



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Sixth periodic report submitted by Turkmenistan under  
article 18 of the Convention, due in 2022\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## **Part I**

### **Methodology**

1. This Report was prepared in line with Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”). In preparing the report, the authors referred to the compilation of guidelines on the form and content of reports to be submitted by States parties to the international human rights treaties ([HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#)) and General Assembly resolution [68/268](#) on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. They also took into account the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the fifth periodic report of Turkmenistan on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention ([CEDAW/C/TKM/5](#)).
2. The report was drafted by a working group of the Interdepartmental Commission on Compliance with the International Obligations Undertaken by Turkmenistan in the Field of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.
3. The draft report was discussed by organizing consultative meetings and round tables with broad participation of representatives of civil society associations and organizations, including the Women’s Union, the National Trade Union Centre, the Youth Organization, the National Red Crescent Society, Keyik Okara, Yynam, Beyik Eyyam and Ýeňme, on the implementation of national legislation as well as the Convention. In that connection, on 15 April 2022, a seminar was held with the participation of civil society organizations to discuss the practical implementation of the Concluding Observations of the Convention and the draft sixth periodic national report on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. During the seminar, a questionnaire was distributed to gauge the awareness of representatives of civil society organizations regarding issues of gender equality, women’s rights and legal remedies available under the legislation of Turkmenistan; the answers served as the basis for an analysis of the situation regarding the activities of civil society organizations. The responses were also taken into account in the preparation of this report.
4. The report uses as its basis the analytical material submitted by all the ministries and departments and civil society associations and organizations of Turkmenistan, taking into account the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the fifth periodic report of Turkmenistan.
5. This sixth periodic report contains Turkmenistan’s information on major developments and progress in the matter of ensuring that women have political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights on an equal basis with men during the reporting period from January 2018 to June 2022 in connection with the implementation of the Convention.
6. In addition, the report contains specific information, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, on existing constitutional, legislative, administrative and other measures, progress made and steps planned for the further practical implementation of Turkmenistan’s gender policy.

### **Introduction**

7. On 25 September 2020, the Act on the Constitution was adopted. It introduced amendments and additions to the Constitution of Turkmenistan to create a bicameral system of the Milli Geňeş (Parliament), which consists of the Halk Maslahaty and the Mejlis. The bicameral system provides for greater involvement of women, as deputies, in the legislative process.

8. The effectiveness of the gender policy being implemented is evidenced by the election of Turkmenistan to the Commission on the Status of Women for 2018–2022 and to the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for the period 2022–2024.

9. On 6 August 2021, Turkmenistan initiated the first Central Asian Women’s Dialogue with representatives of the five countries of the region, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The main topic of the first Dialogue was the role of women in strengthening cooperation between States, the development of socio-economic ties, cultural and scientific contacts, and cooperation in the field of health care. The agenda included issues related to women’s participation in public and social affairs, the implementation of changes and reforms, including those undertaken to ensure gender equality, and the protection of women’s rights and interests.

10. The second Dialogue of Women of the States of Central Asia and the Russian Federation, entitled “The Role of Women in Socio-Political and Socio-Economic Development”, was held on 12–13 May 2022 in Ashgabat, with Turkmenistan taking the Chair.

11. All of Turkmenistan’s national socio-economic development programmes reflect gender development issues. For example, the President’s national programme for the socioeconomic development of Turkmenistan for 2019–2025 provides for structural reforms in the economy, creating new jobs, stimulating the development of small and medium-sized businesses, expanding employment in the private sector and transferring informal workers to the formal sector, which opens up new opportunities for the population, including women.

12. On 11 February 2022, a new national programme for the socioeconomic development of Turkmenistan for 2022–2052 was adopted. Among the priorities of the programme is the ever-increasing role of human capital as the main factor in the economic development of the country and, as a consequence, the formation of a new social model of development that ensures high standards of living for Turkmenistan citizens. In the new 30-year socioeconomic development programme, United Nations agencies have been assigned the role of major strategic partners, a role reinforced by the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Turkmenistan and the United Nations on cooperation in implementing the national programme for the socioeconomic development of Turkmenistan.

13. The adoption and gradual implementation of the National Programme to mitigate the prevailing challenging situation of the global economy and to promote the sustainable development of the national economy for 2020–2021, and the Plan of operational socioeconomic measures in Turkmenistan to counter the acute infectious disease pandemic, together constitute a comprehensive package of measures to mitigate the negative impact of the global pandemic on the socioeconomic situation in Turkmenistan, with special attention being devoted to the most vulnerable population groups, including women and girls, in accordance with the principle of leaving no one behind.

14. A Framework for cooperation on sustainable development for 2021–2025 was signed between Turkmenistan and the United Nations. It is guided by the following principles: (1) Inclusivity and equality, to “leave no one behind”; (2) Human rights, gender equality and workers’ rights, and women’s empowerment; (3) Sustainability and resilience; and (4) Accountability, including the accessibility and use of quality data.

15. In July 2019, Turkmenistan presented its first voluntary national review on the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as part of the high-

level political forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in New York. Preparations are underway for the second voluntary review of the Sustainable Development Goals, one of the main focuses of which is to highlight the country's progress in advancing human rights and gender equality.

16. A presidential decree of 4 December 2020 approved the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025; the Plan was developed in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and includes seven strategic areas: strengthening and improving the legislative framework to achieve gender equality; ensuring gender-oriented health care; promoting access to education; combating violence against women and children; expanding the economic empowerment of women and girls; increasing women's participation at all levels, including in the political and public spheres; and strengthening institutional arrangements to promote gender equality.

