affairs across Afghanistan.

136. Ministries such as Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) and the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA) undertake awareness raising activities for women on family rights and family relations. As per the CEDAW Third Periodic Report, the issues of family

rights have also been incorporated in the school curricula to raise awareness among young boys and girls on family rights. Finally, there have been awareness campaigns on women's financial rights i.e. *Mahr* (dower) and inheritance.

QUESTION 8

Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years? YES/NO.

N/A.

POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

QUESTION 9

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

137. The Government of Afghanistan along with relevant ministries, to name a few, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Labour Social Affairs, (MoLSA) have rigorously been working towards reducing and thereby eradicating poverty especially among women and girls in both urban and rural setups to achieve long-term self-sustainability. Further information is being discussed in Paragraphs no. 83 and 95.

◆ **Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labor market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures**

138. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) informs that even though unemployment remains one of the issues that women face today, however if we compare 2007 with 2017 the gender differences in labour market have reduced. Moreover, efforts are being made by the government itself to expand income generating activities for women, especially those living in rural areas. As of now, the largest income generating activity in urban areas for women include teaching in schools while in rural areas activities like carpet weaving, sewing and embroidery generate income for rural women.

139. Afghangovernment seeks to make greater efforts to encourage women's economic participation to eradicate poverty and foster better nutrition, food security and greater productivity. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) is

working closely with the members of Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) to improve the quality of food production and food preparation practices in order to make them more systematic and sustainable.

- 140.** The USAID funded Afghanistan Agricultural Extension Programme (AAEP II), the Afghanistan Agricultural Research and Extension Development (AGRED) 2012-2016 and Commercial Horticulture and Agricultural Marketing Programme (CHAMP) 2010-2016 all are initiatives led by the public and private sectors, directed towards achieving effective services for rural farmers, both men and women by providing them with extension services and teaching post-harvest techniques for value addition in crop production. Similarly, women take part in agricultural training programmes, kitchen gardens and poultry programmes, livestock production programmes in order to yield maximum output and reduce household poverty.
- 141.** As per Citizens' Charter National Priority Programme of 2016, the government has been making social investments in areas such as health, employment and education in order to alleviate people out of poverty. Similarly, the 2017 to 2021 Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework sets forth a five-year strategy with an aim to achieve self-resilience, in other words, self-sustainability which will help the country to put an end to poverty. The Programmes focus on empowering women by supporting their economic engagement to achieve high levels of economic growth.
- 142.** As per the Status Report by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) from 2017 to 2018, the female employment rate has increased by 27% since 2007 and total investment on by women is estimated worth \$77.5 million where half of these investments are taking place in handicrafts and traditional crafts for instance, carpets, embroidery, wood, jewellery, cotton shawls, silk and leather goods and only a few sell their products in local and global markets. The status report further highlights that the assessment report of Institute of Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD) on Afghanistan Gender and Equality has shown an improvement in the overall participation rate of women in the workforce. As per data, out of 131,011 total members in the National Workers Unions during 2013 to 2014, almost 40,447 (31%) were women. The union consists of 512,393 members out of which, 155,983 are only women. Along with that, there are also more women also ministries and departments, the 2017 to 2018 data show that out of 400,439 members, almost 90,394 are women.
- 143.** As per Citizens' Charter National Priority Programme of 2016, the government has been making social investments in areas such as health, employment and education in order to alleviate people out of poverty. Similarly, the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework of 2017-2021 sets forth a five-year strategy with an aim to achieve self-resilience in other words, self-sustainability that will help the country to put an end to poverty. The Programs focuses on empowering and thereby supporting women's economic engagement to achieve high levels of economic growth.
- 144.** Under the 2004 constitution of Afghanistan, all afghan women have an equal right to education, to work. Therefore, government will invest greatly on female education, health, technical skills to increase their economic participation, in order to achieve higher productivity and thereby reduce household poverty. Furthermore, ANPDF 2017-21 notifies that the Government of Afghanistan has allocated budget for the UN Resolution 1325 and the National Priority Program for Economic Empowerment of Women to reduce poverty

over the next 15 years by investing as much as USD250 million in programs relating to women's economic empowerment.

◆ **Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services**

145. Similarly, as per the country's National Peace and Development Framework for 2017 to 2021, notable multi-sectorial investments need to occur in areas such as irrigation, harvesting methods, improved seeds, environment-friendly technology, storage facilities to achieve surplus production of food eventually leading to food security and subsistence. Likewise, Afghanistan ICT Sector Development Project for 2011 to 2017 supported by the World Bank seeks to provide 70 innovative cost-friendly e-learning technologies to avoid gender segregation and gender seclusion in order to help women connect across the country as well as across borders leading to circulation of qualified female extension workers, trainers and teachers.

◆ **Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities**

146. The Government has taken various steps to promote women's business development activities. For instance, the 2010 to 2015 Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme under the MoRRD (Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development) provides women with opportunities to start or expand SHGs or small-scale business ventures. We can take the example of the Enterprise Development Component that supports and motivates village facilitators for instance, a man and a woman to create business and saving groups. Other agro-business initiatives are captured in the 2017 research on Women in Agriculture. The Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD-F) of 2014 to 2019 funded by DFID & Danish Fund (DANIDA) seeks to establish an Inter-ministerial committee with an aim to Increase income & business opportunities.

147. As per the Ministry of Finance's (MoF) 2017 to 2018 Status Report on achieving commitments, the National Priority Program for Women's Economic Empowerment was yet another achievement which was launched on March 8, 2017. The Program aimed at providing services to a great number of Afghan poor citizens including both men and women, it also included citizenship and economic empowerment of women through various agricultural activities such as garden kitchens where 35,530 gardens were successfully built along with 35000 livestock and greenhouses. Moreover, Afghan women were being trained and more than 90,000 being supported. Additionally, recruitment of 2,458 female teachers took place on contractual basis.

148. Similarly, according to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), more than 6000 programs have been launched over these 10 years in different provinces to empower Afghan women and girls. As an outcome to these skills development programs, more than 102,070 women and 27,955 men have gained benefit from them in areas such as tailoring, carpentry, gardening, carpeting, embroidery, candle and flower making and handicrafts respectively. Similarly, the India's Siva Project has successfully educated 3,000 girls in food processing, embroidery, sewing, clothing design, and jewellery in *Balkh* and *Herat* provinces and *Bagram* and *Istalif* districts of Kabul respectively.

149. Encouragingly, a report by the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that female entrepreneurs have created job opportunities for approximately 47,861 men and women, 87% for women and 13% for men. On average, more than 2 out of 5 businesses have attended conferences, exhibitions and various courses and luckily, more than 480 out of 1,144 female entrepreneurs have attended such conferences, exhibitions etc. and more than 50 female entrepreneurs have set up websites in all 34 provinces of the country.

◆ **Introduced or strengthened social protection programs for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)**

150. As per the 2007 to 2017 National Action Plan on Women, the Government of Afghanistan finds it difficult to introduce programmes and policies that encourage women's social protection in the informal sector due to the reason that women's work both at home and in agriculture are highly undervalued. Despite the difficulties, dedicated efforts are being made by various ministries, for instance the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, (MoLSA) aims at establishing an agency for cash transfers for pensions and other social protection services.

◆ **Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty**

151. According to the Constitution of Afghanistan, the government has a duty to provide legal aid to the poor citizens in particular women., the justice system has changed significantly under the reform agenda by the national unity government, although, the challenges is still subsist in the fair treatment with women. However, the Government of Afghanistan is making efforts to amend and abolish existing laws discriminating against women; the judicial system will therefore be revised in accordance with the state's duty to protect the rights of its citizens.

QUESTION 10

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

152. Developments have been made by almost all relevant Ministries in improving access to social protection for women and girls. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL)'s 2010 to 2015 strategy to empower women in rural areas in accordance with similar contributions made by other ministries such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Economy (MoE), Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and finally the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI). The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has also been working with the other Ministries in developing human capital of the country.

153. In addition, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) has successfully initiated programmes that ensure the empowerment of rural women and their active participation in the decision-making process.

◆ **Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programs, social assistance)**

154. According to the Constitution, Article 43 and Social Protection Law 2018, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Afghan Red Crescent Society are obliged to provide social protection Centres for elderly citizens, widowed women and disabled persons. The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework of 2017-2021 recognizes ministries that work on human capital development to equip labour force including women with the right set of skills needed for jobs. These ministries may include, The MoF, MoH, MoE, MoHE, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSMD) and MoWA. The Framework later discusses how social protection services such as pension reform, social safety nets etc. can prevent the impoverishment of vulnerable groups. The I-ANDS Volume-1 for 2006 highlights government's positive initiatives for instance, policies that focused on women empowerment, social protection, health, education and Human Rights.

◆ **Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers**

155. According to the CEDAW 3rd Periodic Report, the Afghan refugees receive food items such as rice, flour, wheat, oil and other. Moreover, Health packages and physical cash are provided in one of the towns where these refugees live. Similarly, the Humanitarian Aid Programmes have covered 135,682 IDPs and the returnees at both national and provincial levels. MoLSMD also seeks to establish an agency for cash transfers for pensions and other social protection services.

◆ **Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pensions**

156. In Afghanistan, yet there is no such safety net system except for a few limited pensions reserved for people with disabilities and families of martyrs. Poor families depend on the informal social safety net for instance community-based assistance.

◆ **Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels**

157. There are 35,000 Community Development Councils (CDCs) in which 37% of the participant are women. Likewise, 37% of females are participating in 389 District Development Assemblies. Encouraging, as of now, Microfinance has been provided to 5 provinces naming Parwan, Balkh, Bamyan, Nangarhar and Hirat with 60% of female beneficiaries.

◆ **Improved access to the above for specific populations (e.g. women in informal employment, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian settings)**

QUESTION 11

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

◆ **Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services**

158. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has developed their National Health Strategy for 2016-2020 and National Gender and Human Rights Strategy for the health sector. The main goal of the National Health Strategy is to access, strengthen and develop beneficial and sustainable health practices to ensure better and just access to quality healthcare services. These are based on available funding for improving the health and nutrition conditions of all citizens particularly women, children and vulnerable groups.

159. The health sector is committed towards implementing objective 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which concerns health improvement based on its 13 specific indicators including women's health. Additionally, the MoPH is committed to comply with and implement all relevant international documents such the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health of 2016 to 2030 and family planning respectively.

160. Furthermore, MoPH increases women's access to health services through targeted public health services directed towards the following:

- Victims of gender-based violence and their families by setting up protection and family support centres for women survivors of violence and their families.
- For women detainees by providing free health services in coordination with Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) with assistance from The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and CSSP who have prepared the health strategy for detentions and prisons, with the provision of health services for women being an important part of this strategy.
- MoPH has established a psychological health clinic for refugees returning from European countries and ordinary people. Around 10,012 psychosocial counselling sessions have been held in groups while 16,056 psychosocial counselling sessions have been held for individuals, along with 538 awareness raising sessions held for 16,888 people.

◆ **Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services**

161. During the years 2013 to 2017, a total of 998 female health personnel including doctors, nurses, midwives and pharmacists were hired at the MoPH. The measures that the MoPH has undertaken for increasing the number of female health personnel are as follows:

- i. Establishment and support of local midwifery and nursing schools.
- ii. Voluntary recruitment of female doctors for specialization programme.
- iii. Giving examinations and attestation of three years' work experience and out of country educational documents.
- iv. Considering 5% extra marks for women in the examinations for grading system and women's specialist programmes.

162. Additionally, MoPH has undertaken various measures aimed at ensuring rural women's access to healthcare services. These include provision of health services through 115 family health nests in remote and rural areas of *Faryab, Badakhshan, Daikundi and Hirat* provinces respectively. The goals of establishing these nests are to provide lifesaving services, create an active referral system, and provide family planning services. Improved access has also resulted, in enhancing the sense of local ownership, thus helping to eliminate gender-based violence for rural women deprived of health services.

163. The assessment conducted by the MoPH in 2011, with technical and financial support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), demonstrates that for the victims of violence who are seeking help and protection out of the family circle, healthcare and treatment facilities in rural and urban areas are often the only alternative. On the other hand, additional healthcare services in all mentioned areas, referral and reporting of the linked network of implementing agencies regarding response to violence is in crisis, since the MoPH with support from UNFPA presented a model of response to violence that is among the priority national programmes of the MoPH implemented in 2012.

164. Based on 2011 figures of Demographic and Health Survey released by Central Statistics Authority, the maternal mortality rate is 400 cases out of 100000 live birth complications caused by postpartum period.

◆ **Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns**

165. Ministry of Public Health National Health Strategy 2016-2020 states in its various indicators the importance of campaigns, including in access to information on utilization of maternal, child and adolescent health services. These campaigns

would have a twofold strategy to increase awareness of and advocacy for preventing child marriage, and delaying teenage pregnancy and birth spacing. Family planning campaigns are limited to television and radio. Nevertheless, radio and television are good sources of family planning information, but the impact of the mass media on this issue has not yet been evaluated. The government, however, does conduct immunization campaigns very regularly particularly to eradicate Polio.

- 166.** Notably, the government of Afghanistan has finalized its Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, and Child and Adolescent (RMNCAH) strategy along with its Coasted Implementation Plan for 2018 to 2022 for family planning programs and policies. The first FP2020 commitment was made by Afghanistan in 2016 with an aim to increase the public health facilities that offer family planning services and expand contraceptive choice across country by introducing DMPA-SC injectable contraception and making it an essential part of the national medicines list. Moreover, the country is working towards promoting public-private partnerships while engaging with religious leaders, youth and civil society in order to reach their goal of achieving a Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) of 30% by reducing the unmet need to 10% by 2020. Through this FP2020 commitment, the government will address cultural barriers to family planning through inter-sectorial coordination and thereby public awareness advocacy campaigns. There is also multiple family planning committees set up in various sectors for instance, RMNCAH strategy coordination.

◆ **Provided gender-responsiveness training for health service providers**

- 167.** Ministry of Public Health National Health Strategy 2016-2020 lists the types of interventions possible for mainstreaming gender and human rights in its work by educating health providers and managers on gender and human rights, including gender based violence, and the link between women's status in society and ill health. By developing and promote communication activities for health staff to improve gender responsive health services and by developing a gender and human rights accountability framework for monitoring MoPH planning and program implementation.

◆ **Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes**

- 168.** The strategy also aims to address forms of substance abuse with program interventions targeting youth and adolescents. Life Skills modules also have basic

sexuality education to help youth prevent harmful practices and contract sexually transmitted or other infectious, viral and communicable diseases.

169. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)'s comprehensive education programs aim at enabling young people to make informed decisions about their sexuality and health while enhancing life skills and promoting gender equality, various NGOs in Afghanistan are providing sexual education services through IPPF's funding although various adjustments are made to the program to align with national priorities. For instance, the Afghan Family Guidance Association (AFGA) was established in 1960s and today aims to deliver sexual and reproductive health services and thereby programs with permanent clinics and mobile facilities present across country. The AFGA's Family Welfare Centres are located in Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad respectively and provide information on contraceptives and free contraception, counselling on family planning, HIV, AIDS and adolescent health prevention and treatment, antenatal and post-natal care. Other services include screening and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), basic infertility treatment where complicated medical cases are also referred to these centres.

QUESTION 12

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

- ◆ **Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programs**
170. According to the CEDAW Third Periodic Report (2018), the government has launched a third Strategic Plan for Education (2017-2022 to increase the ratio of girls' admission to technical and vocational institutions from 17% in the year 2015 to 26% in 2021. The country has also set the machines in motion to conduct on the job trainings for newly recruited female teachers as well as provision of literacy courses for women, raising the number from 60% to 100% in 2021. Also according to the report, the Ministry of Economy has prioritized development programs and included them in the national budget, resulting in growth and empowering women in villages and rural areas. These comprise the inclusion and strengthening of the National Solidarity Program (NSP), vocational and technical training programs, AREDP, Household Economy and the Citizens Charter Program in the

national budget and have been implemented for growth and empowerment of women in rural areas and villages. As per report 21.7% of female youth (of the 45.9% total) have participated in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 12 months. However, much lower female adults participate in this kind of training at 0.3 percent compared to male adult students (2.2%). There is good achievement with room for more.

171. The Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan priorities increasing the number of female literacy students from 53% in 2015 to 60% in 2021 and provision of emergency educational programs for children of IDPs and Repatriates. (50% of which, is for girls). The statistics showcase the high probability for the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to realistically achieving their set goals.

172. According to the World Bank, on October 23, 2018, Afghanistan and the World Bank signed new grant agreements worth \$403 million to finance improvements in primary, secondary and higher education along with advancing the economic and social standing of rural Afghan women. This grant includes a \$5 million additional grant to the existing \$50 million grant Higher Education Development Project (HEDP) from the Afghanistan's Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) which aims at increasing access to higher education in Afghanistan, as well as improve its quality and relevance. Furthermore, The Ministry of Education (MoE) in cooperation with the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has also finalized practical plans and thereby programs to be completed in due time in accordance with the specified budget. Similarly, additional \$5 million financing for the Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) will be used provide support in four areas including: (i) provision of scholarships for full-time faculty to pursue master's degrees or above; (ii) training of teaching faculty in Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Student-Centered Learning (SCL); (iii) support to public universities to prepare and implement Strategic Institutional Development Plans (SIDPs); and finally, (iv) grants to support individual and group research projects at universities.

◆ **Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education**

173. The MoE has developed a plan to recruit a sum of 30,000 female teachers with financial support from development partners (Women's Economic Empowerment Project). Based on this plan, these 3,000 female teachers will be allocated in remote areas across the country, out of which 1,330 women have been contracted for the job and the rest is underway. During the year, teachers of the MoE undertake short and long-term trainings under the Teacher Training Program (Teacher Training Centers in Provinces) particularly on subject matters and pedagogy. A sum of 1,885 teachers and personnel of the teacher training centers from the capital and provinces, out of which 630 are women, have participated in short term training programs and received necessary trainings. This has increased the probability of developing gender-responsive curricula with increasing induction of female teachers. The Ministry of Education can in lieu of this achievement devise a monitoring body composed of senior female teachers for screening curricula for adherence and up gradation into gender mainstreaming.