17. The National Action Plan for Human Rights in Turkmenistan for 2021–2025, developed in cooperation with UNDP in Turkmenistan, was approved by a presidential decision of 16 April 2021. The priority areas of that National Action Plan are defined as: increasing the accountability of State bodies and officials for the fulfillment of obligations arising from international human rights treaties; widespread application of international law by courts and law enforcement agencies; further implementation of the principles of equality and adversarial proceedings in the judicial process; improving the operation of the legal profession; improving the quality of qualified legal assistance and training lawyers specializing in human rights; ensuring the protection of citizens, especially members of vulnerable populations, from any form of discrimination; further improving the mechanism for ensuring the right to privacy; and further strengthening the role of political parties, civil society institutions, and the media in the protection of human rights and freedoms.

18. The above National Action Plans are based on the concluding observations of the United Nations Committees and the recommendations of Turkmenistan's Universal Periodic Review regarding human rights.

## **Part II**

### **Information on the follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

#### **Paragraphs 8 and 9: Constitutional and legislative framework**

19. In accordance with its Constitution, Turkmenistan guarantees equal civil and human rights and freedoms and equality before the law and the courts irrespective of ethnic background, skin colour, sex, origin, property, official status, place of residence, language, religious affiliation, political beliefs or other circumstances.

20. The State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (of 2015) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) establishes State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of State and public life.

21. In accordance with the legislation referred to above, the State guarantees women and men equal employment opportunities; the free choice of profession, occupation and place of employment; opportunities for entrepreneurial activities; training and retraining; and the ability to balance their work and parenthood responsibilities. The Act also guarantees their equal rights to safe working conditions and to protection against unemployment. The State guarantees women and men equal right of access to

public service through their appointment or election to public office, and promotion within public service.

22. The Military Duty and Military Service Act of Turkmenistan (2010) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) does not limit women's access to military service and establishes the age limit for military service, including for that for female service personnel. The age limit for military service is set at 48 years (the age limit for men is 52 years), and male and female citizens between 20 and 30 years of age may enlist for compulsory military service; women with a high school education aged between 17 and 21 have the right to enroll in military higher education institutions.

23. The Act on the Status of Military Personnel (2017) (<https://minjust.gov.t.m/>) provides for guarantees of legal and social protection for service personnel, in particular women service personnel, who, in accordance with the legislation of Turkmenistan, enjoy social rights and guarantees related to the protection of motherhood and childhood.

24. The National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025 provides for the implementation of activities for the development and adaptation of gender audits of draft legislative acts, including a selective gender audits of existing legislative acts. In addition, regular consultations with representatives of State bodies and civil society organizations are envisaged as part of the development of laws and regulations to ensure gender equality, and as part of regular training in the period 2021–2025.

25. The National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025 also provides for an analysis of relevant legislation to ensure that it includes rules prohibiting discrimination on any grounds; that specific provisions are inserted on the subject of direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls; and that standards are established for legal liability for discriminatory action.

26. In accordance with the State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act, the State guarantees equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of State and public life. Equality of women and men is guaranteed in the exercise of civil rights, participation in the administration of public and State affairs, in the electoral process, in health care, education, science, culture, labour and social protection, in marriage and family relations, and protection from sexual assault, kidnapping and trafficking. The guarantees in the spheres referred to are covered in specific legal acts.

27. The Turkmenistan Labour Code (2009) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) devotes a special chapter to the peculiarities of regulating the work of women and other persons with family obligations, in accordance with which there are guarantees applying to pregnant women and women with children on recruitment and on termination of an employment contract. It is illegal to refuse to hire women or to employ them at reduced wage rates on the grounds of pregnancy or because they have children up to 3 years of age (or children with disabilities up to 18 years of age). Employers may not terminate an employment contract with a pregnant woman or a woman with children up to 3 years old or children with disabilities up to the age of 18. In addition to the usual rest and meal breaks, a woman with a child under 18 months old is allowed additional paid breaks to feed her child.

28. Women receive State benefits in connection with pregnancy, birth and child care. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are given priority for service in medical institutions and in retail and public catering establishments irrespective of ownership, and for ticketing for all forms of transportation. Children under the age of 5 travel free of charge by air, rail, sea and public road transport.

29. In accordance with the Turkmenistan Public Health Act (2015) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), women are entitled to free specialized medical care in State medical institutions during pregnancy, during childbirth and after childbirth until the child reaches the age of three.
30. For the purposes of family planning and the protection of her health, as well as the prevention of unwanted pregnancy, a woman has the right to take decisions regarding motherhood.
31. Pregnant women, women in childbirth and in women in the postpartum period who are detained on suspicion of committing a crime, are held in custody, are serving a sentence in a place of detention, or are under administrative arrest, are entitled to specialized medical care.
32. The primacy of universally accepted principles of international law is recognized under article 9 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan.
33. One of the priorities in the protection of individual and political rights identified in the National Action Plan for Human Rights in Turkmenistan for 2021–2025 is the broad application by courts and law enforcement agencies of the principles and norms of international law and the implementation of the principle of the primacy of international law.
34. With the aim of achieving the implementation of the National Action Plan for Human Rights, the framework for UNDP-Turkmenistan cooperation includes provision for project activities to develop recommendations for reforming the judicial system, including measures to improve the capacity of judges at all levels to apply the norms of international human rights conventions in judicial practice.

#### **Paragraphs 10 and 11: Access to justice**

35. In accordance with the legislation of Turkmenistan, every person has the right to appeal or to file a claim or complaint to a competent authority on issues directly related to their rights and legitimate interests, and to file petitions or to receive information. The Administrative Procedures Act of Turkmenistan (2017) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) seeks to make sure that all administrative bodies ensure human rights and freedoms.
36. Foreign nationals and stateless persons have the right to defence in court on the same footing as Turkmen citizens in accordance with the law of Turkmenistan and the international treaties to which it is party (Court Act of Turkmenistan, 2014) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>).
37. Pursuant to the Ombudsman Act of Turkmenistan (2016) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), the Ombudsman considers complaints about, and has the right to conduct inquiries into, decisions, actions or omissions of central and local government bodies and their officials that violate the rights, freedoms or legitimate interests of citizens of Turkmenistan or foreign nationals or stateless persons in the territory of Turkmenistan.
38. According to the Bar and Advocacy Act of Turkmenistan (2010) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), the State guarantees
- the provision to everyone of the necessary professional legal assistance;
  - the equal right of all individuals and legal entities in Turkmenistan to receive legal assistance and information regarding the nature of that assistance and the procedures for obtaining it;
  - and free legal assistance and protection of the rights of individuals in circumstances specified by the law of Turkmenistan.

39. According to the law, depending on their financial situation, individuals may be fully or partially exempted from paying for legal assistance.

40. The National Action Plan for Human Rights in Turkmenistan for 2021–2025 provides for the right to trial, equality of parties in criminal proceedings, harmonization of criminal procedural law with international standards, and expanded training programmes for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and public servants on human rights standards and practices for judicial protection as measures to improve the judicial system.

41. Judges at all levels increase their awareness and qualifications at seminars on the subject of the Convention organized by international organizations with the involvement of international experts in the application of international experience in this area. Accordingly, between 2020 and June 2022, 11 gender equality events were held for judges, 19 of whom took part.

42. The National Action Plan for Human Rights in Turkmenistan for 2021–2025 calls for increased cooperation with civil society organizations to raise awareness among women and girls of their rights and the mechanisms that exist to protect them; for strengthening cooperation with civil society organizations in the development of appropriate programmes, as well as for the implementation of the recommendations of international mechanisms regarding gender equality. Raising women’s awareness of their rights and the means for protecting them is one of the main areas of cooperation between United Nations agencies in Turkmenistan and civil society associations and State bodies, as part of ongoing project activities.

43. The Ministry of Justice (Adalat) of Turkmenistan holds twice-monthly public clinics for citizens regarding legal issues; these sessions are staffed by representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Office of the Procurator-General, the Supreme Court and the Bar.

44. Statistics for previous years regarding women’s requests for advice in connection with violation of their rights:

Table 1

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of requests</i>
2018	353
2019	290
2020	331
2021	342
2022 (6 months)	155

45. The National Trade Union Centre regularly holds consultation sessions for the public regarding labour and related rights of citizens, including women. The Women’s Union of Turkmenistan also has a complaints and appeals section which women can consult in writing or orally. Women living in remote areas can contact local branches of the Women’s Union or the Central Council of the Women’s Union of Turkmenistan.

46. The Women’s Union of Turkmenistan, together with the Mejlis of the Milli Geňeş of Turkmenistan and the Institute for State, Law and Democracy, has held a series of awareness-raising events on women’s rights. The target audience of these events is women working in various sectors of the economy, women with many children, and housewives. During the reporting period, 38 awareness-raising events were held; information about them is available on the website of the Central Council of Women of Turkmenistan (<https://zenan.gov.tm/>).

47. With UNFPA support, the NGOs Keyik Okara in Ashgabat and Beyik Eyyam in Lebap welayat have been providing free legal advice and support to women facing critical life situations because of gender-based violence. Since the beginning of the piloting of these services, 134 individuals from vulnerable groups, including 9 men and 125 women, have received free legal support.

48. Information on the mandate and composition of the the Interdepartmental Commission on Compliance with the International Obligations Undertaken by Turkmenistan in the Field of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law was included in the fifth national periodic report in 2016.

49. In addition to courts of all levels, law enforcement agencies and bar associations, the following human rights institutions have been established and are successfully operating in Turkmenistan:

- the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms of the Halk Maslahaty of the Milli Geňes of Turkmenistan;
- the Committee for the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of the Mejlis of the Milli Geňes of Turkmenistan;
- the Ombudsman, as authorized representative for human rights in Turkmenistan;
- the Institute for State, Law and Democracy of Turkmenistan, which is the coordinating body for the Interdepartmental Commission on Compliance with the International Obligations Undertaken by Turkmenistan in the Field of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law;
- the human rights resource centres in the five welayats and the city of Ashgabat.

50. The following have been attached to the the Interdepartmental Commission on Compliance with the International Obligations Undertaken by Turkmenistan in the Field of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law:

- the working group of national experts created by decision of the Interdepartmental Commission (2007);
- the Working Group on International Humanitarian Law established by decision of the Interdepartmental Commission (2012);
- the Working Group for a Survey on the Health and Situation of Women in the Family (2018); this group is the main national expert group for protection against and prevention of gender-based violence, informing relevant legislative projects, and technical support in developing necessary measures and practices in a multi-agency response to gender-based violence;
- the Working Group to combat human trafficking (2019).

51. Funding for gender equality issues is provided from the State budget as well as from other sources not prohibited by the legislation of Turkmenistan (State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act).

52. Funding related to the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025 comes from the organizations responsible for the activities relating to the Plan, as well as from other legal and natural persons of Turkmenistan, foreign States and international organizations.

53. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025 is a continuous process. The main goal of monitoring and evaluation is to identify the keys to progress, finding effective ways to implement the strategic actions of the Plan. Monitoring and evaluation help to



maintain positive momentum and timely resolution of issues that may arise during implementation.