174. Teacher trainings and female teacher's inductions are a priority, but also revisions in curricula. Under the in-service training educational program, a total of 71,000 teachers (33% female), have participated in the short-term capacity building program of the ANSIT (Subject Matter and Pedagogic Trainings).
175. Gender equality has been considered in the revision of the textbooks of grade 1 to 6 by ensuring the mentions of male and female names have been equalized, the number of pictures, figures and drawings of male and female have been equalized, and the balance and similarity in male and female occupations have been considered. This is a remarkable achievement for the Government of the Islamic Republic. The only challenge is to mainstream the curricula across varying parts of the country.
- ◆ **Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals**
176. Teachers of the Ministry of Education (MoE) have undertaken short and long-term trainings under the Teacher Training Program (Teacher Training Centers in Provinces) particularly on subject matters and pedagogy.
- ◆ **Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls**
177. In accordance with the work plans of the Protection and Safety units of the MoE provincial directorates, the training on awareness about the risks of landmines and unexploded material, are being conducted for teachers as well as male and female students. On the safety of their commuting routes as well as traffic signs, partner organizations provide awareness.
178. Additionally, in accordance with the security plans of each school, the committees of proctors are operational in every school and the body search regime is properly in place. Thus, the safety of students in schools are ensured, the authorized personnel of the MoE conduct regular monitoring, check and control of the drinking water, prevent entrance of prohibited material and food items to the schools and prevent the expired food items to the cafeterias of educational institutions.
179. The Social Harmony Sections and Administrative Councils of the Schools also work towards ensuring the social protection of female teachers through the council of school and social workers by organizing local councils. In case of need they can also get help from the local security offices. According to the MOE database, in the year 1394 (2015) a total of 677 female students and 9 female teachers who were poisoned, were treated after the administration of the necessary medications. One student was gang raped by unknown persons and two female teachers were threatened, warned and beaten. Three cases of abduction and beating were referred to the prosecution in 1393 and 1394 (2014 and 2015).
- ◆ **Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy**
180. In Afghanistan, employers rank computer science skills at the top of their future employment needs. A recent survey of 275 ICT companies in Afghanistan (commissioned by USAID) reported that there were 1,174 ICT jobs available for women and one

impediment to their employment was the lack of practical knowledge of technology skills. STEM education sponsorship for afghan girls is an ongoing project of UC Berkley and they are using “Code to Inspire” campaign that empowers female students in Afghanistan with the tech tools, knowledge, and resources to develop their coding skills. Technology education is considered by the organization to be the key to providing the women with “leverage in their fight for social, political, and economic equality.”

181. In collaboration with Central Partnership Authority of Afghanistan, to initially create a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) high-school and University. It will be a hub for young women and from various parts of Afghanistan, providing them the real opportunity to get access to modern education and high-tech jobs. The government of Afghanistan donated six acres (260,000 ft²) of land inside of the Kabul University (worth \$12mil) for first phase. The goal is to utilize local, regional and national resources and expertise to build and equip a top technology high school & Innovation center for Afghan students aged from 14 to 17. This is a collaboration with The Womanist Foundation has two on-going Crowd funding campaigns to support activities in Afghanistan:

- Empower Afghan Girls by Teaching Them to Code
- 250 Teachers for Afghanistan’s Girls

◆ **Ensured access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other education/training settings**

182. MoE strategic plan for education aims at provision of pre-work courses for female students and provision of Master’s degree education for the instructors of teacher training institutions that include women. Provision of health services in the schools for both male and female schools and provision of literacy classes across the country aimed at increasing the rate of female admission in the literacy courses from 53% to 60% in 2021.

183. According to UNICEF Afghanistan, on October 30, 2018 in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Education (MoE) with the support of UNICEF and other relevant ministries celebrated Girls Hygiene Day in Kabul where they launched their first ever Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) guideline meant for teachers in Afghanistan. The guideline has been complemented by a comic and simplified for adolescent girls both in and out of schools. The main purpose of this guideline is to break the taboos related to female menstrual hygiene and to raise awareness regarding the importance of good menstrual hygiene management for women and adolescent girls in Afghanistan as recent findings showed that almost 70% of the girls do not take bath or shower during menstruation for fear of infertility, while 29% avoid attending school when having their menses. Similarly, 80% girls are not allowed to attend social events such as weddings etc. Last but not the least, 50% of these girls is not aware of menstruation until their first period started.

◆ **Strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood**

184. As per CEDAW Report, the draft family law which sets the minimum age of marriage for male and female at 18 years is under scrutiny. (Update needed) Some of the provisions of

the Shia Personal Status Law that were deemed discriminatory were amended and corrected, and in force according to the directive no. 405 dated April 7, 2009.

185. The Afghanistan National Action Plan (NAP) 2016-2017 status report mentions its varying achievements regarding the varying indicators/laws given in the National Action Plan. Targeted levels of achievement pertaining to specific indicators in the developing of safe and secure spaces, provision of technical training and education, gender mainstreaming and training in Elimination of Violence against Women Law etc. The Table below gives a snapshot of these achievements

INDICATORS/LAWS	ACHIEVEMENTS
<p>1 and 2: Number of laws and policies assessed in order to strengthen women participation</p> <p>Number of adequate laws and policies amended</p>	<p>Assessment on women participation in civil services, including freedom from sexual harassment, incentives for women access to education and non-discrimination at civil service.</p>
<p>4: The number of ministries having the policy of mutual respect in the workplace</p>	<p>3000 female teachers trained and appointed across 34 provinces through Global Partnership for Education (GPE) program.</p> <p>Ministries included gender with a special reference to women participation, like National Policy of Youth</p>
<p>6. Number of women-only training facilities</p>	<p>Military Training Centers for women,</p> <p>English language and Computer Programming for women</p> <p>Security training for women to participate in security sector</p>
<p>24. Number of Women trained in Sharia, EVAW Law and Penal Code of Afghanistan</p>	<p>13 workshops, 34 seminars on women participation, topics included EVAW law, proposal writing and computer skills</p> <p>2 advocacy conferences organized</p>

186. According to Afghanistan’s Senior Family Law Officer, Rights & Democracy, Family law in Afghanistan came into effect in 1920s by NezaamnamehNekah (the ordinance concerning marriage) following the 1961 Usulnaameh-e-Ezdewaadj (the principles concerning marriage) which specified marriage age as 15 and the new marriage law of 1971 which addressed consensus to marriage, marriage registration along with some provision on divorce. Similarly, the 1977 civil code had minor reforms on child marriage, polygamy and divorce. Therefore, the 1977 law which is currently implemented in the country has a number of shortcomings including different marriageable ages for instance 16 for girls and 18 for boys, there is lack of provisions that talk about consent in marriage, similarly, the rights and interests of children have been ignored etc. The reforms made to the family law are not welcomed by many conservative groups yet, due to various arguments and justifications given by these groups on the basis of religion and culture. Therefore, implementation of family law is tied into custom as a result to which women’s access to justice and equal protection provided under the law have not been practiced properly in the country. However, discussions are taking place in terms of reviewing the current family law in light of the constitution and international human rights provisions.

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

QUESTION 13

In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?

- 187.** In 2017 the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) reported that 4340 cases of violence against women had been registered, increasing by 11.7% in one year. Unfortunately, few cases get to be reported compared to the actual prevalence rate of violence against women due to various family and social pressures.
- 188.** Moreover, women and girls are also prevented from reporting violence due to stigma, discrimination, fear of reprisals, as well as the treatment of victims of sexual abuse who seek help as perpetrators of *zina* (i.e. sexual intercourse outside of marriage) or “attempted *zina*”. Therefore, women and girls are indeed sometimes charged with the “intention” of committing *zina* when they run away from abuse and seek help.
- 189.** In addition, contributions are being made towards the effective implementation of the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) law. For instance, in the last Universal Periodic Report (UPR) cycle, many States made recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the law by providing training to law enforcement officials, by creating specific police and prosecutions units.

190. The EVAW law emphasises the State's role in protection and prosecution, requiring the police to register complaints and protect victims, courts and prosecutors to prioritise such cases. However, cases of violence against women, including criminal cases, are frequently mediated, mostly through traditional dispute resolution mechanisms headed by men and made on the basis of cultural norms, rather than on the legal framework.

191. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has highlighted that the wide use of mediation in criminal offences of violence against women, including in murder cases, promotes impunity that enables the reoccurrence of violence and erodes women's trust in the legal system.

192. However, the Government of Afghanistan recognizes that security is a prerequisite to women's overall well-being, their ability to enjoy their rights as well as their social and economic advancement. It also aims at tailoring security policies to the unique needs of women and girls. The security sector strategy includes:

- Reviewing the major security policies and programs from a gender perspective.
- Assessing existing gender tools, mechanisms and approaches.
- Implementing an affirmative action policy.
- Eliminating women-directed violence in public and private spaces.
- Raising awareness on human rights, especially women's rights, and gender-based violence within the security sector; and finally,
- Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.

193. The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) pillar on security presents the government's strategy in creating a secure environment for women within both the public and private spheres that is conducive to their empowerment and thereby the attainment of gender equality.

◆ **Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape**

194. Domestic violence, perpetrated largely by intimate partners, is still a hidden phenomenon that necessitates education and legal measures such as improved family law, protection for women at risk, counselling, and support for the economic autonomy of survivors of violence. As of now, the lack of formal reporting, recording and analysis of cases hinder the adoption of measures to address them.

195. Domestic violence, in other words, intimate partner abuse, battering, or wife-beating, refers to physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse that takes place in the context of an intimate relationship, including marriage. Domestic violence is one of the most common forms of gender-based violence and is often characterized by long-term patterns of abusive behaviour and control.

196. It has been recognized by the Government of Afghanistan that it is important to raise awareness of the police, prosecutors, judges and the general public on the importance of addressing violations of women's rights, including domestic violence, through the formal

justice system. For this reason, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), civil society groups and other agencies seek to sensitize the police, prosecutors, judges and the general public on the importance of addressing violations of women's rights, including domestic violence, through the formal justice system rather than *jirgasandshuras*; and increase the awareness of women and girls about their rights and available legal remedies. For instance:

- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has carried out considerable activities for public awareness regarding laws and their legal rights in the capital and the provinces. MoJ held 505 public awareness programs in 2014, 600 in 2015 and 1631 in 2016. These programs were for government employees, students, children in orphanages and juvenile correction centres, and the public in the Masjids and in public areas. MoJ has also distributed 548621 promotional papers to the public.
- Similarly, the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) has held short term training programs and workshops to elevate the level of police awareness on solutions to family problems. Successfully, a total of 115 training workshops and programs have been held on prevention of violence.

◆ **Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment**

197. According to NAPWA, public violence, assaults and verbal harassment that are specifically motivated to undermine women's advancement adversely affect women's rights to participation in Afghanistan.
198. Prevention, one of the integral pillars of the Afghanistan's National Action Plan (NAP) oversees all legislation, capacity building and other actions against all kinds of sexual harassment and violence against women and girls in public places. According to Objective I of the ANAP, women and girls of Afghanistan will be protected from all kinds of harassment and violence through awareness raising and public outreach.
199. Establishment of the High Commission on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW), Provincial Commissions on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Prosecution Office for Elimination of Violence. EVAW Law symbolizes the commitment of the Afghan Government and its people to ensure gender equality as enshrined in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
200. Moreover, articles 5 and 30 of the Law deals with harassment and violence against women and girls in public as reported in CEDAW 3rd Periodic report. Though a Presidential Decree rather than a Law enacted by Parliament, notably the EVAW Law identifies 22 acts of violence against women, including rape, forced prostitution, forced marriage, abuse, humiliation or intimidation, harassment or persecution and forced drug addiction among others.

◆ **Violence against women in politics**

201. The NAP on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2015 to 2022 is an essential document containing strategic priorities for the protection of civilians including women. The Plan outlines strategies for the protection of women engaged in political activities and public life. The Plan goes through issues of implementation as division of responsibilities have been divided across multitude of actors. However, it may not essentially be harmful in

the long run. Studies show that appropriate balance of centralized and decentralized division of responsibilities is essential to the effective and efficient functioning of government.

202. The EVAW law, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and other policies mentioned above on VAW, are elemental initiatives of the NAP. In accordance with the NAP, women participation in local governance and political structures has increased
203. NAPWA of 2014 to 2019 notifies that the conditions under which Afghan women practice politics remain constrained by violence and prejudice. However, the new Government has been quite successful in ensuring strong involvement of women in national institutions, including the civil service and the National Assembly.
204. Based on Anti-Harassment Law against Women and Children, women are protected against all forms of violence in all government entities. All ministries have already established an anti-harassment committee for prevention of the offenses against women in public places.

◆ **Child, early and forced marriages**

205. EVAW law which was adopted in August 2009 criminalizes 22 acts of violence against women including forced and child marriage acts.
206. Furthermore, in 2017, the government adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage. NAP attempts to Reform and amend the legal framework to protect the rights of women and girls by:
 - Criminalizing violence against women and traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls, including forced and child marriages.
 - Informing all government agencies about the legal provisions to eliminate violence against women, forced and child marriages, as well as the institutions in place to assist women facing such crimes
 - Reducing the constraints to girls' and women's access to education, with special emphasis on early child marriages, sexual harassment, and physical access.
207. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) has taken prominent measures on Violence against Women (VAW). To start with, MoWA, in close collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) office is working on a plan to end early child marriages from Afghanistan. Moreover, the ministry has initiated a project to protect women and children from violence and intimidation. Similarly, MoWA is also working over the mechanism for arbitration and proper monitoring of violence cases being registered in the country.

◆ **Trafficking in women and girls**

208. Security is one of the important and vital issues for all people of society, especially for women. There are two issues in this regard: first, the impact of insecurity severely affected women and children. The main reasons behind insecurity are poverty, ambition for power,

and trafficking of narcotics and of child and women. Women and girls in insecure situation fall victim to rape and sexual slavery.

209. According to the International Organization on Migration (IOM), in August 2018, a second regional forum was organized to bring together non-government organization (NGOs) from Afghanistan and various other countries to discuss cross-border cooperation to eradicate human trafficking from Central and South Asia. The forum was part of the multi-year Combating Human Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Afghan government adopted a new law on human trafficking and smuggling of migrants in 2017 to combat human trafficking. This law was made to help Afghan officials distinguish between trafficking and smuggling of people which was previously being used interchangeably. By doing so, better protection can be offered to victims of both crimes. According to the law on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants, a High Commission on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants has been established in the Capital Kabul and all provinces of Afghanistan to coordinate all activities concerning combating human trafficking and smuggling.

QUESTION 14

What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?

- ◆ **Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation**
210. The Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) Law symbolizes the commitment of the Afghan Government and its people to ensure gender equality as enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Passed by presidential decree in 2009, the EVAW law has criminalized “*customs, traditions and practices causing violence against women and which are against Islamic Sharia*”.
211. Under the EVAW law, all provinces are mandated to have a commission of elimination of violence against women (CoEVAW) for the planning, measuring and thereby effective implementation of law. They have been established in 32 out of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan.
212. The law is based on a set of objectives these may include:
- Safeguarding the religious and legal rights and protecting the human dignity of women.
 - Protecting wellbeing of family and fighting against customs, traditions and practices that cause violence against women contrary to the provisions of religion of Islam.
 - Protecting the victim of violence (affected woman) or exposed to violence.

- Preventing violence against women.
- Ensuring public awareness and education on violence against women & Finally,
- Prosecuting perpetrators of violence against women.

213. Each article under the law addresses a different type practice/action of violence against women. For instance, Article 4 deals with the prevention of violence while article 18 talks about sexual violence, similarly, articles 21, 22, 23 and 24 deal with common forms of violence or harm that woman face. Other may include Article 25 on *Baad*, 36 on forced labor, 26 on forced marriage so on and so forth.

214. As per The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), in 2012, preparations and arrangement of regulations for the support centers for women were made while modifications were to take place in 2019. Similarly, based on the provision of free legal services, around 1502 defense lawyers have been assigned to pursue legal cases for free in courts and prosecutors’ offices in Kabul. MoWa also notifies that monitoring mechanisms are in place to analyze the situation of women in areas where there is deprivation of liberty and support centers in order to effectively implement regulations of these centers. Additionally, from 2018 to 2019, the following-up of cases to relevant organs identified around 667 persons in capital alone leading to a total of 3840 legal advices during the same year. Likewise, during 2018-2019, family meetings and mediations occurred with around 1720 people from the capital and provinces and a total of 1675 cases got resolved after legal action during the same year.

◆ **Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls**

215. The Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) established a Commission on the Elimination of Violence against Women, composed of 9 government ministries and institutions which were tasked to initiate policy and program measures that would strengthen the government’s response to VAW. National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) was coined through a well-catered commitment by Afghan Compact and International community for Afghan National Development Strategy.

216. NAPWA aims to address the three-pronged goals on gender equity and thus address the difficult situation of women. These goals are:

- a) Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women;
- b) Developing women’s human capital;
- c) Ensuring women’s full participation and leadership in all aspects of life in Afghanistan.

◆ **Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women’s access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases.)**

- 217.** One of the integral goals of NAPWA is “to build and sustain a secure environment that enables women to live a life free from intimidation, fear and violence, and which supports their participation and leadership in promoting and maintaining peace and security”.
- 218.** Therefore, NAPWA builds the commitment to “Eliminating women-directed violence in public and private spaces”. This commitment involves the Government and its subsidiaries; Supreme Court, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Parliament, Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), human rights organizations, Ministry of Information (MoI), Culture and Youth etc. to undertaking the following actions:
- Establishing of pilot Family Response Units in police stations.
 - Conduct of public awareness campaign and public outreach to make communities, families and community-based organizations aware of family response units and referral centers.
 - Strengthening of the preventive component of security measures, including the provision of security briefing, security information, and emergency response tips for concerned women, individuals, and institutions.
 - Legislation of appropriate measures to curb domestic violence against women.
 - Establishment of close linkage with institutions dealing with women’s rights, health and rule of law, and sectorial ministries to identify areas of cooperation, synergy, and support.
 - Development and implementation of trainings and awareness campaigns on human rights, especially women’s rights, and gender based violence.
- 219.** The plan tends to analyze and portray the increasing status of women and their access to justice through a set of specific indicators such as eliminating gender discrimination, proper enactment of gender specific legislations i.e. Family law, a 30% increase in participation of women in the justice sector, greater number of judicial officials sensitized on citizen’s rights especially those of women and children, increased access to free legal aid and availability of legal awareness programs etc.
- 220.** Similarly, women can seek justice in criminal courts if no special court exists in the province. Also, the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) has established the Deputy Office for EVAW, juvenile delinquency, supporting human rights, primary, appeal, and high investigations attorney directorates in the capital and the provinces, and social interrogators’ departments for EVAW. Women victims can also register their cases and access justice in the Legal Directorate of the Ministry of Justice in the capital or Legal Departments in the provinces, Women’s Affairs Directorates across the country, and the AIHRC.

YEAR	2016-17		2015-2016		2014-2015		2013-2012		2011-2012	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
No. of Women	81.3	2848	78.3	3052	92.4	3059	92.6	2926	91.2	3458

No. of Children	18.7	787	21.7	844	7.6	250	7.4	235	8.8	332
Total	100	3503	100	3896	100	3309	100	3161	100	3790
No of Shelters	29		28		27		25		18	

221. Furthermore, NAPWA focuses on providing other Legal services specifically crafted to women’s needs and legal assistance for instance legal aid clinics are to be established throughout the country, and support will be given to organizations that provide legal counseling to women.

222. Likewise, a national network will be established among defense attorneys to provide needed support to paralegal officers. MOWA’s Legal Department, together with the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI), is to provide a referral service to support female victims of violence. A larger number of protection and response services for women suffering from violence, such as shelter, to be made available to women seeking redress. Activities already developed to support women-at-risk will be expanded and strengthened. Establishment and strengthening of Family Courts at the provincial level and affirmative action policies for employment of legal professionals and law enforcement officers will further increase rural women’s access to justice.