54. Round tables and working meetings are held annually to raise awareness among representatives of State and civil society organizations regarding gender equality in all spheres of life in Turkmenistan, to understand the role of State bodies and civil society organizations in implementing the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality and the international obligations of the State, as well as enlist the support and involvement of those organizations. Between 2018 and 2022, more than 700 representatives of government agencies and civil society organizations participated in these meetings.

#### **Paragraph 15: National human rights institution**

55. In 2016, the Ombudsman Act of Turkmenistan was adopted. During its drafting, international organizations were involved and account was taken of best practices in other countries in connection with the Paris Principles.

56. The activities of the Office of the Ombudsman are financed from the State budget and other resources.

57. In 2017, in a multicandidate election held by secret ballot of deputies of the Milli Geňeş of Turkmenistan a woman was elected to the position of Ombudsman. She was re-elected to a new term in 2022.

58. The organizational and legal structure of the Office of the Ombudsman consists of a single department for the protection of human rights and consideration of citizens' appeals. The Office of the Ombudsman consists of 9 people, and a gender balance is maintained. There are plans to restructure the Office by creating new departments to protect the rights of children, women, and persons with disabilities. In 2020, the staff of the Ombudsman's Office was increased by 10 per cent. Currently, an examination is being conducted of international experience in terms of the structure of similar institutions and the functioning of regional offices.

59. Within the framework of the Ombudsman mandate, that individual undertakes activities to provide guarantees of State protection of human and civil rights and freedoms. This includes focusing on ensuring the rights of women.

60. Within the bounds of the Ombudsman's competence, he or she verifies reports of violations of women's rights and freedoms. This may be done on the basis of complaints received, or on the Ombudsman's own initiative. Appeals to the Ombudsman are routinely analysed in detail, and a breakdown is provided by gender and by region. According to the figures given in the Report of the Ombudsman on her activities and the human rights situation in the country for 2021, 47.63 per cent of all written appeals and 65 per cent of oral appeals came from women. It should be noted that the appeals from women relate not only their own issues, but also the rights of their loved ones, relatives and acquaintances.

61. In accordance with the Annual Work Plan of the Office of the Ombudsman, systematic activities to raise public awareness regarding human rights are conducted. As part of a joint work plan with international partners – UNDP and UNICEF – the Office of the Ombudsman prepared and published in Turkmen, Russian and English brochures entitled “A few words about the Ombudsman” and “Procedure for filing an oral and written complaint with the Ombudsman of Turkmenistan”. These brochures explain in accessible form, using a question-and-answer format, the main functions of the Ombudsman and the procedure for filing and considering appeals. The brochures appear in electronic form on the website of the Office of the Ombudsman.

62. The website, [ombudsman.gov.tm](http://ombudsman.gov.tm), contains all of the Ombudsman's annual reports since 2017. These also appear on the "Turkmenistan Today" website ([www.tdh.gov.tm](http://www.tdh.gov.tm)).

63. Between 2018 and 2021, representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman took part in international events and increased their capacity to protect women's rights and gender equality. Similarly, representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman participated in the Dialogue of Women of the States of Central Asia forum in 2021 and 2022.

64. In 2021, the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), with the participation of representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman of Turkmenistan, held a seminar on gender issues during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Eurasian region.

65. In September 2021, representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman of Turkmenistan participated as observers in the interactive broadcasts held as part of the 26th Annual General Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, and in the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women working group and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

66. On 12 December 2020, a project document entitled "Strengthening Institutional Capacity of the Ombudsman's Office of Turkmenistan for 2021–2022" was signed between the Office of the Ombudsman and UNDP in Turkmenistan. The main purpose of this project document is to develop the institutional capacity of the Office of the Ombudsman to examine the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) accreditation process, as well as to build the capacity of the staff of the Office of the Ombudsman.

67. All of the activities provided for in the 2021 work plan were successfully completed. Collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions regarding the process of accreditation for the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) is now well under way, in accordance with the plans for 2022.

#### **Paragraphs 18 and 19: Stereotypes and harmful practices**

68. In 2019, at the initiative of UNFPA, together with the Youth Organization of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan, a Leadership Academy and Innovation Lab session were held in Ashgabat for 220 adolescent girls to increase access to information and services on reproductive health and gender equality.

69. The Women's Union of Turkmenistan, in cooperation with UNFPA, launched a digital platform for women's empowerment focused on the model of successful women in business, culture, government, public life, art and other fields. The main goal of the platform is to empower young women and girls and inspire them towards personal growth and fulfilment by introducing them to the life experiences of successful women serving as role models.

70. In 2020, with UNFPA support, the #ErkeklerHem (#MenEngage #МужчиныТоже) campaign was launched as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which engages men and boys in promoting gender equality and countering violence against women and girls at home, at work and in the community.

71. In 2021, the digital campaign "We Are Different. We are Equal" to promote dignity and gender-sensitive attitudes among young people, regardless of gender, age, region, ability or disability, ethnicity, or life choices, was launched. The campaign reached more than 413,000 people online and through youth dialogues regarding rights, equality and inclusion.

72. The Yashlyk website (<https://turkmenistan.unfpa.org/en/yashlyk-website-yashlykinfo-now-so-easy-access-click-now>) continues to publish articles for teens on adolescent reproductive health, emotional health, growing up and healthy relationships, gender equality issues, including bodily autonomy and gender-based violence prevention. Between January 2018 and June 2022, more than 177,000 young people received information through this outreach platform.

73. The “Woman of the Year” competition is held annually at the initiative of the Women’s Union of Turkmenistan. Its aim is to promote a positive image of a modern woman leader and entrepreneur and the active involvement of women in the public, political and economic life of the country, as well as to change stereotypes about the role of women in society. For example, the nomination of a woman serving in the military or law enforcement system resonates strongly in society. The competition contributes to overcoming gender stereotypes regarding the division of roles between women and men in work and society.