◆ **Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)**

223. National Action Plan (NAP) Resolution 1325 deems Prevention as an integral pillar to Prevent violence against women to ensure their rights and political participation.

- It focuses on setting specific measures for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence including recommendations on type of measures, reporting on type of violations, type of perpetrator and specific groups affected.
- Designing measures for safeguarding of women and girls’ rights, including reporting and investigation on violations, inclusion of a gender perspective and gender mainstreaming in human rights activities.
- Introducing measures for the inclusion of gender perspectives in conflict prevention, security and peacekeeping missions.

224. Advocacy campaigns are in the planning phase with the different ministries. Ministry of Information and Culture towards fighting violence against women and girls, plans for raising awareness amongst women with regards to their Sharia and legal rights. Expert women in the Sharia and legal affairs that are inclusive of the representatives of Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, and the Ministry of Information and Culture are the accommodating authorities with membership

from the cooperating establishments. The purpose of this group is to introduce women's place in Afghanistan Sharia and Laws, and to train specialized staff in the affairs of Sharia and law in accordance with the National Action Plan of Resolution 1325.

- ◆ **Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls**
 - ◆ **Introduced or strengthened measures for improving the understanding of causes and consequences of violence against women among those responsible for implementing measures on ending violence against women and girls**
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QUESTION 15

What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?

- ◆ **Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours**
- 225.** Codification of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) consists of provisions for raising awareness amongst the masses and the Legal community on violence against women and gender issues. The objectives of these campaigns are defined to not only provide knowledge but to also transform behaviours and attitudes towards issues faced by the women of Afghanistan. These campaigns consist of varying objectives identified by law and involve varying levels of engagement.
- 226.** These campaigns may include various government institutions such as Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA) have launched public awareness raising initiatives on women's rights including their right to work. The aim of these programs is explain and elaborate women's right to work, enlightening public attitudes towards working women as well as refuting negative attitudes and myths.
- 227.** Moreover, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) conducts awareness raising initiatives with the aim of enlightening attitudes and increasing the number of women in their institution. For instance, an awareness raising campaign was undertaken for women in the year 2013 covering 300 women in Kabul and Balkh provinces, and in the year 2014 two sessions were held in Salaam and Kateb Universities in Kabul for 60 persons, both men and women. Similarly, in 2015 an awareness raising campaign was held in Dawat and Tabesh universities for 100 men and women, and

in 2016 in Kapisa and Badakhshan universities for 100, and in Bamyán province for 120 persons, men and women.

- 228.** For awareness purposes in the implementation of the Law on ERAW, advertising material such as posters and banners have been produced through the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) in association with the non-government institutions have been distributed in the capital and the provinces. Also, the preparation of training manual on Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (LEVAW) according to Islam and enforced laws has been used in more than 10 training programs held for government and non-government employees.
- 229.** Each of the training programs consisted of 20 to 25 participants. During 2014 and 2015, awareness raising workshops on LEVAW were held for 595 government and non-government employees in the capital and the provinces. Moreover, broadcasting advertisements through national radio and television on reduction of violence against women, elections, and women's Islamic and legal rights for the purpose of realization of the NAP values for the Afghan women for more than 3 million viewers annually. These measures for the implementation of LEVAW have resulted in considerable progress, with a 2% increase in 2012- 2013, and a 5% increase from 2015 to 2016.
- 230.** Likewise, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) has held training programs and seminars for 425 employees and prosecutors for capacity development and raising awareness regarding LEVAW as well as addressing violence cases through official justice in periodic manner in cooperation with partner organizations through capacity. Other awareness raising programs and initiatives may in the capital and provinces may include:
- Training program on ERAW for 30 prosecutors in Kabul, Kapisa, Nimroz, Herat, Nangarhar, and Laghman in 2014.
 - Training program titled "prevention of violence and addressing cases related to violence against women" and training program on LEVAW for 200 prosecutors from Jawzjan, Badghis, Faryab, Farah, Ghor, Herat, Khost, and Kabul in 2015.
 - Training programs on ERAW, authority, and addressing cases related to ERAW as well as seminars on strengthening database related to ERAW cases for 161 prosecutors in different provinces in 2016.
- 231.** Furthermore, in order to counter violence against women, AGO has held an awareness program on ERAW for 289 government employees including 117 men and 172 women through the establishment of a department for the reduction of violence against women. Additionally, AGO has also increased public awareness programs on LEVAW and women's rights in schools, universities, and other gatherings.
- 232.** MoHRA has performed the following activities regarding raising awareness on women's rights:
- A 6-day training seminar titled as Women's rights according to Islam and national and international laws for 500 religious scholars in Kabul,

- A 2-day awareness raising seminar on EAW for 3200 religious elders in 16 provinces, Publication and distribution of books (Sound Family and Prosperous Society) and (Harms of Unpleasant Traditions)

233. Despite the existence of the EAW Law, violence against women remains a major issue in Afghanistan, as do forced marriages, early child marriages, the practice of *Baad* and *Badal*, high illiteracy rates, low levels of legal awareness particularly among women, misinterpretation of Sharia, and low awareness about human rights, women's rights and children's rights within Afghan communities. Therefore, in order to address the key issues of traditional harmful practices, it is very important to tackle the root causes of the problem. This requires a holistic advocacy approach for behaviour change at all levels.

◆ **Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education**

234. As per Afghan Family Guidance Association (AFGA), on August 2012, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) along with the financial and technical support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and implementing partner AFGA established a free of cost, phone health line with an aim to provide youth with friendly health counselling. By dialling the number 120 boys and girls can receive accurate information on reproductive health. This service is available in Dari and Pashto from 8:00 AM to 4 PM. This way, Afghan people can ask questions that may be difficult to address in person. Similarly, the Youth Health Line will have two counsellors (one male, one female) employed and trained by the Ministry of Public Health. The counsellors will follow the Youth Health Line main principles: provide accurate and timely information, provide an opportunity for dialogue, give support to callers by listening to them and counselling them and when necessary provide referral information. According to Youth Health line center in Afghanistan Young people in Kabul can gain information on issues such as health and family planning, early marriage, early pregnancies, communicable diseases and sexually transmitted infections etc. This helpline also give information on what steps to take in case of gender-based violence.

QUESTION 16

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

235. Afghan government adopted the new Penal Code 2018 to address Cybercrime. Penal Code of Afghanistan comprises provisions on cybercrimes, along with crimes related to sexual harassment. Under this code, Cybercrimes are defined as crimes that occur in cyberspace through the use of modern technology, information, and electronic communication. Moreover, in order to protect official websites and social media pages from cyber-attacks, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) is working on setting

up a Cyber Emergency Response Team (CERT) based on consultation with its international partners including the US government security agencies.

QUESTION 17

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?

- ◆ **Enacted, strengthened and enforced legal reforms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media**
- 236.** A monitoring mechanism on the implementation of ERAW LAW, Media regulations and highlights of women rights made progress in the previous BPfA Report 2010-14. MoWA and implementing partners introduced three reports through governmental media channels in a press conference. Dissemination of the ERAW campaign through media has also been undertaken by MoIC and MoJ, including articles in Anis Daily, Islah, Heewad, and Kabul Times. MoJ has conducted a 3-month campaign in Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Balkh, Kabul, Bamyan and Badakhshan provinces for school teachers, students, local elders and students of constitutional and Sharia law. The agencies so far have harnessed different media and spokespeople to deliver these messages, showing very good progress.
- 237.** In accordance with the National Action Plan for the Afghan women, specific working programs on ERAW are carried out with the religious scholars and community heads. Public awareness programs on women and girls' rights using audio, visual, and printed messages are prepared. Awareness raising campaigns have been conducted across the country for women rights. Coordination meetings have been held with the media and civil society aimed at enhancing the level of women's participation in the election processes in 2014. MoWA have used media as a tool for public awareness and campaigning on ERAW and gender justice issues.
- 238.** In addition, as part of its own mandate, The Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) has progressively published proceedings and reports in the government-run media (Anis Newspaper, Eslah Newspaper, Hewad Newspaper and the Kabul Times) and Watandaran Newspaper in six local languages this also included reports in Bakhtar News Agency and pertained information on the events related to women's issues
- 239.** In accordance with the National Action Plan for the Afghan women, specific working programs on ERAW are carried out with the religious scholars and community heads. Public awareness programs on women and girls' rights using audio, visual, and printed messages are prepared and of with the cooperation of the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs. This programs are conducted with support of media and MoWA has helped media to develop and adhere to code of conduct for promotion of women rights.

◆ **Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media**

240. The Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) organized a two-day seminar on report writing and the fundamentals of journalism towards capacity building for male and female journalists, attendees for this seminar were 100 journalists of which at the least 50 percent were women and girl journalists. The intention of the Ministry is to build the capacity of women and girl journalists in order they can fully participate in the media in equal bases with their male counterparts.

241. Media houses and staff were provided trainings through MoWA on promotion of balanced and non-stereotypical image of women in media. For example, a gender exhibition for showing print material for awareness raising and gender was held in Kabul for a period of two weeks in during March 2014. A total of 1,000,000 pages of informative brochures printed and disseminated during March 2015 as part of the awareness raising campaign to all the provinces of the country and districts of Kabul.

◆ **Promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media**

242. Under NAP and with support of MoWA, media houses are provided with training support, formulating a mechanism for enhancing women role in management and leadership positions at media. Though the results are not very visible yet, election period saw a huge number of women actively participating in media election campaigns.

243. A high level, multi-sector, multi-stakeholder task force under cabinet and Presidential purview will be created. The task force will advocate for women's leadership, enforce institutional accountability, and monitor the implementation of affirmative action policy and other measures for the promotion of women's leadership and participation in governance at the central and provincial levels. This body will also investigate complaints of discrimination against women who are either in public office or seeking positions. NAPWA 2007-17.

**PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY
AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS**

QUESTION 18

Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

YES

244. Outcomes achieved through the implementation of NAPWA

QUESTION 19

What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

- ◆ **Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets**
- 245.** An Increase in the participation of women at all levels of decision-making related to peace, security and civil service is one of the integral pillars of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). It goes hand in hand with preventing violence against women to ensure their rights and political participation. In accordance with Afghanistan's non-discrimination constitutional clause, the policy asserts that women should participate in negotiations with armed oppositions both in Afghanistan and internationally. The policy further aims at:
- Increasing the participation of women in Afghan High Peace Council (HPC) and HPC's secretariat.
 - Increasing women's participation in provincial peace committees.
 - Establishing a board to monitor the inclusion of women in all sectors of the peace process. & finally,
 - Binding HPC to Afghanistan's national and international obligations on the participation of women in peace negotiations and in peace processes across the country.

246. Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan recognizes that increasing women’s participation in governance and in the administration of justice will strengthen the protection of women’s human rights and empower women more generally.
247. The pillar on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights is divided into two chapters - one, on legal protection and human rights and another on leadership and political participation. The strategy to protect women’s human rights and their rights under the Constitution includes the following four steps:
- a. Eliminating discrimination against women in law
 - b. Improving women’s access to justice
 - c. Reforming law enforcement
 - d. Promoting legal and religious awareness of/on women
248. Under the constitution, the elections law shall adopt measures to attain, through the electorate system, general and fair representation for all the people of the country where, on average, at least two females shall be the elected members of the House of People from each province. According to the Election Law of 2016 section 2 of Article 62, the 25% quota for women are considered and stipulated in the district councils as: “At the least 25% of chairs in each of the council of the district are assigned to women candidates.” As it was mentioned, participation of women in the National Council are stipulated under the Article 83 of the constitution and currently 27% of members of the House of the People are women and one-sixth of the chairs of the House of Elders are also dedicated to women
249. Therefore, notable and tangible progress regarding women’s participation in public life can be seen in the recent years. The Afghan women’s political participation has made significant progress. Women’s 27% presence in parliament shows that one sixth of Senate seats in parliament are occupied by women and this brings Afghanistan in 20th place among the countries where women are present in their legislative institutions. According to the Inter-Parliamentary World Ranking of Women in National Parliaments, as of June 1, 2018, Afghanistan is ranked 55/193 countries globally.
250. Additional to the amendment of the Election Law 2019, Civil Servant Institutions under sections (1, 5 and 7) of Article 13 emphasize on Women’s rights with regards to the appointment of commission members, and gender equality in the selection of the members of the Election Commission, Complaints Commission, and Heads of the Committees. Likewise, the National Action Plan for Afghan Women (NAPWA) is a 10-year strategic plan (2008-2018) that has produced tangible results in all areas, including increased participation of women in government agencies. According to the plan, systematic supportive activities are being undertaken by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to enhance the role of women in various leadership positions.

◆ **Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures**

251. Capacity building programmes are available for the women Community Development Councils (CDCs). Each CDC has female and male sub-councils, each with five members.

One CDC represents around 300 families. The CDCs move development forward – in particular, in rural areas – by identifying local development potentials and drafting project proposals. The community acknowledges the important skills and capacities developed by these women through the training and mentoring activities. The success of the measures is also reflected in the fact that the needs of women are increasingly taken into account in the local development process and project proposals are more needs oriented than in the past.

252. The HPC has considered training programmes aimed at capacity development of women in the Council and in the provincial peace committees. As a result, 17 female members of the HPC and provincial peace committees attended the *Conflict Management Training Programme* in Philippines in July 2015 with cooperation of the United Nations Office for Women. In the same way, 9 female members of the HPC along with 3 female advisors of the HPC secretariat, with the cooperation of the *Berghof Foundation* in February 2014, attended a seminar on women's contribution to the peace process held in Berlin. 8 female members of the HPC also attended an academic workshop in Indonesia in 2017.

253. To ensure women's participation in the peace process, the government of Afghanistan has launched symposiums inside and outside the country. As per the CEDAW 3rd Periodic Report of 2017, these symposiums aim to strengthen women's participation in various peace processes, not least in the peace process, and in exchange of international experience. The symposiums have been held both inside and outside the country. The first, second, and third symposiums were held in Washington, Oslo, and Kabul respectively. Also, fourth symposium was held in Kabul during 14-17 On 2017. Further provincial symposiums were held in Balkh, Mazar –e – sharif province and the series are expected to continue in the future as well.

254. In Addition, the sensitization and inclusion training for the staff of different institutions including MRRD in gender equality at medium and advanced level. Moreover, as reported in CEDAW 3rd Periodic report and Beijing Afghanistan 20 year report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is providing scholarships short-term and midterm scholarships for 30% women for their participation.

◆ **Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning**

255. As part of its work on NAPWA and on how to increase women's participation, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) has taken the following steps:

- Awareness raising activities for female college students,
- Creating a CV pool of women eligible for applying to civil service positions,
- Developing a needs assessment database, and
- Creating an official Facebook page.

256. Furthermore, to increase the ratio of women's recruitment, gender representatives of ministries and independent institutions are present during the recruitment process and 5% extra marks are considered for female applicants in accordance with the recruitment manual. The IARCSC also finalized its policy on increasing women's participation in the civil service. This policy aims to provide possible facilities for women, create a safe work environment, and encourage their increases participation in the civil service.
257. Promoting Equality for Women in Afghanistan, one of the national priority programmes is a joint commitment of the Afghan-US government. It works towards empowering a total of 75,000 women between 18-30 years of age and promoting them into the new generation of political, business and civil society leaders and ensuring their participation in the areas of politics, economy, civil society and government.
258. The government is strongly committed towards increasing the participation of women in the National Assembly and to open opportunities for women to assume high-level government seats as strengthening women's participation will promote a strong voice and unified stand among women, thus allowing them to support and/or resist gender-related provisions that will affect women.

◆ **Encouraged the participation of minority and young women, including through sensitization and mentorship programmes**

259. According to USAID, Promote is a five-year program that targets the education, promotion, and training of Afghan women with an aim to strengthen women's participation in the civil society and the economy. It targets at increasing the number of women in decision-making position within the Government and helping women gain technical skills i.e. business and management skills. This program reaffirms the US government's long-term support to Afghan women and girls. The USAID's commitment to Afghan women will also include the creation of a \$50 million endowment to provide university scholarships. Similarly, other projects such as the Women's Leadership Development (WLD) Program gives opportunities to 25,000 young women and adolescent girls to take part in this personal development and leadership mentoring program, a six-month leadership development program will operate in cycles from mid-2015 to the end 2018. Moreover, there will be opportunities for 3,000 university graduates to receive civil service training and participate in internships with various governmental organizations, at both national and local levels. We also have the Afghan Women in the Economy (WIE) Program with an objective to help Afghan women increase their leadership in the economy and secure employment with advancement potential through internships

◆ **Taken measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violence against women in politics**

260. The Attorney General's Office (AGO) and the Ministries of Higher Education (MoHE), Public Health (MoPH), and Education (MoE) and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) signed a simultaneous agreement with the 16-day campaign on Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (LEVAW) in the presence of H.E. the President, the First Lady, and the representatives of civil and international institutions.

According to this agreement, the entities included have to report to the AGO, cases of violence against women employees in their organizations for legal prosecution.

◆ **Collected and analysed data on women’s political participation, including in appointed and elected positions**

Mentioned above.

QUESTION 20

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women’s access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

◆ **Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership**

- 261.** As per the Gender Budgeting Audit Report for 2018, a number of technical and vocational education and training providers have emerged. These programs are being offered either by the private sector through NGOs or by different branches of the government.
- 262.** According to the Audit Report, the Ministry of Education(MoE) and The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) seek to ensure that young afghan population get trained in skills relevant to Afghanistan’s labor market by increasing the number of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education Training) institutions across the country, they also aim to increase the enrolment rate of girls by 30% as it is believed that TVET institutions and thereby services can help build people’s capacity and capability set and an efficient workforce that can contribute in the country economic growth.
- 263.** According to AREU 2017 research on Women in Agriculture in Afghanistan 2017 believes that women’s skills enhancement and education enrollment is increasing day by day in Afghanistan however, at a slow pace. The National Skills Development Plan of 2004 was aimed at providing Afghan labor force with relevant skills and knowledge through TVET facilities. Moreover, the Ministry of Education (MoE) provides 2 to 5 years of TVET course to those who have passed 9th grade. Similarly, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoSAMD) offers a one-year course. Unfortunately, however, women rarely qualify for such training courses due to lack of education. Therefore, the

TVET system has not yet been able to target larger unskilled population. In 2009 though, there were a total of 500 centers of which some were exclusively for women.

264. The same research explains that in 2014-2015, a total of 2,399 students were enrolled in the private vocational and technical training institutions of which 557 were female students and of 217 total teachers 37 were female teachers. Similarly, during the same year professional and vocational high schools were established, 164 boys and only 4 girls. The student to teacher ratio for boys was 28,470/1284 male teachers and 4,287 female students/153 female teachers. This research further tries to analyze this trend by arguing that the low number of female trainers and teachers is due to the societal barriers in enrolling girls and women in TVET courses as male trainers in female institutions are culturally unacceptable. The lack of women-only centers also influenced such a trend resulting in low female TVET enrollment.

◆ **Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free Wi-Fi hubs, community technology centers)**

265. Women in Agriculture in Afghanistan report 2017, shares that Afghanistan has successfully launched a major national initiative to accelerate its broadband deployment due to its good mobile phone outreach. The 2011-2017 Afghanistan's ICT Sector Development Project under World Bank aims at expanding connectivity by mainstreaming the use of mobile applications in all strategic sectors of the Afghan government to support the development of their local Information Technology (IT) industry with a target to achieve 10% of women. Furthermore, 70 new, budget friendly, innovative e-learning technologies will be pit to use to determine the gendered physical seclusion patterns along with identifying geographical constraints to help women connect as working groups across the country as well as internationally.

QUESTION 21

Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

YES

If YES, what is the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women?

266. It is invested, and investigations has been carried out in 12 budgetary units that are responsible in regards to Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). The Ministry of Finance in collaboration with six other line ministries namely, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Ministry of

Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MoAIL) and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MoRRD) are responsibly working towards tracking the proportion of national budget being allocated in the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment in other words, Gender Responsive Budgeting. Major contributions have been made by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and UN Women Afghanistan to institutionalize GRB in National Budget.

267. The Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (WEE-NPP) under the GRB consists of a budget estimated at 400 million USD, which currently has acquired a funding commitment of 120 million USD from the World Bank and the Government of Afghanistan. The program is also part of the USAID's 20 million USD Incentive Fund.

◆ **Please provide information on the specific areas in which these resources have been invested as well as reflections on achievements and challenges encountered in making budgets gender responsive.**

268. The Government of Afghanistan started to work on Gender Responsive Budgeting in 2005 after the establishment of a Gender Budgeting Group under the Ministry of Finance in order to track the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

269. As per the Gender Audit of the National Budget for 2016, the Government of Afghanistan has shown great commitment towards improving the situation of Afghan women in the country. These efforts also include international commitments for instance, the MDGs, SDGs, CEDAW, the Kabul Conference (2010), Geneva Conference on Afghanistan etc. However, the Gender Responsive Budgeting has now become part of the Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms with an aim is to familiarize public actors with this new program and to track provincial Budgeting. Moreover, in order to institutionalize GRB at the national level, the PRM Roadmap II for 2016-2020 has also included the program GRB strategy in detail.

270. Since 2008, these ministries have successfully received training in GB (Gender Budgeting) from different civil society and international organizations, to name a few, Counterpart International, UNDP, UN Women etc. which led to the drafting of a GRB policy under which a steering committee as well as a Technical Working Committee (TWC) was established.

271. The Audit informs that during the financial year of 2009, Ministry of Finance committed itself to allocated US\$ 5 million to meet the gender needs of the country that would otherwise remain un-covered by usual national budgeting. As per the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), all ministries are encouraged to spend at least 30% of their development budget for programs, services and thereby policies that can empower Afghan women. Similarly, in 2015 a strategic plan on GRB was designed for the FYs (Financial Years) 1394 – 1395, the plan targeted to establish an enabling environment to effectively implement GRB in the country in order to foster gender equality and thereby women empowerment.

- 272.** Furthermore, in order to systematically and effectively institutionalize Gender Responsive Budgeting at the level of line ministries, both, the UN Women Afghanistan and the Ministry of Finance signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA). This included a pilot program that led by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and six other line ministries, The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MoAIL) and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MoRRD). In addition, The Ministry of Economic (MoE) along with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) were initially part of these pilot ministries however, were dropped later due to various other reasons as discussed in the Gender Audit of the National Budget for FY 1395/2016, the work plan of 2016-2017 included different activities one of which was to have a Gender Audit for FY 2016.
- 273.** The structure for National Budget for FY 1395/2016 covered six areas; these areas include Public Employment, Direct Transfers to private households, Public Procurement, Education and Higher Education, Agriculture and Rural Development, Public Health and finally, Social Protection. The Gender Audit of National Budget did an in depth statistical study of each area for instance, the share of spending on public employment that benefit women as compared to men indicated that women's civil service representation was quite less as compared to their male counterparts. However, the scenario was different in different ministries for example; the Ministry of Frontiers, Ethnic and Tribes Affairs (MoFETA) had the largest proportion of female staff 65% respectively while the proportion was less in other ministries.
- 274.** Since social protection programs are relatively new to Afghanistan's national priorities, 87% of the sector's budget only includes pensions for civil and military person along with pensions for Martyrs and disabled.
- 275.** The Gender Responsive Budgeting Strategic Action Plan 2015 which was prepared by the Ministry of Finance aimed at providing financial support as well as innovative programming mechanisms to all line ministries to achieve the target of gender equality in accordance with the national priorities. The Action plan also seeks to strengthen understanding, capacity and actions taken by the MoF and other budgetary units on towards gender equality across all relevant ministries and agencies.
- 276.** As per the GRB Strategic Action Plan of 2015, the objectives of the Gender Responsive Budgeting included promotion of accountability and transparency for government's activities towards achieving gender equality, it includes the mainstreaming of gender-related issues, moreover, to access information regarding national budget being allocated to both men and women, to develop the capacities of line ministries and other relevant stakeholder to enhance connectivity and coordination among them and to finally create new and enabling platforms for women's active participation as leaders, gender advocates and CSOs in the budgetary process. The Ministry of Finance therefore, will review a capacity need assessment in consultation with stakeholders for effective implementation and thereby results. For this very purpose, a dedicated staff will work at the core of the GRB activities at

both agency and the Ministry of Finance's Gender Budget Department. Furthermore, sector managers and Budget execution teams are working at the General Department to ensure effective implementation of GRB activities.

277. Moreover, the Gender Unit works closely with the ministries to facilitate the integration of gender analysis into the national budget through proper monitoring of the progress being made under gender policies, strategies and activities.
278. The Gender Audit of National Budget for FY 1395/2016 argues that Even though, the Ministry of Finance, the Government itself along with international organizations such as UN Women, have made commitments however, the Strategic plan on GRB has so far not been able to extract desired results due to the weak institutionalization of GRB activities and objectives, the lack of expertise and coordination amongst ministries and budget units. Despite efforts to promote gender equality in the country since 2001, gender gaps continue to persist, resulting to a high vulnerability of Afghan women. As per the Gender Audit, this may have occurred due to the high proportion of budget being allocation to the security sector which limits fiscal improvement in both economic and social sectors of the country. As discussed in the Gender Audit, the challenges are also an outcome of the uneven allocation of finances between different provinces. Other challenges as mentioned in the 2015 GRB Strategic Action Plan may include the overall lack of commitment to support the GRB reforms, lack of coordination within ministries for instance MoWA and MoFA and amongst other stakeholders; lack of availability of line ministry staff for capacity building and loss of GRB trained staff members. Limitations are captured in detail in the GRB Strategic Action Plan.
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QUESTION 22

As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

YES/NO

If YES, please provide further information on the methodology, the scope of tracking, past trends and current proportion of investments

Not applicable

QUESTION 23

Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality? YES

If YES, please list the name of the plan and the period it covers, its priorities, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG5.

- 279.** The National Action Plan (NAP) 1325 Objective I promises to increase meaningful participation of women in the decision-making and executive levels of the Civil Service, Security, and Peace and Reintegration. This is indicated by number of laws and policies assessed in order to strengthen women's participation and amendment of adequate laws and policies.
- 280.** These are led by the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ). MoWA has assessed three laws to increase women's participation; Penal Code, Anti-harassment Law on women and children and Law on Reconciliation Jirgas for dispute resolution.
- 281.** MoWA has reviewed the following policies and strategies of government organizations during 2017 to restore gender and justice concept into them:
- a. Draft policies of widowed women with MoLSA
 - b. National labor policy of MoLSA
 - c. National policy on protection of consumers with Ministry of Information Communication;
 - d. Gender strategy of Independent Directorate of Local Governance;
 - e. Local Governance Policy
 - f. Public-Private Partnership policy- Ministry of Finance;
 - g. Gender Policy of MRRD;
 - h. Policy and Strategy of NDS;
 - i. National Youth Strategy;
 - j. Policy for people with disabilities;
 - k. Policy on decreasing illiteracy rate;
 - l. Policy on the Sustainable Development of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
 - m. Strategic plan of MoE;
 - n. Policy on increasing participation in civil service;
 - o. National Policy on Minerals for Ministry of Mine and Petroleum;

p. Gender Policy of Ministry of Energy and Water.

282. To provide equal opportunities for women in politics and presence in public life Article 83 of the constitution stipulates a special quotas for women in parliament currently 27% of the members of the House of People are women and also one-sixth of the chairs in the House of Elders have been stipulated to women. Additional to the amendment of the Election Law 2019, Civil Servant Institutions under items (1, 5 and 7) of Article 13 emphasize on Women’s rights with regards to Election Commission, Complaints Commission, appointment of members and also gender equality in selection of the members of the Election Commission.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NAPWA AND OTHER MEASURES TAKEN TOWARDS WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS AREAS					
YEARS 1395 (2016)					
1.	Women’s Representation in the National Assembly	27%	10.	Women’s Representation in Government Agencies	26%
2.	Women’s Representation in the Provincial Councils	21%	11.	Women’s Representation in the Judiciary	12%
3.	Women’s Representation in the Cabinet	15%	12.	Women’s Representation in the Security Sector	1%
4.	Women’s Representation in the Decision-Making levels of the Government	10%	13.	Women’s Representation in the Decision-Making levels of private sector	9.8%
5.	Women’s Representation in Health Sector	33%	14.	Women’s Representation in the Economic Sector	6%
6.	Female Students in Schools	39%	15.	Female Teachers in Schools	34%
7.	Female Students in Public Higher Education Institutions	23%	16.	Female Students in Private Higher Education Institutions	23%

8.	Female Instructors in Public Higher Education Institutions	14%	17.	Female Instructors in Private Higher Education Institutions	10%
9.	Women's Representation in the Private Sector	21.7%			

If YES, has the national action plan been costed and have sufficient resources been allocated to its achievement in the current budget?

- 283.** There are two mechanisms of funding available for MoPH, MoWA and MoI which contribute to the above-mentioned program and policy streams targeting access to services, protection, participation, etc. specifically for women:
- Direct on-budget funding by MoF to key ministries including MoWA, MoPH and MoI for the implementation of NAP1325.
 - Afghanistan is a third country in Asia and the Pacific that formulated its National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, and funded through its national budget.
- 284.** Based on the annual code 380108, the Ministry of Women's Affairs finds out through the social protection sector of the budget department of the Ministry of Finance (MoF), progress made on the implementation of the NAP for Women. This process began in 2000 and will continue, with AFN 1366800 allocated for 2018. The budget policy is gender responsive, with the budget prepared accordingly, and included in the job description for the leadership committee and technical group. An awareness raising program has been held on gender responsive budgeting for the members of the parliament, UNSC Resolution 1325 focal points from the government entities and civil organizations.
- 285.** The Ministry of Finance has started a trial gender responsive budget implementation with six ministries (Ministries of Education, Higher Education, Public Health, Rural Rehabilitation and Rural Development, Agriculture, and Labor and Social Affairs) and the main activities of this section are capacity building of the Ministries, revision of budget circular, and gender responsive budget policy making.
- 286.** Taking into consideration the results of the trial project with the 6 Ministries, the MoF will expand the implementation of the gender responsive budget to other Ministries. Due to re-vamping of the Ministries and gender-responsive re-designing of their scope of work, the Government of Afghanistan.

QUESTION 24

Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women? YES

If YES, please provide some highlights of the action plans and timeline for implementation.

287. The Afghan government is committed before obligations arising out of international human rights instruments. To realize its mission, the government adopted a regulation on promotion of human rights in governmental entities on 2014. based on this regulation the Ministry of Justice is mandated to establish a “Coordination Committee” to oversee and follow up all human rights recommendations being issued by treaty bodies and other human rights mechanisms. The Coordination Committee comprising of 16 relevant ministries with membership of deputy minister-level and active participation of civil society organizations.
288. MoWA has finalized the Anti-Discrimination regulation and has submitted to MoJ after a second review. MoWA has reviewed several policies and strategies of government organizations during 2017 for mainstreaming into gender and justice concept. MoLSA drafted policies for widowed women and reviewed its National Labor Policy. Mainstreaming requires the country to not only re-examine these integral documents but also integrate its commitment to paving way for women to access economic opportunities without discrimination. In addition, Afghanistan endeavors to raise the quality of life for widowed women who are in many situations not only sole bread-earners but also are single parents.
289. For this, the country strives to liberate the women from shackles of economic dependency and channel their productivity for the development of the state. In addition to producers, workers and traders, Afghanistan seeks to protect the rights of consumers and has designed its National Policy on Protection of Consumers. MoIC through its policy seeks to protect the consumer rights of women consumers with maintaining easy access to high quality of products and services with least discrimination.
290. Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) reviewed its Gender Strategy. The strategy encases gender-based sensitization of procedures such as registration of candidates, voting, counting of the ballots etc.
291. There is also an attempt to mainstream Local Governance Policy and Policy on Increasing Women’s Participation in civil services. The policy pertains to allocating inputs in the current system that would allow women to ease into civil service jobs without discrimination or lowering of standards. MoE has focused on illiteracy amongst women as

well as mainstreaming education, skills and training for women with disabilities. Other policies in focus are; Gender Policy by Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Sustainable Development Policy of EPA etc. all target women and gender mainstreaming. The process of assimilation is still ongoing.

PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

QUESTION 25

Is there a national human rights institution in your country? YES

If YES, does it have a specific mandate to focus on gender equality or discrimination based on sex/gender? Please provide up to three examples of how the NHRI has promoted gender equality

292. The AIHRC is a national human rights institution working in the area of protection and promotion of human rights. This Institution was established based on the Bonn Agreement and Presidential Decree and afterwards, pursuant to Article 58 of the Afghan Constitution, it found a legal base to monitor the observance of human rights as well as to protect and promote human rights in the country, "Every individual shall complain to this Commission about the violation of personal human rights.
 293. The Commission shall refer human rights violations of individuals to legal authorities and assist them in defense of their rights. There are separate units within the Commission for the Rights of Women and Children.
 294. AIHRC has the legal authority to investigate any violation of human rights and as such, requires the cooperation of all institutions and authorities in the conduct of said function. However, the Commission has encountered resistance in conducting monitoring in detention centres; thus, hindering the agency's ability to perform its required mandate. Even if the enabling law allows the Commission free and unannounced access to detention, in practice, they have not been provided the necessary cooperation and liberty.
 295. It is important to note, however, that the Human Rights Commission allocates a certain percentage for women applicants which is 30%. Trainings purely for women and gender sensitivity sessions are conducted to capacitate their women employees.
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QUESTION 26

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

- 296.** The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan stipulates its role and commitment in sustaining peace and security in the country as well as in the region. It draws these commitments from the varying international and national civil society advisory and suggestions at improving the access of women for inclusive sustainable development. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted the landmark Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, stressing the importance of increasing women's participation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict and in all matters related to peace and security. Afghanistan developed its own National Action Plan to implement this resolution, adopted in June 2015. The document aims to achieve 25 strategic objectives, ranging from women's inclusion in peace and security processes to combating gender-based violence.
- 297.** The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) is based on following pillars:
- **Participation:** Increase participation of Women at all levels of decision-making related to peace, security and civil service.
 - **Protection:** Ensure the protection of women, vulnerable to various types of violence in conflict and post conflict societies.
 - **Prevention:** Prevent violence against women to ensure their rights and political participation.
 - **Relief and Recovery:** Create funding mechanism, economic development opportunities and the provision of relief and recovery services to women from/within conflict-affected communities, IDPs, and survivors of violence.
- 298.** These pillars formulate the core of the impending issues women in Afghanistan have faced for decades. For this reason, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan seeks for the translation of policy announcements into practice to be geared up for a more thorough planning and execution. A progressive road map has been drawn after the Kabul Conference in 2010 and the Government of Afghanistan put forward a realistic and achievable national agenda, by underpinning national priority programs (NPPs) and reform initiatives. For effective implementation of the NPPs, they are grouped into the following 6 clusters:
- i. Security: (Peace and Reintegration)
 - ii. Human Resource Development: (Skills Development and Labour, Education for All, Higher Education, Women Affairs, Capacity Building for Health)
 - iii. Infrastructure Development: (National Regional Resource Corridor, Extractive Industries, National Energy Program, Urban Development)

- iv. Private Sector Development: (Trade Facilitation and SME, E-Afghanistan)
- v. Agriculture and Rural Development: (Water and Natural Resource Management, Comprehensive Agriculture, Rural Access, Strengthening Local Institutions)
- vi. Governance: (Economic and Financial Reform, Transparency and Accountability, Efficient and Effective Government: (Local Governance, Justice for ALL, Human Rights).

299. All of these areas of integration are critical to the achievements the country has achieved and hopes to achieve in the future. In addition, recognizing the importance of women's increasing participation, 6 important documents have been assessed and amended by Ministry of Justice for strengthening women's participation in different roles and at different levels:

- i. "Empowerment strategy" legal document;
- ii. A policy on scoring in recruitment to incentivize women applying;
- iii. Civil servants law;
- iv. Administrative performance law;
- v. Easy service provision law; and,
- vi. Anti-harassment law on women and children.

◆ **Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security**

300. Afghanistan government has launched Afghanistan's National Action Plan (NAP 1325) on UNSCR 1325 (Women, Peace, and Security) in 2015 -2018 to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and women peace and security agenda.

301. The implementation period of the NAP 1325 is set to be in two phases. Phase one from 2015-2018 and phase two from 2019-2021. The first phase is completed in 2018 and covers progress towards women peace and security.

302. Comparative analysis of year 2016-17 to 2018 shows that remarkable progress has been made towards adopting and implementing NAP for women, peace and security. Some of these achievements have been mentioned above. Security situation has changed significantly for better in period at national and regional levels, finances and allocations of budgets are completed in 2017 for implementing the plan. Capacity building of points for NAP completed in 2017 with technical assistance from UNWOMEN. Provincial resourcing saw slow progress because of finalizing of national financing mechanism. However, 2017 Status Report on the Afghanistan's National Action Plan shows considerable Policy coordination came through the formation of steering committees and their meetings on quarterly basis.

303. The High Peace Council (HPC) reports in the 2017 Status Report on the Afghanistan's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 that their five-year strategic plan center's around women's participation in peace, reconciliation and reintegration in Afghanistan. In addition

to the achievements mentioned above, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) reported that there is a roster of 66 women covering 34 provinces in Afghanistan. The women on the roster participated in peace negotiations with the armed opposition both in Afghanistan and abroad.

304. Internally, HPC now comprises 65 members of which 12 are women, showing a 3% percent decrease from the 2016 levels of 11 out of 52 members. However, 4 women are now in the executive leadership level and actively take part in the decision-making process at HPC, demonstrating participation beyond simple inclusion. Reflecting this, HPC's five-year strategic plan promotes the role of women in all sectors of peace processes.