74. In 2018, in collaboration with UNFPA, the Reproductive Health Education Curriculum and the Life Skills Teacher’s Manual were updated, with the introduction of board games and videos on healthy living skills and healthy choices. In 2019–2020, the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan developed an educational and methodological manual for teachers and association leaders entitled “Basics of Life Activities. Life Values and Skills”.

75. In 2019, 72 per cent of the nation’s high school teachers upgraded their qualifications and skills in teaching reproductive health aspects based on the updated manual. Also, in August 2021, in collaboration with UNFPA, seminars were held to build the capacities of teachers in the field of on reproductive health and gender equality. Over 100 teachers teaching the subject “Life Skills” in secondary schools in the country attended.

76. Textbooks and teaching aids are periodically reviewed by experts on gender equality. Inappropriate topics and illustrations are replaced with topics and illustrations that promote gender equality. For example, in cooperation with UNFPA, a gender-sensitivity examination of the “Life Skills” textbooks for grades 7 and 8 in secondary schools was conducted in 2018.

77. Gender equality issues are addressed in articles by researchers from the National Institute of Education of Turkmenistan in the magazine *Bilim* (Knowledge), and the newspapers *Neutral Turkmenistan* and *Mugallymlar Gazeti* (Teachers’ Newspaper).

78. In 2021–2022, in the context of capacity-building courses for teachers, the State Methodological Centre at school No. 27 in Gökdepe District held scientific and methodological seminars devoted to bringing up young people on the basis of national and universal human values. Individual modules were devoted to gender equality. Between January 2021 and June 2022, the State Methodological Centre held 16 scientific and methodological seminars attended by over 900 educators.

79. As part of the national “Healthy Mother – Healthy Child – Healthy Future” strategy to protect mothers’ and children’s health in Turkmenistan for 2021–2025, materials and new teaching methods related to gender equality are being developed for use in secondary general education schools. Specialists of the National Institute of Education of Turkmenistan are working on the development of new methods of teaching gender equality issues in secondary general education schools, and are studying international experience in this area.

80. Programmes have been developed and are in operation to train teachers and other education specialists (education management specialists, inspectors, etc.) on gender equality and human rights through capacity-building courses at the National Education Institute and the main education departments of Ashgabat and the welayats,

as well as capacity-building sections at higher education institutions specializing in education (Magtymguly Turkmen State University, the Seyitnazar Seydi Turkmen State Pedagogical Institute and the Dovletmamed Azady Turkmen National Institute of World Languages). Capacity-building seminars and training courses for secondary school teachers and psychologists are regularly held in order to introduce international best practices and teaching methods, including those to promote gender equality.

81. In accordance with the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025, the gender sensitivity of the strategic actions implemented will be examined in the context of monitoring and evaluation, and, if necessary, appropriate adjustments will be proposed and implemented.

82. At the end of the implementation period of the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025, there will be an evaluation of implementation and achievements in the form of self-evaluation and independent evaluation. The use of two evaluation formats will allow the Plan's achievements to be reviewed by both national and international standards. Monitoring and evaluation processes will be based on appropriate analytical sources and mechanisms, and will take into account the specified indicators of progress, the role of the organizations responsible, and the planned timelines for implementing strategic actions.

#### **Paragraphs 20 and 21**

83. There is no practice of child and/or forced marriage in Turkmenistan. The Family Code of Turkmenistan establishes the same marriage age for men and women – 18 years (Family Code of Turkmenistan).

84. Forcing a woman to marry or preventing her from marrying is criminalized under Turkmenistan's criminal law. Accordingly, under Article 162 of the Criminal Code, forcing a woman to marry or to continue a marital cohabitation, as well as preventing a woman from entering into a marriage of her choice, combined with violence or the threat of violence, is punishable by a fine of twenty to thirty times the average monthly wage or correctional labour for up to two years or imprisonment for up to two years.

85. Forcing a person under the age of marriage to enter into a de facto marital relationship is punishable by imprisonment for up to three years.

86. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan has no information regarding the forcing of women and girls to undergo gynecological examinations to determine their virginity. The internal affairs bodies have similarly recorded no complaints or appeals of such a nature.

87. The employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs periodically carry out preventive measures aimed at ensuring road safety in relation to male and female drivers.

88. The country has put into operation modern automated centres for the examination and testing of driving skills for the purpose of obtaining a driving licence. The centres administer qualification tests assessing the knowledge and skills of applicants using automated methods which do not discriminate on the basis of gender.

### Paragraphs 22 and 23: Gender-based violence against women

89. The first National Plan of Action for Gender Equality, for the period 2015–2020, promoted positive reforms in national gender policy, including:

- National implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- In 2018, the Mejlis of Turkmenistan and the UNFPA office in Turkmenistan conducted a joint analysis of national legislation for consistency with international legal instruments in the field of gender equality. One of the main outcomes of the review was the recommendation that laws relating to gender-based violence be improved;
- As part of the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2015–2020, comprehensive work was carried out to prepare and conduct a sample survey on Women’s Health and Family Status in Turkmenistan, which covered key topics related to violence against women. The sample survey constitutes the first experience in Turkmenistan of data collection and analysis of domestic violence against women based on a survey of women aged 18–59 in the capital and five welayats of the country.

90. The objectives of the sample survey included the following:

- Identification and analysis of the main parameters of the situation of violence against women in Turkmenistan;
- Developing recommendations for government agencies and civil society organizations working to respond to domestic violence and other types of violence against women.

91. The survey used the methodological approach and tools developed by WHO for the international study of violence and women’s health. All tools (questionnaire and interviewer instructions) were adapted to the context of the country.