◆ **Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks**

305. Progress is observed especially in amending laws and policies and integrating them with women, peace and security agenda. Under NAP 1325 on UNSCR (women, peace and security), actions progressed to integrating women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks. These included:

- Number of laws and policies assessed in order to strengthen women's participation,
- Number of adequate laws and policies amended.

306. The documents amended to include women, peace and security agenda and women participation like Civil Servant's Law, Administrative Performance Law, Easy Service Provision Law, Anti-harassment Law on women and children. These laws promoted women's participation in the civil service, including freedom from sexual harassment, incentives that address women's historical lack of access to education and non-discrimination within the civil service. MoWA (Ministry of Woman Affairs) suggested various amendments towards policies and laws resulting in more participation of women in civil and legislative institutions.

307. In 2017, MoWA reviewed following policies to restore and integrate gender and justice components of policies to integrate policy, planning and monitoring frameworks in these key areas with MoLSA, National labor policy of MoLSA, National policy on protection of consumers with MoIC, Gender strategy of IDLG, Local Governance Policy, Public-Private Partnership policy- Ministry of Finance, Gender Policy of MRRD, Policy and Strategy of NDS, National Youth Strategy, Policy for people with disabilities, Policy on decreasing illiteracy rate, Policy on the Sustainable Development of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Strategic plan of MoE, Policy on increasing participation in civil service, National Policy on Minerals for Ministry of Mine and Petroleum, Gender Policy of Ministry of Energy and Water.

308. Progress towards women at leadership positions in security sector was seen in following the NAP on UNSCR (women, peace and security). The percentage of women in the national

army rose from 1.3% in 2015 to 2.5% in 2016. However, the percentage of women at officer rank decreased from 2.9% in 2015 to 2.75% in 2016. In the police force, however, the percentage of women overall increased more slightly from 0.5% in 2015 to 0.6%, but the percentage of women in officer positions rose from 1.1% in 2015 to 1.7% in 2016.

309. According to the report from the Directorate of Human Rights of the Ministry of Defense (MoD), for the attraction and recruitment of female personnel, MoD is providing female staff with facilities and a safe and healthy working environment. Currently, 2411 female personnel are serving in the civilian and military sectors of which 739 are officers, 632 serve as sergeants, and 242 of these females are soldiers with 624 civilians and 174 female students respectively. Notably, a 10% consolidation has also been set for future recruitment of female personnel. Similarly, Development Personnel are actively fulfilling their duties in the following regional army camps; 201,205,207 & 209. Similarly, a total of 38,000 notebooks, 30,000 key chains and 38,000 pens, along with promotional posters in 25 female schools have been distributed in various regions of Kabul city for the attraction and recruitment of new volunteers. Furthermore, dormitories, gymnasiums, dressing rooms, an obstetrics and gynecology hospital, and children hospital are under way. Moreover, as per the report, certain religious, cultural and societal factors led to the lack of recruitment of female personnel.

◆ **Used communication strategies, including social media, to increase awareness of the women, peace and security agenda**

310. MoD is also raising public awareness on human and humanitarian rights in order to prevent the recruitment of minors (individuals below the age of 18). For instance, 30 yearly training workshops are held on the literature of prevention of civil causality, human right issues, and humanitarian rights as well as on the prevention of minors from joining the army. Therefore, the Ministry of National Defense is introducing policies that prevent minors from joining the National Army

◆ **Increased budgetary allocations for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda**

311. There is not a lot of clarity regarding budget allocations down to the specific amounts. While there is evidence that suggests that awareness on gender issues has increased among the policy makers and planners, it is important that this awareness is fully translated into budgetary allocations for concrete improvements in the lives of women and men. The limitation in achieving the commitment is however quite clear in the present context where security concerns continue to be extremely precarious. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) offer their services in contextualizing these budget allocations in accordance with the commitments made by the country.

312. It is important to develop the intricate connections between these allocations and its impact on women. It is recognized that the benefits of the recent improvements in development opportunities, services and actual economic benefits have not had an equal impact on women. However, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) reported that in total eight programs have been initiated and funded through government on-budget support in 2018. These projects

are started within the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy.

313. In early years and stages of UNSCR 1325 implementation, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has had good achievements and remarkable progress without specific funds allocation for 1325, and much before finalization of NAP 1325 costing, and budgeting in four pillars of the NAP 1325 (Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief & Recovery). Despite various challenges for implementation of NAP 1325, joint efforts and collaboration of implementing partner entities demonstrate political commitment and required dedication for implementation of all pillars of NAP 1325.

◆ **Supported inclusive and gender-sensitive conflict analysis, early warning and prevention mechanisms**

314. Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) frame Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) for disaster risk reduction (DRR). This included frameworks and inclusive gender sensitive DRR approaches for women.

QUESTION 27

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peace-building, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?

◆ **Promoted and supported women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements**

315. The key element in the process to increase the participation and inclusion of women in Afghanistan is their placement in institutions and integration in the decision making framework. Role of women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building was seen as exclusionary and negative. However, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan seeks to change the space in which women perform in the country. It struggles to achieve an inclusionary space where women can perform in leadership roles and participate in decision-making at different spheres but particularly peace and conflict resolution. This is not just to pave way for women in Afghanistan and reap the benefits of their productivity. But also pertains to breaking the stereotypes and harsh post-war space that the country was left in after the war. It was thus necessary to frame, process and implement legislation that would allow women to emerge out of closed doors and enable the state to create a country where women can make decisions for themselves and society especially in institutions where they have always been excluded.

- 316.** The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its Governments have endorsed National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) as an initial vehicle of government for implementing its gender commitments in the Afghanistan. NAPWA served as a vehicle for implementing the gender provisions of the Constitution, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that was ratified by our government in March 2003, and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) that is the global framework for promoting the advancement of women. One area in which the new Government has supported women successfully has been in ensuring strong involvement of women in national institutions, including the civil service and the National Assembly. The NAP seals all institutional support for the framing of systems to include women in leadership roles and decision-making.
- 317.** Under NAPWA, the government supported women rights and participation in peace and security processes and agreements. This included increasing opportunities and mechanisms for women’s leadership and participation in the communities through:
- Mandatory recruitment and deployment of women to provincial offices of government ministries
 - Adoption or enactment of an affirmative action policy promoting leadership and membership of women in government initiated projects in rural and tribal communities
 - Full scale implementation and modeling of community women’s groups
 - Introduction of mentoring and coaching program for community women leaders.
- 318.** One of the critical ways of ensuring women’s participation in peace has been through their inclusion in the legal institutions. Representation of women in Loya Jirga would enable them to pave way for others to participation in national and local governance structures. For this reason, the 20% female representation in the Constitutional *LoyaJirga* has led to significant advancements for women in Articles 83 and 84 of the Constitution, guaranteeing seats for women in the upper and lower houses. Some of these formal gains were realized in the elections, where, according to one report, 19 women representing 7.6% of the seats in the lower house would have been elected without quotas, and affirmative action provisions in the Constitution allowed women to win an additional 49 seats.
- 319.** Increasing women’s political participation especially towards leading peace is an important commitment necessary for changing the lives of the women of Afghanistan. Data shows an increase in the participation of women in civil service. Data shows that 27.3% of women engage in public civil service. Of the total. Of these female employees, 7916 are contract staff, and 81,906 are official members of staff. Women make up 8.85% of contract staff, and 26.41% of official staff, demonstrating that women are relegated to more precarious contractual employment in the civil service.
- 320.** The HPC has considered training programs aimed at capacity development of women in the Council and in the provincial peace committees. As a result, 17 female members of the HPC

and provincial peace committees attended the Conflict Management training program in Philippine in July 2015 with the cooperation of the United Nations Office for Women.

321. There has been considerable progress in the contribution of women at the HPC leadership level and in the peace negotiations with the deputy High Peace Council, two senior advisors, and an executive member of the council being women. The peace and reconciliation strategic committee is headed by a woman (Deputy Chief of the Council) and the HPC advisor is also an active member of the committee which depicts the active decision-making contribution of women in the peace process. In particular, the number of women in the HPC has increased to 12 out of 65 members in 2017 and 63 members of the provincial peace committees are women.
322. The Elite Women Advisory Board, consisting of 66 members from 34 provinces, participate in the peace process representing Afghan women. Additionally, the HPC has developed its new strategy to establish this voluntary Board for women to consult with the HPC, the peace process executive secretariat, and the government. The Board can monitor different phases of the peace process. Efforts by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) combined with efforts by the government, have resulted in participation of women in the peace process in Afghanistan. 30% of the women participated in the *Loya Jirga* peace talks. In addition, women chaired 13 of the 51 committees and were elected as two of the five Deputy Heads of Jirga.
323. Ministry for Women Affairs (MoWA) has laid foundations for involvement and participation of women in lower, middle and high level leadership decision making processes. MoWA has signed various agreements like with Ministry of Interior (MoI) to recruit women officers and soldiers.
324. Following the launch of the NAP 1325 in 2015 and the commencement of its implementation, we have been witnessing significant progress in enhancing women's participation in government decision-making levels and their participation within security forces. Women now have a meaningful role in the High Peace Council and have an active role in peace negotiations.
325. The Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) has recently launched a Provincial Peace Consensus with the participation of 15,000 Women Lawyers, through publications and distribution of leaflets and conducting conferences. The campaign engages representatives of the justice system with the public to make the women aware of their inclusion in the legal system of the country.
- ◆ **Promoted equal participation of women in humanitarian and crisis response activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level**
326. Through Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), however, the women participation is mostly observed as community and at community level. Participation at decision making levels remains limited. Overall increase of women participation in civil services can provide assessment of women participation in decision

making process during humanitarian situations. The state of Afghanistan seeks to protect all citizens including women in situations of emergency and will continue to strive for inclusionary practices so that these communities can participate in the crisis response and humanitarian process at all levels.

◆ **Integrated a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of armed or other conflict**

327. National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (women, peace and security) identified and put forward gender perspective in prevention and resolution of armed or other conflicts. Though NAP focused on prevention of GBV and EAW, it also provides prevention of GBV in situations like armed or humanitarian conflicts. For example, MoWA has conducted exclusive meetings with several members of EAW High Commission and provincial EAW Commissions at zonal level. This helped MoWA to monitor activities of the commissions and to encourage them for development and preparation of effective plans on prevention of VAW. The plan and activities not only focus on addressing VAW cases but also monitor the places women are studying and working as well as women's health and detention centers.

328. Various mass level campaigns are carried out by MoWA on EAW and prevention of GBV. Under overall prevention of violence against women and girls, various activities have been achieved, like:

- Establishment of women's network within local government offices and women leaders in local level will be identified by this network and will be supported;
- Establishment of anti-harassment and abuse commission in 34 provinces;
- Establishment of Gender Mainstreaming Committee;
- Establishment of Gender Committee;
- Establishment of EAW provincial commission in 34 provinces.

◆ **Integrated a gender perspective in humanitarian action and crisis response**

329. Under SNAP for DRR, The Government of Afghanistan has taken various measures to protect especially women and girls during armed and other conflicts. These activities included:

- Institutionalization and Mainstreaming of Gender in all spectrums
- Safe Schools – Ministry of Education;
- Hospital Safety – Ministry of Public
- Resilient Cities – Ministry of Urban Development;
- Early Warning System– Ministry of Information and Culture;
- Preparedness for Effective Response.

◆ **Protected civil society spaces and women’s human rights defenders**

330. Specific steps are being taken by the government to protect civil society spaces and women’s human rights defenders as per NAP and CEDAW. In accordance with the law, namely article 5 of the Police Law, the Afghan National Police (ANP) is mandated to ensuring public order and protection, ensuring security of the individual and community, and protecting their rights and freedoms. In the capital and provinces, the ANP is performing its duties of ensuring security and protecting the rights and freedoms of the citizens in a continuous and equal manner. Perpetrators of attacks against women are prosecuted in accordance with the law.
331. Protection and support of human rights defenders and activists is a responsibility that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan strives to fulfill. The AIHRC has undertaken necessary steps towards supporting human rights activists/defenders, some of these steps include:
- Launching the National Conference on Supporting the Human Rights Defenders on December 19, 2016 with participation of 200 human rights defenders from the capital and other 33 provinces of Afghanistan. In this conference, H.E. the President made a solid promise to support the human rights defenders in the country. He stated, “Only you can forgive your right to someone, not me or the government can do it on your behalf and no political settlements will be concluded without human rights considerations”. The President also promised that the government would not conclude any agreement that would compromise the rights of victims and those violated.
 - Approving the National Action Plan on Protection of Human Rights Defenders,
 - Establishing a National Database of Human Rights Defenders, and;
 - In 2017, conducting a sum of 32 training workshops for Human Rights Defenders with titles such as “Defending Human Rights in Critical Situations” and “Support and Safety of Human Rights Defenders”.

QUESTION 28

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

◆ **Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls**

332. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has an important status in consolidating, facilitating and implementing legal and policy reformsto document, debate and give input on the violations of rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. AIHRC conducts research and produces an annual report on its findings which offer key insights into the struggles and violations of human rights that children and women within these

circumstances are subjected to. The role of AIHRC is to craft conscious and applicable policy recommendations to government and civil society organizations that are based on respecting, promoting and protecting the human rights of Afghan women and children.

◆ **Strengthened institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during conflict and crisis response**

333. Measures have been undertaken by the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to promote and strengthen women's rights. Numerous efforts have resulted in legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of rights of women and girls. These are reflected in its legislation, policies, institution-building and operations; the most notable of which are the following:

- Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF),
- National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) - currently the Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (NPP-WEE)
- The Anti-Harassment Law
- Codification of the Family Law
- Adoption of regulation for the women's protection centers in all 34 Provinces
- Development of procedures to prevent discrimination
- Policy to increase girls' enrolment in schools
- Law on guardianship of orphaned children
- Policy to strengthen the role of women in economic spheres
- Amendment of some of the provisions in the Civil Servants' Law in favor of women.
- National Strategy for Elimination of Violence against Women and its implementation plan.
- Modification of Electoral Law with a view to gender equality (National Unity Government)
- Adoption of regulation for the prevention of sexual harassment (National Unity Government)
- Policy to improve female prisoners' access to justice (National Unity Government).

334. Including qualified women in the justice structure is an integral part of National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) as well as a part of the overall strategy for equality and protection of the women of Afghanistan. The government has undertaken specific steps to appoint women as members of the High Council of the Supreme Court. These steps include:

- Conducting training courses for female judges,
- Establishing the Female Judges Association, and
- Attracting women to the judicial stage (practice) period.

335. According to the Third Periodic Report of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Committee of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2018), The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has undertaken specific steps to appoint women as members of the High Council of the Supreme Court. These include: conducting training courses for female judges, establishing the Female Judges Association and attracting women to the judicial stage (practice) period. In 2008 the representation of women in the judiciary was around 4.7% which reached 8.4% in 2013 and this percentage rose to 11% in 2016. The Supreme Court subunits such as Juvenile Court, Family Court, and EVAW Court are managed by women and women are appointed as judicial councilors and work as members of various tribunals of the Supreme Court.

336. Measures and actions with regards to strengthening institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during conflict and crisis response were put in place. Rulings were passed according to the issues women were facing in those times. A judicial ruling was passed by the Supreme Court that stops judges from imprisoning women for running away from their families. With the new ruling, it became necessary that justice officials, prosecutors, and the police be informed and made to understand said ruling to ensure their full compliance of the new rule. In its efforts to stop such demeaning practices and opening the law to a wide range of interpretation, it became of primary importance to educate people on the law and to increase awareness of their rights. Educating women will empower them to fight for their rights and against traditions that violates those rights.

337. The State currently holds institutions of Justice accountable for committing acts which denigrate the women and failing to take adequate steps to avoid “re-victimization”. It is essential that the law give preference to logic based on evidence and investigation rather than stereotypical ideas and rumors concerning women and girl victims. The State has worked hard in not only in framing varying institutions but also developing monitoring units within MoWA for compliance into delivering justice victims.

◆ **Strengthened capacity of security sector institutions on human rights and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.**

338. The Criminal Procedures Law contains specific provisions for victim’s rights and protection of evidence. Due to this Law the Penal Code defines sexual assault and predicts grave punishments for the offenders and considers *BachaBazi* (sexual relations between older men and boys) as a crime, prohibiting medical examination for victims and prescribing punishment for the offenders.

339. Law on Elimination of Violence against Women (LEVAW) remains enforced in Afghanistan and the cases on violence against women will be reviewed in accordance with

this law. Similarly, the new Penal Code of Afghanistan (2017) has written-off the honor killing in Article 398 of the penal code (1976) and the offender of honor killing according to the new penal code does not gain any legal advantages. The new penal code also defines Rape in the Article 636 and considers heavy punishment for the offenders. The code does not credit the consent of the child and cases of sexual encounter with an underage child are considered as rape.

340. The Government of Afghanistan has undertaken various measures to ensure safety of women in the workplace. Among these is the enforcement of the Law on Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the year 2016, the Penal Code with specific provisions preventing harassment of women, ensuring human security, physical security, and psychological security of women, as well as the draft on Prevention of Discrimination, to name a few.
341. In order to ensure safety of women in the workplace, committees for prevention of harassment have been established in most government institutions where female victims can register their harassment complaints to be addressed by these committees. In order to ensure the safety of policewomen, in 1395 (2016) the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has developed a Guide on Prevention of Sexual Harassment, with one of its main objectives to ensure the implementation of the Anti-Harassment Law. The MoI has also established a total of 86 women councils in the center and provinces consisted of 1,666 policewomen, sponsored by the Directorate of Human Rights and Women's Affairs.

◆ **Increased access of conflict-affected, refugee or displaced women to violence prevention and protection services**

342. In the course of recovery from conflict, populations of refugees, displaced and conflict-affected have been a priority for the State. The country has faced the difficult task of addressing these issues along with building back all of its institutions brick from brick. Despite these challenges the country has achieved integral milestones in enabling these groups to become active productive and active citizens. It is essential for the country to integrate all of its citizens through active programs.
343. Department of Physiological Health also provides psycho-social support for victims of conflict affected areas across the country through 14 centers in provinces like Kabul, Hirat, Farah, Ghor, Balkh, Kunduz, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Kunar, Paktia, Ghazni, Helmand, Urzgan, Zabul.

◆ **Taken measures to combat illicit arms trafficking**

344. Afghanistan in partnership with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), has implemented a program called as 'Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects'.
345. Various actions including research initiatives are under taken to address the trafficking of women, girls and boys, trafficking in illicit drugs. The Ministry of Justice has started a research initiative on the causes and factors of human trafficking with the support of CSOs

in 7 provinces namely; Badakhshan, Balkh, Nangarhar, Herat, Nimroz, Kandahar, and Kunar.

- 346.** In order to carry out the fight against abduction and human trafficking most effectively, in 2012 the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan established the High Commission to Fight against Abduction and Human Trafficking. This Commission is led by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with representatives from the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, (MoLSA), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC), Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Refugees and Repatriates (MoRR), Attorney General's Office (AGO), General Directorate of National Security (NDS), Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), Independent Bar Association (IBA) as well as two representatives from social organizations.
- 347.** Human trafficking and Counter-abduction Laws have also been developed by Afghanistan. These laws are implemented by the courts in the country in all of the cases related to trafficking and abduction. From 2013 to 2016 the courts addressed a total of 7369 cases of abduction; and 1322 cases of human trafficking were also decided. All situations stated in the counter human trafficking law have been considered by the three-layer courts based on various situations. The documents in the Attorney General's Office show that no human trafficking and abduction victim has been prosecuted for committing rape.
- 348.** On August 15, 2014, Afghanistan joined the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (the Palermo Protocols) and some of these protocols such as taking steps on preventing human abduction and smuggling, punishing the perpetrators of human abduction and smuggling, ensuring international coordination and cooperation, supporting the victims of abduction and trafficking cases, and similar issues have been integrated into the national legislations. Among others, the law against Abduction of Humans and Refugees has been amended in light of the provisions of this Protocol.
- 349.** According to the 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report of Afghanistan by United States Department of State, various non-government and international organizations, with in-kind assistance from the government, conducted 656 capacity-building workshops in 2017 for over 20,000 members of the public, government officials, and civil society members, including religious leaders and lawyers. Towards the end of the reporting period, the high commission, with technical and financial support from an international organization, finalized a training manual to train Afghan law enforcement agencies including border police, immigration officials, members of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), NGOs specializing in counter trafficking, shelter managers, and community leaders.
- 350.** However, in 2017, the high commission report identified 476 potential trafficking victims compared with 23 victims identified by the government and 93 victims identified by NGOs in 2016. Additionally, in partnership with an international organization, the high commission developed a training manual for government officials and civil society that included indicators of human trafficking and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the

identifying the victims to further refer them for rehabilitation services. However, the manual is yet to be implemented. Similarly, on August 2017, the high commission became an autonomous government office under the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) where most of the office's works on trafficking among other human rights issues. The high commission has also been successful in drafting its first national report in collaboration with an international organization to comprehensively review trends, laws, and societal views on human trafficking. Notably, the Commission in close collaboration with international organization and NGOs has launched public awareness programs from 22 during previous years to 210 in 2017 and has targeted approximately 16,500 members of the public.

QUESTION 29

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?

- ◆ **Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children**
351. The report arranged and presented by the Director of the Gender Integration and Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) aimed at creating educational capacity building through public awareness and persuasive incentives. 208 female cadets were introduced to *Dunya University* in order for them to pursue higher education. Whereas, 214 undergraduates were given the opportunity to travel abroad, for capacity building and Human Resources Development. Similarly, hundreds of individuals were introduced to vocational training courses, medical institutes, and English, computer, and literacy courses. Additionally, many allowances were provided; an education allowance of 5,000 AFN for each female attendee, a monthly allowance of 8,000 AFN for female duty officers, allowances of 7,500 AFN per year for children under the age of six, whose mothers are attendants of the National Army, and a monthly health allowance of 4140 AFN for each female soldier under the military training.
- ◆ **Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training**
352. The country's commitment in enabling access to girl's education has been the efforts of the state and society both. Due to the efforts of the Masjid Imams and religious schools' teachers, hundreds of girls and boys deprived of literacy have been admitted to schools and Madrasas. The Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has developed its third Strategic Plan for Education (2017-2021) to improve the literacy rate amongst girls, in which it shall undertake the following:
- Provision of pre-school education (50% of which, is for girls),
 - Provision of local educational classes and accelerated education for children left out of school (50% of which, is for girls),

- Increasing the ratio of girls' admission to technical and vocational institutions from 17% in the year 2015 to 26% in 2021.
- Increasing the number of female literacy students from 53% in 2015 to 60% in 2021 and provision of emergency educational programs for children of IDPs and Repatriates. (50% of which, is for girls),
- Launching awareness raising programs on the importance of education for girls and provision of financial incentives and stipends for female teachers during the on-the-job trainings;

353. The National Women Empowerment Strategy is one of the significant initiatives in which the MoE has played its role both in developing and implementing it and will continue to do so. Additionally, the MoE particularly puts in efforts to ensure the sustainability of women and girls' education through recruitment of female teachers across the country, and provision of education via local and accelerated classes, general education, Islamic education, technical and vocational trainings, literacy trainings, and teacher training programs.

354. One of the main goals of the Third Strategic Plan of education is to increase balanced and widespread access to relevant, safe and quality educational opportunities for children, youth and adults particularly women. To advance women and girls' access in the rural areas, local classes have been formed and female teachers have been hired. Access to education has been provided for a total of 383,351 children. Aimed at enhancing girls' access to education, through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) program a total of 2,081 female teachers have been hired in 14 provinces with a dire need for female teachers.

◆ **Implemented policies and programs to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage**

355. Child marriage exists in many forms still in Afghanistan. A formal marriage or an informed union before the age of 18. However, the legal structures of the country has worked hard in destroying these practices. According to Article 70 of the Afghan civil law, child marriage for girls is considered to be at the age 16 for girls and 18 for boys. Marriage under the age of consent for children is a form of forced marriage. (UNICEF report 2018) A law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) was adopted in August 2009. It criminalizes 22 acts of violence against women such as, forced and child marriage, rape, beating and many other traditions and practices that lead to violence against women.

◆ **Implemented policies and programs to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices**

◆ **Implemented policies and programs to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children**

356. Afghanistan National child labour strategy and action plan (2018-2030) maintains strategy and action plan with the following objectives;

- Assessing vulnerabilities of child laborers girls and boys especially in their work spaces.
- Establish Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) which would establish periodic monitoring systems and Prepare and publish periodic reports on child labor abuses and risks faced by boys and girls. In addition, it would also Initiate the withdrawal process through provision of alternatives and facilitate reintegration into social support systems of boys and girls working as child laborers.
- To eliminate barriers to education particularly for girls
- Identify invisible child laborers (girls working as domestic help)
- 'Promote and facilitate girls' and women's equal access to quality education and training.

357. The strategy is an excellent proposition in addressing child labor and other associated issues. Child labor impacts children, specifically the girl child, to varying forms of abuse and harassment. The Government of Afghanistan seeks to abolish the practice with as fast a pace as possible. Such a campaign would be possible through time as the writ of the state reaches the edges of the state and with complete abolishment of unrest and conflict.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

QUESTION 30

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?

- ◆ **Supported women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance**
358. In 2017, MoWA reviewed following policies to restore and integrate gender and justice components to integrate policy, planning and monitoring frameworks. These included Policy on the Sustainable Development of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Policy on Minerals for Ministry of Mine and Petroleum, Gender Policy of Ministry of Energy and Water. Women participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management are getting improved.
- ◆ **Strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)**
359. Afghanistan's institutional capacity to deal with impacts of natural disasters remains low. To tackle with the environmental concerns, SNAP provided strategic guidelines with

regards to DRR. Since disaster risk reduction (DRR) cannot be divorced from the national context, Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) was formulated with the promotion of peace building and stable development in mind. In this regard, peace, security, development and disaster risk reduction comprise the central focus of Afghanistan's SNAP. The proposed DRR strategies are aligned with the ANDS to reinforce the objectives and outcomes of under its pillars.

360. Afghanistan is facing several environmental challenges and increasing risks from hazards and climate change. The distinction between man-made and natural disasters is no longer that clear when we consider the complex causes of droughts, landslides and floods. The current Afghanistan disaster management framework is built around four "stages of the disaster cycle": non-disaster (mitigation and prevention), before disaster (preparedness and early warning), during disaster (response, relief,) and after disaster (rehabilitation and recovery).

361. However, these components cannot and must not be regarded as separate parts within disaster management. Each aspect affects and can be affected by the others. Neither is there a clear distinction when one element ends and another begins. Rather, they are best explained as different functions wherein all stakeholders are involved to a certain extent at different times both singly and together.

362. The women and gender perspective is built into disaster management framework. Overall, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) through SNAP has run multiple awareness campaigns on gender specific needs at times of environmental hazards. The National Disaster Management Authority prioritizes action on risk management and vulnerability reduction and also to address the underlying factors of risk for all population. In this regard social protection agenda, infrastructure, environment and key development sectors are evaluated to reduce the underlying social, economic, environmental and physical risk factors. Social protection for vulnerability reduction including women's and gender based vulnerabilities; environmental and natural resources management; poverty alleviation mechanisms and vulnerability reduction; risk-sensitive land use and housing practices; mechanisms for implementing safety and building codes; integration of disaster risk reduction into project planning and management; private sector involvement; financial/economic instruments; disaster recovery plan

◆ **Increased women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources**

363. NAP 1325 on UNSCR calls for access of women to various resources including access and right to land, water, energy and other natural resources. However, this is made in regard with IDP women. Ministry of Rural Reconstruction (MoRR) reported progress, with 14 regulations to date having been implemented in Kandahar, Helmand, Baghlan, Herat, Nangarhar, Balkh and Kabul provinces; those also included The right to have adequate shelter and access to land.

364. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has initiated a project on establishing integrated models for protected areas and their co-management in Afghanistan to maintain and eventually restore its natural resource base. The country contains surprising biodiversity including Marco Polo sheep, snow and Persian leopards, important breeding and migratory sites for numerous birds, and various endemic plants etc. However, barriers to biodiversity conservation and land productivity include the lack of a clear institutional and legal framework for protected areas and the absence of a *Protected Areas System* (PAS). The project aims at mainstreaming environment and sustainable development as well as promoting adaptation to Climate Change through increasing Afghan government's capacity to develop policies to manage natural resources. This project will also build capacity for co-management of natural resources in government and local communities with particular attention on advocacy and economic empowerment of women.

◆ **Promoted the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment**

365. Efforts like introducing subjects on natural environment and disaster management were introduced into curricula of higher education for both men and women. Disaster Management was introduced as a subject at the Faculty of Geosciences at the Kabul University.

366. Low public awareness about risks in their dwellings and environment as well as how to prevent losses to life and property has been often mentioned as contributing to increased disaster impacts in many rural areas. It is essential that a consistent message is transmitted to people. Also, better understanding about the linkage of DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) is also important for regions affected by climate related hazards.

367. Campaign on DRR and CCA shall address information and education needs on DRR of specific groups: the general public (with media), teachers, and primary and secondary school students, government officials. Efficient and reliable systems and media for gathering and sharing information (e.g., forecasts and warnings, information on relevant capacities, role allocation and resources) between stakeholders are a key to reaching as many people as possible on emergency preparedness.

368. The campaign can be guided by six basic principles to raise public awareness: (a) Target all sections of society; (b) Identify the types of delivery systems, messages and locations most effective to reach the target; (c) Include a constructive role for commercial mass media; (d) Set up guidelines for establishing public information centers and media relations officers; (e) Ensure that the messages conveyed have local relevance; (f) Use appropriate communication mechanisms, so that people can be reached.

369. Thus, collaboration with religious institutions will be sought as part of the communication strategy. This campaign shall also be linked with the National Early Warning System to

ensure public understanding of the local warning system, preparedness and evacuation measures at the household and organization level.

370. Although it does not distinctly articulate the involvement and targeting of women and girls to be part of awareness raising campaign design, the overarching commitment made by ANDMA states the relevance and significance of women's plight as affectees of disasters and of their role in sustainable solutions.

◆ **Enhanced women's access to sustainable time- and labor-saving infrastructure (e.g. access to clean water and energy) and climate-smart agricultural technology**

371. NAP 1325 on UNSCR has brought reforms into overall policies and laws to enable women save labour and time for works related to agriculture and trade. These policies eased the women access to justice including peace and security. This undertook comprehensive reform of laws, including commercial, criminal, family, and labour and trade laws to bring them into conformity with the CEDAW and NAP.

◆ **Taken measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities related to traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques**

372. The Government's efforts over the last many years have led to strong progress in women's participation and leadership in public life. Women are now active in nearly all fields including commerce, medicine, higher education, agriculture, politics, law, media, and industry. The Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) of ANDMA released in 2018 states that in understanding and developing national early warning system in collaboration with MRRD, IDLG and AMA, they shall document indigenous and local practices related to warning that work

◆ **Monitored and evaluated the impact of environmental policies and sustainable infrastructure projects on women and girls**

373. Through policy reforms and infrastructural developments, Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has made it easy for women to benefit equally from decent jobs. NAP 1325 on UNSCR has brought actions into place where women are working as part of informal sector. However, the Afghan economy is dominated by the informal sector, with 80 to 90% of economic activity occurring within the informal sector. Due to this, exchange of services and products between rural households is widespread and women perform a large part of this work.

374. Because home-based work and the work of female workers in the agricultural sector are largely unregulated, payment is low or largely in-kind, and the work of such women is largely invisible. This makes it particularly difficult for the State to structure programmes of social protection to benefit and protect women working within the informal sector.

375. The environmental policies and sustainable infrastructure projects have helped up scaling women's economic and social lives in various ways. For example, Ministry of Health continue to support and promote the creation and repair of adequate medical facilities that are able to attend to the particular health needs of women. Efforts are made to improve access to health services, particularly at the provincial level.
376. This will include the creation and increased use of mobile clinics to serve villages and more remote rural areas. Enforcing the BPHS policy that at least one female health practitioner work in each health care facility will significantly impact on women's ability to access medical services. The Ministry of Public Health enforced its policy that all women who are from rural areas and trained elsewhere as midwives return to serve their villages for a specific period of time, except in justifiable circumstances.
377. According to the Ministry of Urban Development and Land (MoUDL), the rapid growth of the city and citizenship and the expansion of issues and problems related to the urban life in Afghanistan and their impact on women are reasons for the recent increase in active and impactful involvement of women in urban development planning. Women similar to their ability to conveniently manage house work which is a small case of urban affairs can also play an important and significant role on different managerial tasks in offices on urban levels. Therefore, urban sustainability is not possible without effective attention from families to their living environments. Recent policies developed by the urban sectors in Afghanistan have shown that women in the contemporary world are the main targets for urban development, since they are connected to the family foundation which is a well-established system in terms of living; family is also a collective set of cultures and lifestyles. Therefore, in order to fight problems relating to urban development, there is a need to introduce new urban policies, plan and programs for instance, change in the structural socio-economic designs of residences that enables women to take part in urban activities while supporting their families. Therefore, Afghanistan's urban sectors put great emphasis on the pivotal role played by women in the public and private spheres as domestic architects and urban planners as these efforts will help the country achieve the eleventh Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which is sustainable housing and communities.
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QUESTION 31

What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programs for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?

- ◆ **Supported women's participation and leadership, including those affected by disasters, in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation policies, programmes and projects**

378. The implementation of the gender strategies and gender responsive policy instruments, facilitated through NAPWA and NAP 1325 on UNSCR supported all ministries in incorporating gender into their respective implementation plans and sets up ministry-wide processes and mechanisms to ensure the participation of both women and men in the mainstreaming of gender. This also helped ministries working on climate change and DRR to benefit from women leadership especially those who have affected by disasters. In all these processes, MOWA act as a key partner for other ministries - providing leadership and policy advice on gender mainstreaming, coordinating actions, and facilitating the flow of resources to concerned implementers whenever necessary.

◆ **Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g. disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)**

379. ANDMA have implemented a framework called as Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) that included special parameters and actions for women and girls affected with DRR. The HFA focus on risk management and disaster preparedness for vulnerable communities like women, girls and disabled persons.

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	ANDS/ANDMA	RELEVANT CONCERNS/APPROACHES
Risk management and vulnerability reduction – Reduce the underlying factors of risks.	Social protection, infrastructure, environment and key development sectors - Reduce the underlying social, economic, environmental ,and physical risk factors.	Social protection for vulnerability reduction including women’s and gender based vulnerabilities; environmental and natural resources management; poverty alleviation mechanisms and vulnerability reduction; risk-sensitive land use and housing practices; mechanisms for implementing safety and building codes; integration of disaster risk reduction into project planning and management; private sector involvement; financial/ economic instruments; disaster recovery plan.

<p>Disaster preparedness - Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.</p>	<p>Social protection and disaster preparedness - Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.</p>	<p>Activities in support of disaster preparedness; assessment of disaster preparedness capacities and mechanisms; contingency plans; financial reserves and contingency mechanisms to support effective response and recovery; cluster approach in humanitarian assistance; damage and needs assessment; post event reviews; documentation of lessons learned and good practices.</p>
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SECTION THREE

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

(QUESTIONS 32- 35)

QUESTION 32

What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government?

- 380.** National Machinery for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Afghanistan presents as a unique governance structure. Despite all challenges eschewing from the continuous internal security threat, the administration has been fast to adopt, implement and mainstream gender equality and empowerment. Afghanistan has managed to build national mechanisms from scratch and have progressively mainstreamed the present ones to its critical gender mandates.
- 381.** Mandate from the national mechanisms in Afghanistan are strong with its commitment to honor Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Afghanistan is also signatory to the Platform of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1984) and the Beijing Platform of Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women (1985). Article 3 of the Afghan Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women in Afghanistan while maintaining that no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions Islam
- 382.** Article 22 commits to a policy of non-discrimination and equality in rights and duties between women and men. Afghanistan's Constitution further makes general provisions regarding the advancement of women's economic rights by creating and protecting spaces for women in the workforce, monitoring their progress, and developing institutions that foster female employment.

Types and Locations of National Mechanisms

- 383.** National mechanisms encompass ministries that share varying responsibilities for eliminating all kinds of discrimination against women, increase women's participation in leadership and political roles, access to justice and end to violence against women etc. One of the important structures within the national mechanism, Ministry of Women's Affairs is a key player in implementing gender-based programming pertaining to issues of

discrimination, targeted-violence and lack of mainstreaming and participation of women. Afghanistan has had an institution on women's affairs as part of its governance structure.

- 384.** Since 1928, the state of Afghanistan had established the Society for the Protection of Women specifically for institutional assimilation of women and their affairs. "The Bonn Agreement (2001) laid the foundation for Afghanistan's Constitution and made provisions for the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to act as the lead ministry for the advancement of Afghan women" Acting as a principle guiding agency, MoWA also reports on gender practices by institutions across varying spectrums in different parts of the country. "Under MoWA's supervision and guidance, state institutions are expected to mainstream gender in their policies, annual plans and activities, and ministries are encouraged to dedicate at least 30 percent of their budget to it."
- 385.** MoWA, in collaboration with its partners, conducts vocational trainings for 10,000 women every year (EVAW Law Report 2014, pp; 15). In addition, under the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Law, Law enforcement agencies are required to apply the EVAW law and inform MoWA about incidents (EVAW Law Report 2014, pp; 16). A cell in the ministry has been constituted to facilitate collection of data from different agencies. "MoWA has been accepted as a member of the presidential legislative committee after a great deal of advocacy". MoWA shares its views and "suggestions on Sharia-based and constitutional rights of women to the committee."
- 386.** The Minister of MoWA along with Deputy Minister Administrative and Finance and Deputy Minister Technical and Policy are members of various institutional processes responsible for the implementation of SDGs. The organizational chart of MoWA given above indicates the avenues of responsibilities set in each of the leadership roles within the Ministry.
- 387.** In order to mainstream their policies, laws, strategies and plans in accordance with the mandate of MoWA, the Minister and the Deputy Ministers are members of committees and monitor the functions of the following Ministries:
- Ministry of Health
 - Ministry of Education
 - Ministry of Higher Education
 - Ministry of Justice
 - Ministry of Public Health
 - Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
 - Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
 - Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations
- 388.** At a formal institutional level, the existence of MoWA, solely devoted to women's affairs and rights, is a significant achievement. All key development and reconstruction objectives

in Afghanistan, including ministerial policies and strategic plans, are to include gender as a crosscutting theme.