92. In 2018, by a decision of the the Interdepartmental Commission on Compliance with the International Obligations Undertaken by Turkmenistan in the Field of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, a special working group was established to coordinate the work on the survey. It included representatives of the Ministry of Health and the Medical Industry, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee on Statistics, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Institute of State, Law and Democracy of Turkmenistan and the Women’s Union.

93. The working group is the main national mechanism for developing effective measures to prevent violence against women, in particular the development of measures and standards for interagency responses to gender-based violence, the promotion of legal protection for victims through improved legislation and the drafting of a special law on the prevention of gender-based violence.

94. The level of representation in the working group has reached that of practical national experts capable of providing advice, coordination and expertise on gender-based violence, both in the area of legal initiatives and information, and in the area of practical solutions, in particular the development of the country’s network of social services in the field by State bodies and civil society organizations, while informing the population about the actions taken.

95. Data collection in the field was carried out in Ashgabat and five welayats from 25 February to 1 April 2020.

96. The survey achieved its goal of providing an objective assessment of the prevalence of domestic violence against women in Turkmenistan and developing recommendations for agencies working to respond to any form of violence against women.

97. These surveys serve as the basis for developing a national strategy on gender equality and for informing the international community about Turkmenistan's actions and achievements as part of its international obligations to ensure and protect human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the indicators of Goal 5 and Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

98. The main partner in the survey was UNFPA, which provided technical and financial assistance. The main funding for the survey came from funds of the Government of Turkmenistan, under co-financing arrangements with UNFPA.

99. According to the main findings of the survey (<https://turkmenistan.unfpa.org/en>),

- 12 per cent of women ages 18–59 who have ever been married/in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a husband/partner at least once in their lifetime. The prevalence of physical violence was 11.4 per cent and sexual violence 2.7 per cent;
- The proportion of women aged 18–59 who had ever been married/in a relationship who had been physically, sexually, and/or psychologically abused by a husband/partner in the previous 12 months was 5.4 per cent. The prevalence of physical violence was 3 per cent, sexual violence 0.9 per cent, and psychological violence 3.4 per cent.

100. Recognizing the complex nature of the problem, in addition to the analytical overview of the data collected, the report also contains a wide range of recommendations for practical actions to prevent domestic violence, including four main components: 1) improving national legislation, 2) building coordinated support and protection services for victims of violence, 3) measures to prevent violence against women and all forms of gender discrimination, and 4) collecting and analyzing data on the frequency, prevalence and characteristics of gender-based violence within and outside the family setting.

101. Active efforts began in 2019 to examine and establish a multi-agency response to gender-based violence against women. As part of the examination of the issue of preventing gender-based violence, the Interdepartmental Commission and the working group were made familiar with the concept of interagency response to gender-based violence with the assistance of UNFPA in Turkmenistan: training was conducted for 21 representatives of the Interdepartmental Commission.

102. In 2019, with technical assistance from UNFPA, an evaluation of existing practices to prevent and prevent domestic violence against women was conducted. The assessment made recommendations to improve the legal framework, build the capacity and skills of health, law enforcement, and social protection sector representatives, and establish mechanisms for coordination between these sectors to provide comprehensive assistance to women victims of gender-based violence.

103. In 2018–2019 study exchange visits were conducted for national representatives to study successful experiences (Romania and Turkey), which helped to strengthen national expertise, to study the application of practices of services for women in difficult life situations by both government agencies and civil society organizations, based on an interagency response to gender-based violence, to understand the role and tasks of the structures involved, coordination of actions and protection of rights and interests of affected women.

104. Draft standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been developed for health, police, and social workers to establish the necessary action to provide quality services to women based on respect for human rights, principles of ethics and confidentiality, and women's interests. The SOPs include training material for their implementation, are based on United Nations system guidance and standards, and are applicable to all situations, including emergencies. The SOPs were piloted for health care workers in September 2020 through an introductory training workshop, and were piloted for police and social workers in 2021.

105. These procedures ensure that women and girls who are victims of domestic violence receive services that are based on respect for human rights, the interests of victims, confidentiality and ethical standards.

106. Efforts to establish an interagency response system continue, with the ultimate goal of ensuring well-established practices to provide quality and comprehensive services to women who have experienced gender-based violence.

107. In 2020, the Mejlis of Turkmenistan collaborated with UNFPA to develop a model law on combating domestic violence and restoring harmony in the family. The main objectives of the model law are: to assist the Mejlis of Turkmenistan in developing national legislation to protect against and prevent domestic violence, to define a mechanism to assist victims, to support and strengthen families, to create an atmosphere of intolerance to domestic violence in society and to identify and eliminate the causes and conditions that contribute to domestic violence.

108. In order to introduce training on gender equality issues into the educational curriculum of law enforcement training institutions, the Institute of State, Law and Democracy of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan, in cooperation with UNFPA, have developed an operational manual for internal affairs officers to cover situations in which such officers interact with the public, and have developed a training module for teachers regarding the standard operating procedures for assistance to victims.

109. In 2022, 60 police officers and teachers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs Institute were trained in the use of the operational manual and training module; international experts were involved in that training.

110. In 2022, more than 60 representatives of government agencies and civil society organizations in the country participated in a workshop on the coordination, quality and effectiveness of interagency responses to gender-based violence in Central Asia and in a regional training session on interagency coordination in health, social and police services for survivors of violence in Central Asia, organized by UNFPA together with the Ray of Light Initiative's regional programme for Central Asia and Afghanistan.

111. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Turkmenistan, in cooperation with UNFPA and the NGOs Keyik Okara in Ashgabat and Beyik Eyyam in Lebap welayat, has been piloting specialized services to help women who are victims of domestic violence since August 2021. Between August 2021 and May 2022, the following services were provided:

- Hotline counselling support – 1,686 people (129 men, 1,557 women);
- Social and psychological support – 630 people (39 men and 591 women);
- Legal support – 817 people (27 men and 790 women);
- Social support – 1,033 people (32 men and 1,001 women);
- Reproductive health support: 223 people (37 men and 186 women);

- Case handling by specialist social workers to support women suffering hardship and in critical situations was conducted for 70 individuals;
- Provision of temporary safe accommodation – 19 people (1 man and 18 women).

112. Under the auspices of the NGO Ýeňme, a school was opened in 2019 to build the capacities of women, girls and girls from vulnerable groups (women and girls with disabilities, single mothers, teenage girls, girls from large families, orphans). Between 2018 and July 2022, legal support was provided to 204 women and girls, and psychological support was provided to 309 women and girls; 507 women and girls took part in 200 seminars and 150 training sessions on matters including reproductive health, combating human trafficking, gender equality, improving life skills and professional skills, entrepreneurship skills, prevention of domestic violence, violent extremism; and 234 women and girls received instruction in computer literacy, 547 women were taught vocational skills, and 67 were taught English.

113. The Information Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan collects and analyzes statistical data on instances of all forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age, citizenship and place of incident, on an ongoing basis.

114. Other relevant units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs keep records of the number of complaints received, investigations conducted, and cases of criminal prosecution.

#### **Paragraphs 24 and 25: Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

115. The Trafficking in Persons Act (2016) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) regulates issues related to human trafficking; There is also a National Action Plan on combating human trafficking for the period 2020-2022.

116. Scheduled training sessions are organized on an annual basis to build the capacities of all internal affairs personnel on human trafficking issues, in particular on the prevention, combating and investigation of human trafficking. Between 2017 and 2021, 719 training sessions were conducted in internal affairs agencies.

117. Within the framework of its competence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan undertakes international, regional and bilateral cooperation in the prevention, combating and investigation of human trafficking, on the basis of international agreements to which Turkmenistan is a party. The prevention, combating, and investigation of human trafficking are the subject of the following treaties:

- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on combating serious crime, in particular terrorism and organized crime;
- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on mutual assistance in criminal matters;
- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on cooperation in combating terrorism, organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors and other types of crime;
- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on security cooperation;
- Cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China;



- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in combating crime;
- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in combating organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, terrorism and other dangerous types of crime;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation;
- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on cooperation in combating crime;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia;
- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Latvia on cooperation in combating terrorism, organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors and other types of crime;
- Agreement between the Government of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Slovak Republic on cooperation in combating international terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and other types of organized crime;

118. The NGO Yynam operates a free country-wide anti-trafficking hotline for women.

#### **Articles 26 and 27: Participation in political and public life**

119. The National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025 includes activities to train women in election campaigning and negotiation skills, and information campaigns to promote women’s leadership.

120. One focus of the Women’s Union and the National Trade Union Centre is to raise women’s awareness of their rights. This work is carried out with the support of the Mejlis of the Milli Geňeş. The relevant international norms and legislative acts of Turkmenistan are explained at regular meetings on the gender policy of Turkmenistan. Events are held with a target audience that includes women with many children, as well as non-working women. Information about these events is available on the websites of the Central Council of the Women’s Union and the National Trade Union Centre of Turkmenistan (<https://www.tkamm.gov.tm/ru>).

121. Representatives of the Women’s Union of Turkmenistan, together with representatives of other civil society organizations in all welayats, regularly conduct information activities to raise awareness among women of their rights and of the importance of women’s participation in public and political life, and to identify leadership qualities among women working in various sectors of the economy.

122. More than 50 meetings with women were held in the run-up to the 2018 elections for deputies of the Mejlis of the Milli Geňeş of Turkmenistan. During 2018, the Women's Union of Turkmenistan, with the involvement of the of the Mejlis of the Milli Geňeş of Turkmenistan and local authorities, held 8 events (1,040 participants) of an informational nature on the importance of women's participation in public and political life.

123. Of the 56 members of Halk Maslahaty of the Milli Geňeş of Turkmenistan, eight are appointed by the President of Turkmenistan, while the remaining 48 are elected by secret ballot on the basis of indirect suffrage. As a result of the election of Halk Maslahaty members on 25 March 2021, out of the 48 elected members, 13 (27 per cent) are women.

124. Of the 125 elected deputies to the Mejlis of the Milli Geňeş (Parliament) of Turkmenistan, 24.80 per cent are women; the speaker of the Mejlis of the Milli Geňeş of Turkmenistan is a woman; one of the Deputy Chairs of the Cabinet of Ministers is a woman; the Ombudsman of Turkmenistan is a woman; all deputy häkims responsible for social issues in welayats, etraps and cities are women. The proportion of women in leadership positions in Turkmenistan in 2020 was 23.8 per cent.

125. Turkmenistan has six bar associations, four of which are headed by women. Of the 241 lawyers working to provide legal assistance to the population, 131 (54.4 per cent) are women:

- Ashgabat – 44 women (33.5 per cent)
- Ahal welayat – 9 women (6.9 per cent)
- Balkan welayat – 11 women (8.4 per cent)
- Daşoguz welayat – 17 women (13 per cent)
- Lebap welayat – 28 women (21.4 per cent)
- Mary welayat – 22 women (16.8 per cent)

#### **Paragraphs 28 and 29: Civil society and non-governmental organizations**

126. The act on amendments and additions to the Voluntary Associations Act. (2020) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) simplified the procedure for creating and registering civil society associations. According to the Act, the number of founders of national voluntary associations was reduced from 400 to 50. Applications for registration now need to be signed only by the members of the board of the association, rather than by all of the founders as was the case in the past.