389. The above-mentioned ministries have had a gender unit, a gender focal point, and a gender policy. Since the passage of NAP 1325 in June 2015, “NAP Focal Points” have also been appointed at key ministries to facilitate the implementation of NAP 1325. The mandate of each of these ministries covers some element of the SDG objectives pertaining to different programs and functions. These programmes cover the following aspects of SDGs: (see Annex 4)

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices

5.4 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels

5.5 Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources

5.6 Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality

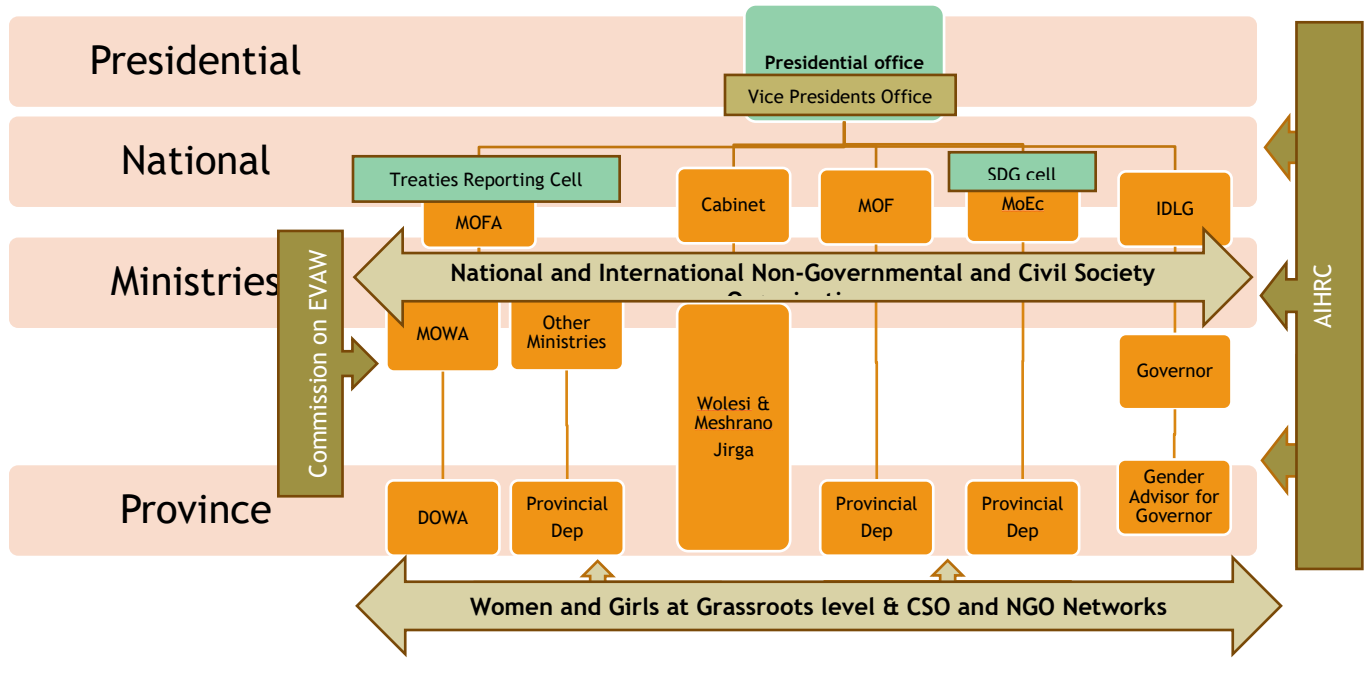
QUESTION 33

Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?

YES

390. The Government of Afghanistan has invested strategically in various systems to ensure reporting across various international treaties and commitments are distilled to reach the Vice President’s Office and are reported to the President as the final approving body of all reports. This also creates a system for accountability to all commitments and actions including budgetary allocations to ensure the essential progress is well funded. All International treaties like CEDAW BPFA etc are reported through MOFA, MOFA coordinates extraction of information from different departments, institutions and ministries. MOWA is the primary ministry that collates and reports on women related issues. While Ministry of Economy gathers information from various departments, institutions and ministries on SDG related reporting. All consultative reports are prepared with inputs from MOWA as is reporting on gender related indicators in SDGs. Hence MOWA plays a central

role in supporting gender desks, focal persons, advisors and their capacity across all the architecture.



QUESTION 34

Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? YES/NO

YES,

- a. Which of the following stakeholders participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

Beijing Declaration and PfA:

- Civil society organizations
- Women's rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks

- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- Civil society organizations
- Women's rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify

b. Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes? YES/NO

391. To ensure the voices of women from civil society in remote provinces is included in the drafting of the report a scoping workshop was held in Kandahar, the south western province of Afghanistan and one in the north eastern province of Balk. Whereas consultations with national civil society members was ensured in the drafting of the report. Through coordination with the MOWA, the provincial DOWA offices facilitated the consultation workshops.

392. In Kandahar province, the city of Kandahar was the gathering point where 40 women from government civil society, women rights activist and women rights defenders gathered under the leadership of MOFA and DOWA. The governor of Kandahar attended the session to listen to the problems of women. He has appointed a new gender advisor Dr. Aziza and she will be required to meet civil society and women government employees on a weekly basis and will debrief the governor on their issues. While he will endeavor to meet women representatives on a monthly basis to resolve their issues. He motivated women to rise up against discrimination and raise a voice for their rights and advised them not be complacent

by not coming out of their homes and claiming the spaces the government is opening for women. He narrated the example of poor applications for a women's specific post of gender advisor to which only one female candidate submitted her application.

- 393.** The governor highlighted a five-point advantage for women if they apply for the government post. He acknowledged that culture of harmful practices is discouraging for women to work. He underscored that each post is well advertised and further circulated throughout the government offices so as to reach all interested candidates applications. He also affirmed that if there is any problem in Kandahar regarding discrimination against women, then they should share with the governor through DOWA. He reiterated his commitment to deal with all cases on an urgent and personal level to ensure he builds an environment that is enabling, transparent and swift in accountability for women facing discrimination in the workplace. The governor also highlighted the most difficult situation in the province is regarding women IDP.
- 394.** Women in Kandahar asserted that they would like to see more women's presence in media which is currently less than desirable. Women highlighted that the need for kindergartens at workplaces for working mothers. A women stated that she is the only woman working in public health department whereas the numbers should be more as the need is high. Women demanded that they should have more authority in their positions and more parity and protection in job security with men. Women asserted that to increase women in government offices some employment conditions need to be relaxed so that women can enter the government workforce. Whereas women should be paid at par with men and should be in positions of authority and management. During consultation they raised following issues:
1. Salaries are not sufficient for women's needs especially those also pursuing higher education along with their jobs.
 2. There is discrimination in hiring and retaining women at workplaces
 3. Curb and address harmful practices that women face when they work in same workplace as men
 4. Identify indigenous women from Kandahar and invest in their capacity for employment
 5. Women are not in key positions resultantly their challenges are not heard
 6. Kindergarten for working mothers.
- 395.** Women appreciated the governor's commitment to meet their representatives on a monthly basis by creating a platform through the governor's office and facilitating regular updates mechanism with the gender advisor. Women appreciated the comprehensive Beijing Platform for Action questionnaire circulated at the workshop and hoped their feedback is represented in the report.
- 396.** A second consultation workshop was held in the province of Balk, at the capital city of Mazar Sharif. It was coordinated by MOFA and DOWA who led the process and invited over 40 women from different civil society organizations, academia, media and government departments to a one-day consultative workshop. Governor of Balk also made a brief appearance and heard the issues raised by the women. Women acknowledged that poverty reduction has made much progress in Balk and in Mazar Sharif in particular. Some

measures are visible for women's role in health structure and family support centers with psychosocial counselling. Women are also accessing business opportunities and showcasing their crafts and handicrafts with women's section in the chamber of commerce and having a women's marketplace in two parts of Mazar city where the women can sell their crafts. There is wide participation of women for enterprise development through workshops and seminars which has helped spur interest in diverse non-traditional fields.

397. The Department for Women Affairs was appreciated for their efforts of this nature in Balkh as an environment that is created by enactment of the law that protects women from violence and discrimination at the workplace and with their growing awareness of their rights. Women who are facing violence can access free legal aid service arranged by the government. The establishment of Women's House of Hope was an important step taken by DOWA where cases of women are handled by women attorneys.
398. In areas of peace talks and women's participation a mixed response was received. Although an AIHRL have launched a research center that gathers information on women's views in peace talks, yet it was felt that women's representation in peace talks is still token and needs to be deepened to ensure their recommendations and protection is respected. The challenges as in any other part of Afghanistan are also faced in Balkh. The state of security is a constant threat to women's free movement whether for seeking education, employment, business endeavors or healthcare. Women low self-confidence is directly linked with traditional practices of subjugation and exclusion from decision making and multiplied with poverty and violence leads to women's weak status and role in contributing to a peaceful and thriving economy and family life.
399. A third consultative workshop was organized in Kabul with ministries technical focal persons where 17 departments, institutions and ministries and a national civil society network for Afghan women called Afghan Women's Network (AWN) were represented including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Defense, Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Martyrs and Disabled Persons, Justice, Information and Communication, Urban development, National Defense, repatriation and Refugees, Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock, Independent Commission on Human Rights, Sarta Courts, and Administrative Office of the President to name a few. The technical persons reviewed the translated draft of the report and committed to send feedback and data to capture progress on the inquiries for the Beijing Platform for Action areas of priority.

QUESTION 35

Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?

Yes

400. As SDG 5 focuses on gender values and equality, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) is leading the Afghan Social Protection Sector to achieve the values and targets of gender equality. MoWA has taken tenacious steps to improve women's status, for the

elimination of discrimination and violence against women, empowering women and supporting their human development in the promotion of women's participation in education, economic, social and political processes via designing policies, pathways, strategies and recruiting them in the government administration and establishing provincial women departments.

401. The National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) will be remembered as one of the major steps towards supporting women in the areas of social and economic empowerment.

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices

Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 is according to results of the survey carried out by ADHS that percentage of women aged 15 to 19 married reaches to 17% while male married in the same ages reaches to 3%. This percentage indicates that more women are married in earlier ages than men.

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work

In Afghanistan the proportion of unpaid domestic workers as a proportion of workforce, is 28%. This ratio differs largely between male and female workers where, for male workers the ratio is 17% and for female workers this reaches 73% of their population. It has been targeted by the MoLSA to reduce this percentage to 15% by the end of 2030.

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels

In Afghanistan the proportion of seat held by women in parliament and local governments is 27% which higher than the world's average of 21%. As such, while the number of women in the decision-making bodies of the Government has improved significantly in the last one and half decade. While women didn't have the right to work during the Taliban regime now they constitute 10.7% of managerial position in government. This trend will improve to 32% by the end of 2030.

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods.

402. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has taken crucial steps in accordance with the commitment of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on SDGs. Gender Response Budgeting (GBR) is an important step towards this commitment.
403. The Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) project was proposed as a budgetary reform in the Ministry of Finance in the year 1390 and its guideline were sent through a circular to the relevant budgetary units. In the year 2017, with the support of the First Lady of the Country, the UN Women Partnership, the United Nations Development Program, and the Office of the Presidential Affairs this initiative was launched under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

- 404.** The Gender Responsive Budget is an official document that is prepared by the Ministry of Finance and demonstrates the impact of the annual budget on gender equality with high quality and accuracy, and based on the evidence shows whether the issues related to gender are sufficiently considered during the planning and preparing of the budget.
- 405.** The Gender Responsive Budget is an accountability and national and international document of commitment of the Afghan government for the people, the civil society, Afghan NGOs, National Action Plan for Afghan Women (NAPWA), and (NAP1325). The Gender Responsive Budget document was first included in the national budget in the year 1398 and currently consists of 12 budgetary units (Tax, Economic, Labour and Social Affairs, Public Health, Education, Higher Education, Commerce, Women’s Affairs, Rural Development, Agriculture, Local Governance Organs, and the Department of Environment).
- 406.** The results of the reviews and investigations of the National Budget (12 budgetary units) based on the Gender Responsive Budget show that even though 83% of the budget were dedicated to gender issues on different levels, only 20% of the expanses of the national budget were completely Gender Responsive, in a way that can provide coverage for the identified gender gaps and improve gender equality in the relative sector. So far about 49% of the reviewed budget are to some extent responsive to gender; in other words, this section of the expanses of the budget have partially identified the gender issues and gaps and in the planning and designing of the budget this issue is targeted and it can potentially lead to gender equality to some extent in the relevant sector. Similarly, 15% of the reviewed expanses were planned where the gender issues were not sufficiently identified or have dealt with these issues very minorly so that it is unable to resolve gender equality issues. 17% of the expanses of the budget were also completely neutral with regards to gender focus, which means that the gender gap was completely ignored, and the planning and preparation of the budget was done without consideration to the gender related issues which truly leads to increase and progression in the gender inequality in the relevant sectors.
- 407.** Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (WEE-NPP)
The starting point for a national program is Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (WEE-NPP) in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which guarantees equal rights to women and men. The women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program is planned for a period of 5 years in accordance with the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF) under the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, and the main objective of this program is to empower women, and their self-reliance and welfare, and provide for widespread access to economic resources and opportunities.
- 408.** The Women's Economic Empowerment Program is one of the government's national programs, which was formed with advisory coordination's on the capital, provincial and district levels. The structure of the program consists of two parts; facilitation and production, and it contains 6 programs in total as listed below:
- I. Increase access and analysis of gender statistics.

- II. Removing the legal barriers to women's participation in productive sectors of the economy.
 - III. Capacity building, education and training of women in the fields of literacy, accounting, small business management, and market demanded skills.
 - IV. Providing inclusive access to financial facilities.
 - V. Improving access to agricultural establishments, promotional services and marketing.
 - VI. Access to Creative Markets (Made by Afghan Women).
- 409.** The program's budget is estimated at 400 million USD, which currently has acquired a funding commitment of 120 million USD from the World Bank and the Government of Afghanistan. The program is also part of the USAID's 20 million USD Incentive Fund.
- 410.** According to the given data of MoPH, these services are provided to 20% of this category of people, which is the baseline. By 2030, the services will be provided to 45% of the population. Number of adolescent birth rate aged 13 to 19 years per 1000 women, according to the given data of MoPH, is 12.1, which is baseline that by 2030, it is planned to decrease the number to 7.3.

SECTION FOUR

DATA AND STATISTICS

(QUESTIONS 36- 40)

QUESTION 36

What are the top three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

412. The government of Afghanistan has made a concerted effort to ensure all departments, institutions and ministries reporting on progress collect sex disaggregated data. During the consultation with the ministry technical focal persons and while researching for the report it was clear that the following priorities have been adopted by the government and has showcased important data on women's equality and empowerment.
1. Established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee): The human rights and gender equality architecture coupled with essential SDG reporting has mandated that related ministries collect data that can show the benefit differential between men and women, boys and girls.
 2. Used more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programs and projects: in the past five years the Central Statistical office (CSO) has generated key national health and living standards surveys that have explicitly defined the lag in women's development indicators. This has allowed government and donor agencies to target women's empowerment and advancement programs with greater accuracy and has established baselines against which the growth and progress can be measured.
 3. Promulgated laws, regulations, or statistical program/strategy setting out the development of gender statistics: The CSO has distinct guidelines and is under guidance from MOWA to ensure sex disaggregated data.
 4. Produced knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers): as mentioned above this priority is also featured as a third area of high preference and the government's different departments have produced gender specific reports and products capturing the differential between male and female progress indicators.

QUESTION 37

Out of the following which are your countries top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?

1. Design of laws, regulations, or statistical program/strategy promoting the development of gender statistics: In continuation of the good work this is a proposed priority by ministries as it has helped measure the progress on women's empowerment and advancement.
 2. Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programs and projects: This too is a continuation of a best practice that has aided in more targeted programming and related policy development for gender equality and women's empowerment.
 3. Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers): As a best practice to keep government abreast with developments innovative data presentation and analysis is proposed to continue to strengthen women's advancement.
-

QUESTION 38

Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

Yes

No

◆ **If YES, how many indicators does it include and how many of those are gender-specific?**

413. While the government is working on all 17 SDGs, following SDGs are key priorities for government as they represent efforts and alignments of government's National Priorities Plan (NPP). These Goals are:

1. Goal 1- No Poverty
2. Goal 2- No Hunger
3. Goal 3- Good health and wellbeing
4. Goal 5- Gender Equality
5. Goal 9- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
6. Goal 17- partnership for the Goals

414. The Government has set national targets and indicators against these Goals as follows;

SDGs	Global Targets	National Targets	Global Indicators	National Indicators
Goal 1	7	5	12	6
Goal 2	8	8	14	17
Goal 3	13	11	26	18
Goal 5	9	6	14	8
Goal 9	8	7	12	15
Goal 17	19	16	25	23
Number of global and national targets and indicators				

415. The other SDG gender-specific indicators are:

Goals	No. of Targets	No. of Indicators	# Gender specific indicators
Goal 1- No Poverty	7	9	6
Goal 2- No Hunger	8	24	1
Goal 3- Good health and wellbeing	13	26	6
Goal 5- Gender Equality	9	14	14
Goal 9- Industry, innovation and infrastructure	8	12	-
Goal 17- partnership for the Goals	19	25	0

◆ **If YES, how many of the gender-specific indicators are additional country indicators (i.e., not part of the global SDG monitoring and indicator framework)?**

416. As per the NAP 2019-22 the government has set stringent measures to not only adhere to SDGs but surpass it with contextual indicators with clearly delineated responsibilities to different implementing entities. There are 38 indicators dedicated to gender equality and advancement of women and preventing discrimination and violence against women and girls.

See Annex 3

QUESTION 39

Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?

Yes

If yes, please describe which indicators have been prioritized

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

QUESTION 40

Which of the following disaggregation¹ is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

INDICATORS	ALWAYS/ MOSTLY/ SOMETIMES/RARELY/ NEVER/ NO INFORMATION
Geographical Location	Always
Income	Sometimes
Sex	Always
Age	Sometimes (respecting sensitivities and where relevant)

¹ As specified in A/RES/70/1, with the addition of education and marital status.

Education	Sometimes where relevant
Marital Status	Sometimes(respecting sensitivities and where relevant)
Race/ Ethnicity	Rarely (respecting sensitivities and where relevant)
Migratory Status	Sometimes where relevant
Disability	Rarely (but will be the norm from 2019 Afghan Demographic and Health Survey underway)

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ANNEXURES

ANNEX1: 17 YEARS ACHIEVEMENTS- 1380 TO 1395 (2001-2016-17)

INDICATORS	GENDER STATISTICS AND FIGURES IN STATE OFFICES			
	Sections	Issues	Baseline (2014-15)	Progress (2017-18)
Presence of Women in Education Sector	Schools	Number of girls	40%	40%
		Number of schools	1000	14658
		Number of teachers	31%	33%
	Teacher Training Institute	Female students	54%	56%
		Female teachers	20%	14%
	Technical and Vocational Institutes	Students	11%	17%
		Teachers	11%	17%
	Literacy	Students	45%	53%
	Higher Education Institutes	Governmental Students (female)	22220	25.79%
		Private Students	201	19.75%
		Female Teachers	49%	31796
		Scholarship for Female	30%	36%
Presence of Women in Public Health	Technical and Vocational Services	Midwife Graduates	2222	Update requested
		Nursing Graduates	0	Update requested
	Healthcare Services	Mother Mortality Rate per 100,000 live births	223	661
		Infant Mortality Rate per 1000 live births	33	34
		Mortality Rate for children under 5	23	55

		Women Fertility Rate	10	5.3
	Administrative	Presence of female staff in Healthcare per 1000 population	22%	1%
Presence of Women in Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission	Employment	Women employment	11%	13%
	Elections	Voters	39%	40%
		parliament	27%	23%
	Leadership	Women in managerial positions	10%	11%
Presence of Women in Social Entities	Peace Advisory Jirga		25%	
	Traditional Jirga		18%	16%
	In Decision Making		9%	11%
	In Legal and Justice Affairs		10%	12%
	Civil Society		22%	22%
	Local Council		35%	Update requested
	Civil Society Organizations		30%	Update requested
Presence of Women in Economic Development, Labor and Poverty Sectors	Ministry of Economics		13%	11%
	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disables		65%	40%
	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development		5%	6%
	Ministry of Finance		6%	8%
	Ministry of Business and Industry		23%	17%
	Ministry of Urban Affairs		0%	9%
	Ministry of Mines		14%	12%
	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock		22.40%	4%

	Ministry of Transport and Aviation		9%	6%
	Ministry of Public Health		22%	24%
	Ministry of Counter Narcotics		9%	6%
Security Sector	Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, National Directorate of Security		5%	14%
Protection of Human Rights	Ministry of Justice		5%	8%
Women Leadership Development and Political Partnership	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Services Commission		17%	Update requested
	Central Statistics Office		12%	15%
	Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs			0.08%
	Ministry of Information and Culture		12%	12%
	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs		13%	15%
	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations		9%	9%
	Independent Directorate of Local Governance		7%	2%
	Ministry of Borders		8%	6%

ANNEX 2: GOAL 5. ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Target	Indicator	Leading/supporting entities	Baseline 2016	2018	2019	2020
5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	5.1.1 Ensure that frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex (legislations, manuals, conventions, and agreements)	Ministry of Women Affairs 1. Independent Human Rights Commission	75%	85%	85%	85%
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and	5.2.1 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by partner in the previous 12	Ministry of Women Affairs 1. All legal and judiciary Institutions 2. Security Institutions 3. Independent Human's Right Commission 4. Ministry of Public Health	56% (2015)	55%	54%	53%

other types of exploitation	months					
	5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than partner in the previous 12 months	Ministry of Women Affairs 1. All legal and judiciary institutions 2. Security Institutions 3. National Statistics and Information Authority 4. Independent Human's Right Commission 5. Ministry of Public Health	53% (2015)	52%	51%	50%
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage	5.3.1 Proportion of women who were married at the age of 15-19	Ministry of Women Affairs 1. Independent Human's Right Commission 2. Ministry of Public Health	17% (2015)	17%	16%	16%
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, disaggregated by: 1. Total of both sex	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled 1. Ministry of Women's Affair	1. 28% a. 17% b. 73%	1. 28% a. 17% b. 73%	1. 27% a. 17% b. 73%	1. 26% a. 16% b. 74%

protection	a. Male					
policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	b. Female					
5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	Ministry of Women Affairs	23%	23%	24%	24%
	5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial Positions	Ministry of Women Affairs 1. All Sectors 2. National Statistics and Information Authority	10.7%	11%	12%	13%

Annex 3 Indicators for Gender Equality other than SDGs

Table of Activities of the Implementing Agencies of NAP 1325 – Women, Peace and Security

2019-2022

A. Participation Pillar

Objective: Participation and increased women’s participation in decision making levels

1. Women’s participation in the negotiations process and realization of peace

Expected Results	Indicator	Activity	Source of Information and Evidence	Implementing Agency	Timeline
Women's participation in the peace and negotiations process is ensured	1. Developing a special 5 year plan on women's active participation in the peace and negotiations process	1. Developing a special plan on women's active participation in the peace and negotiations process	Existence of the plan and monitoring & evaluation reports	High Peace Council, National Security Council, and MoWA	The Special plan is developed in 2019 and will be implemented until 2022
Increase of women's representation in senior and mid managerial level to 50%, capacity building of women on conflict management, peace building, and protecting of conflict affected women.	2. Existence of Gender Policy and increase four women each year	2. Developing a gender policy for the High Peace Council aimed at increased women's participation in senior and mid management level	Existence of the gender policy and Monitoring & Evaluation reports	High Peace Council, and MoWA	The Gender Policy is developed in 2019 and will be implemented until 2022
The program on peace and negotiation is coordinated between the High Peace Council and organizations active in the area of women's rights	3. Establishment of Focal Points Network between the High Peace Council the organizations active on women's rights 4. Types of practical actions and number of coordination meetings	3. Establishment of Focal Points Network aimed at strengthening coordination between organization supporting women's rights and the High Peace Council	Reports of the Meetings and Observations	High Peace Council, and MoWA	The Focal Points Network will be established in 2019 and will continue to operate until 2022

between women
active on peace
and negotiations
and the High
Peace Council
and their results

2. Participation and increased representation of women in the civil service institutions, and defense & security agencies

Number of women is increased in the civil service institutions	5. Relevant legislative documents are reviewed	4. Review of legislative documents related to civil service institutions with a view to increasing women's participation in the civil service	Observations and Documents	MoJ, IARCSC and MoWA	2019-2022
Existing Flaws and Gaps are identified environment is made further conducive of active participation of the female workers of the civil service	6. Developed Guideline on monitoring the increase of women's participation in the civil service	5. Developing the Guideline on monitoring the increase of women's participation in the civil service	Documents and results of monitoring and evaluation	IARCSC and MoWA	The Monitoring Mechanism is prepared in 2019 and will be implemented until 2022
Women in the center and provinces benefit from the equal employment opportunities in the security and defense agencies and are promoted to	7. five percent female recruitment at all levels of the security and defense sector	6. Developing the capacity of women to undertake positions at the high and middle management level	Documents and results of monitoring and evaluation	MoIA, MoD, NDS and NSC	2019-2029

leadership levels

Women's representation is increased in the defense and security forces and benefit from the special support measures	8. Number of women working in the defense and security agencies. Segregated by the MoI, MoD ,NDS and NSC	7. Developing a policy on motivation and its annual review aimed at increasing women's participation in the security agencies	Existence of policy	MoI, MoD ,NDS and NSC	Motivation Policy will be developed in 2019 and will be implemented until 2022
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3. Women's participation in elections

Women's representation in the elections process as voters and nominees will be Increased	9. List of male and female voter registration 10. Number of voters, segregated by gender 11. Number of candidates, segregated by gender 12. Review and reforming electoral regulations	8. Taking support measures for female nominees and voters in registration and voting centers	Existence of legislative documents and results of monitoring and evaluation	IEC, ECC, MoJ	2019-2022
Women's representation is increased in the Independent Election Commissions	13. Number and percentage of women employed at the IEC and ECC	9. observing the principle of gender in the IEC and ECC at the central and provincial levels	Reports of IEC and ECC and Result of monitoring and evaluation	IEC , ECC	2019 - 2022

Reports of IEC and Result of monitoring and evaluation
IEC and Mowa

B. Protection Pillar

Objective: Protecting women against all forms of violence during conflict and emergency situations

1. Policies and Guidelines

Expected Results	Indicator	Activity	Source of Information and Evidence	Implementing Agency	Timeline
Various types of violence against women are decreased and women victims benefit from legal, social and economic support	14. Developing a policy on protecting women during conflict and emergency situation 16. Number of supported women	11. Ensuring safety and support to women during conflict and emergencies	Reports of Implementing Agencies	MoWA, MoJ, MoI and MoD	The policy of protecting women is developed in 2019 and will be implemented until 2022

2. Laws and Judicial Issues

Number of legislative documents aimed at providing special support to women are increased	15. Number of special legislative documents, rights and privileges of women	12. Review and scrutiny of legislative documents aimed at providing special support to women's rights	Legislative documents published in the official gazette	MoJ and Mo wa	2019-2022
Reduced violence against women	16. No. of addressed,	13. Identification	Figures of number of	Security Agencies,	2019 – 2022

during conflict	followed up and resolved cases of violence against women	and prosecution of offenders of violence against women	cases addressed and supervisory observations	judicial institutions, AIHRC and MoWA	
Prevented violence against women in 34 provinces	17. Special court established in 17 provinces	14. Establishing courts for counter violence in 17 provinces	Supreme Court decision and supervisory report of the AIHRC	Supreme Court, MoI, and MoWA	2019 -2022
Circulated and Collected figures and types of cases of violence against women	18. Establishing a new section in case management system of the prosecutor's office 19. Number of registered and followed up cases	15. Establishing special section in the case management system of the prosecutor's office	Statistics of the judicial institutions	Prosecutor's Office, MoI, and MoWA	2019 – 2022

3. Supporting victim women during conflict

Integrated women; victim and complainant of violence to their families	20. Number of women and girls integrated to their families	16. Drafting procedure for submission and reintegration of conflict affected women and girls to their families	Existing of policy and supervisory report on its implementation	MoWA, MoI, and MoD	Policy developed in 2019 and will be implement till the end of 2022
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4. Medical and Psychological Services

Emergency medical services provided for women affected by conflict and better quality and	21. Adopted policy on medical and psychological	17. Drafting health policy on supporting conflict	Existing of policy and supervisory report on its implementation	MoPH, MoWA and AIHRC	The health policy and monitoring mechanism developed in 2019 and will be
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increased quantity of medical services provided	service 22. Adopted mechanism for continued monitor of health programs in vulnerable areas 23. Number of mobile clinics and health services beneficiaries	affected women 18. Monitoring mechanism for providing health services 19. Establishing mobile health clinics for women affected and victim of armed conflict	on			implemented until 2022
Disabled (affected by conflict) women and girls enjoy their fundamental and basic rights	24. No. of department on empowering disabled (affected by conflict) women and girls	20. Establishing department for empowering disabled (affected by conflict) women and girls in 34 provinces	Monitoring and evaluation documents and observations	Office of the State Minister for Martyrs and Disabled and MoWA		2019-2022

C. Prevention Pillar

Objective: Taking special supporting measures for the purpose of preventing violence and discrimination against women during conflict

1. Prohibition of Impunity

Expected Results	Indicators	Activity	Information Source	Implementing Agency	Timeline
Cases addressed in a legal specified period of time	25. Monitoring procedure for implementing EAW law 28. No. of supervised cases by the new procedure	21. Establishing responsive procedure to supervise the implementation of EAW law	Existing of mechanism for supervising the implementation of EAW Law	MoWA, AIHRC and AGO	The responsive procedure developed in 2019 and will be implemented till the end of 2022

2. Public Awareness

Women and men made aware of the consequences of violence against women	26. No. of sermons and preaches	22. Holding sermons and preaches in Masjids to prohibit violence against women	Schedule of MoHRA	MoHRA	2019 – 2022
Citizen and different layers of the society made aware of women's right and harms of violence against women	27. No. of radio and TV programs and spots 31. No. of articles and comments in government newspapers and Bakhtar Agency	23. Broadcasting radio, TV programs, Spots, publishing articles and comments in government newspapers and Bakhtar news agency on EVAW	Reports and documents published on reports and the results of the supervisory and evaluation observations	MoWA, MoJ, AIHRC, AWN, AGO, National RTV, and MoIC	2019 – 2022
Women and men made aware of in Sharia law, EVAW law, Anti-Harassment Law and the Penal Code	28. No. of programs held	24. Launching training programs for women and men on Sharia affairs, anti-harassment law, EVAW law and the Penal Code of Afghanistan	Reports and results of the monitoring and evaluation observations	MoIC, MoHRA	Training programs to be held for women and men from 2019 to 2022
The entities in accordance with their national and international obligations report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on their activities	29. Existing of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Implementation plan, Financial Mechanism and Collecting reports of the implementing agencies on their activities regarding the NAP 1325	25. accurate Monitoring from the implementation of NAP1325, Coordination with other implementing agencies and collecting reports from implementing agencies	Reports	MoFA	2019 – 2022

Representatives of the implementing agencies and civil society made aware of NAP and their obligations in regional level	30. No. of Raising awareness program on NAP 1325 Resolution	26. Holding awareness programs in five regions	Activities and reports	MoFA	2019 – 2022
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3. Supporting Civilians

Identifying and punishing offenders of civil casualties special women	31. No. of cases civil casualties specially women's reported 36. Type of cases of civil casualties	27. Identification and prosecution of the offender of civil casualties specially women	Reports and results of Monitoring and Evaluation	MoI, and AGO	2019 – 2022
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4. Strengthening Government Human Rights Institutions

Women and men's basic need resolved in the entities	32. No. of Units with budget responsive to gender	28. Inclusion of gender responsive budget in budgeting of all government entity	Documents and reports	And MoWA, Mo F and MoWA	Quarterly (2019 – 2022)
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D. RELIEF AND RECOVERY PILLAR

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

1. Resettlement

Expected Results	Indicators	Activity	Information and Evidence Sources	Implementing Agency	Timeline
IDPs will have access to shelter, food and non-food assistance	33. No. of IDPs 39. Type of support to IDPs	29. Implementation of 12 article national policy on IDPs for supporting the families affected by conflict	Research report and documents	MoRR, IDLG, ARCS	2019 – 2022
Deserving displaced women	34. No. residential plots	30. Distribution of land plots for	Official reports and	MoRR, MoUDH	2019 – 2022

would be identified and given access to shelter	distributed to IDPs	resettlement of IDPs (affected by conflict)	results of monitoring and evaluation	and IDLG	
Increased immunity of women prone to danger with the use of opportunities and supportive measures	35. No. of ready to use and active shelters for women prone to danger	31. Developing shelter design for women prone to danger	Existing of shelter and monitoring report	AOP and MoWA	The Shelter design has been prepared in 2019 and to be implemented by 2022

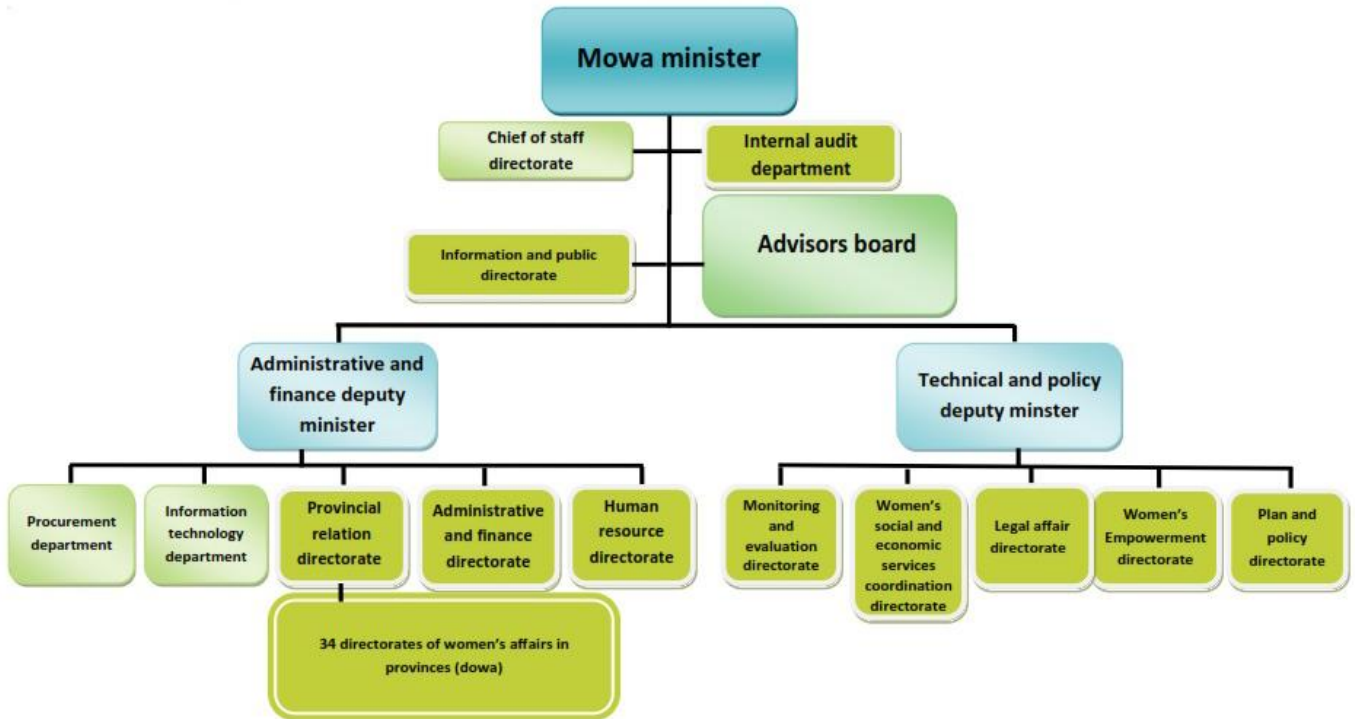
2. Job and Profession Creation for Women Affected by Conflict

Means a resources provided for empowering women in provinces and districts	36. Drafting and Adopting Women's Economic Empowerment and Number of Self-reliant women	32. Preparing plan for economic empowerment of women to provide job opportunities for women affected by conflict	Existing of document, No. of self-reliant women and results of monitoring and evaluation	MoCI	Women empowerment plan is prepared in 2019 and to be implemented by the end of 2022
War and conflict affected women will reach economic independence	37. Building small production centers in areas affected by conflict and war	33. Creating job opportunities for women affected by conflict	Reports and results of monitoring	MoLSAM , MoRR and MoWA	2020 – 2022
Women's legal cases are addressed	38. No. of beneficiaries and type of service	34. Providing legal and social services for women affected by conflict	Documents and reports	MoJ , the Supreme Court and MoWA	2020 – 2022
	45. No. of cases detected and followed up resulting in the complaining parties conviction				



Organizational Chart of MoWA

2018



Annex 4