127. The Act eliminates the invocation, as grounds to deny registration, of the fact that one of the founders has been recognized by a court to be without legal capacity or has been convicted of a serious or especially serious offence, if that conviction has not been cleared or expunged in accordance with the procedure established by law.

#### **Paragraphs 32 and 33: Education**

128. A new version of the Education Act of Turkmenistan (<https://minjust.gov.t m/>) was adopted in June 2021 with the aim of promoting new standards of education, advanced methods and new opportunities for increased interaction with international organizations and education centres throughout the world.

129. Citizens of Turkmenistan, irrespective of their nationality, gender and other characteristics, are guaranteed the opportunity to receive an education. On 13 March 2021, Turkmenistan acceded to the Convention against Discrimination in Education.

130. The country is working to ensure full development of the young generation, early-years schooling and high quality education. State programmes are being successfully translated into action; that includes effective implementation of the 2020–2025 Programme for improving preschool activities in the field of early development and for improving children’s preparation for school and the Framework for improving the teaching of natural and exact sciences in Turkmenistan. In accordance with the tasks stipulated in the Framework for the transition to a twelve-year secondary education system and for the development of a digital education system, improving the teaching of foreign languages and increasing the effectiveness of teaching relevant subjects in natural and exact sciences, there has been a widespread introduction of advanced scientific approaches and advances and innovative technologies into the work of providing education and training.

131. In 2021, substantial attention was paid to the development of the digital education system. Notably, a scientific centre for strategic research, a school for young diplomats, and a department for digital systems and communications were established at the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

132. The country is developing cooperation with international organizations aimed at introducing international standards in the field of education, mainly with United Nations agencies UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO. Joint projects and work plans are being implemented.

133. With the support of UNICEF, competency-based education is being introduced in accordance with international standards for quality education and inclusion; that also includes curriculum renewal in primary and secondary education, and pre- and post-degree programmes of study based on gender equality and equity.

134. During the reporting period, dozens of modern educational institutions were put into operation, with the aim of ensuring that the younger generation receives a high quality education.

135. During the reporting period, the Office of the Ombudsman received one written and two oral appeals from women concerning the right to education; these were considered in accordance with the procedure established by law.

136. The Constitution of Turkmenistan specifies that general primary education is compulsory and that everyone has the right to receive such education free of charge at State educational establishments. This constitutional principle is also stipulated by the Education Act of Turkmenistan (in its amended form of 5 June 2021).

137. In Turkmenistan’s secondary schools, as at the beginning of the 2021/2022 school year, girls accounted for 48.9 per cent of all students. in 2017/18 this figure stood at 49.0 per cent.

138. There are no statistics on secondary school dropout rates.

139. After leaving secondary school, girls have the opportunity to receive vocational training in various types of educational institution. In 2021, young women accounted for 21 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in vocational/technical institutions; in 2018, that figure was 19.5 per cent.

140. The percentage of girls enrolled in secondary vocational education at the beginning of 2021/2022 was 64.3 per cent, up from 54.9 per cent in the 2017/2018 school year.

141. The imbalance between men and women has also been reduced in higher vocational education and training institutions. At the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year, young women accounted for 43.4 per cent of the total number of

students enrolled in such institutions, as compared to 39.8 per cent in the 2017/2018 academic year.

142. Girls are increasingly seeking to acquire skills in emerging and promising fields, including engineering, physics, mathematics and digital technologies (see table 2).

Table 2

**Distribution of students of higher vocational institutions by gender and specialization, as a percentage**

	2017/2018 academic year		2021/2022 academic year	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Humanities	36.7	63.3	37.6	62.4
Health sciences	43.5	56.5	43.3	56.7
Natural sciences	59.8	40.2	41.7	58.3
Engineering and technology	79.5	20.5	70.5	29.5
Social sciences	73.4	26.6	57.4	42.6
Agricultural sciences	69.2	30.8	69.5	30.5

143. The main channel of training for Turkmenistan's innovation economy is study at high-calibre foreign educational institutions. The necessary agreements (inter-State and inter-establishment, that is, between Turkmen and foreign vocational training institutions) are being concluded.

144. Study outside Turkmenistan for both boys and girls is undertaken at the students' initiative at secondary and higher vocational education institutions.

145. In March 2018, the 2018–2020 Programme to improve employment opportunities for young specialist graduates of educational institutions, and the action plan for the implementation of the Programme, were approved by presidential order. The goals of the programme were to ensure a balance between supply and demand on the labour market, to increase employment of young people and to provide sectors of the national economy with qualified specialists.

146. Reproductive health and other relevant issues are included in school curricula on life skills. At all levels of the education system, awareness-raising and preventive work to safeguard health, prevent early pregnancy and address reproductive health issues is carried out on an ongoing basis in conjunction with health care and internal affairs agencies, and representatives of civil-society organizations.

**Paragraphs 34 and 35: Employment**

147. As part of the implementation of the programme of State support for small and medium-sized enterprises for 2018–2024, in accordance with the strategy for the management and reform of parastatal enterprises for 2021–2025 and the Action Plan to implement this strategy, as well as the Public-Private Partnership Act (2021) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), the priority is to create favourable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship, and for gender-sensitive comprehensive support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

148. The Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan brings together about 27,000 representatives of the private sector engaged in various sectors of the national economy, including 5,231 women. In 2021, 1,513 entrepreneurs were welcomed as members, of whom 204 were women, and 1,449 jobs were created in the private sector.

149. Turkmenistan has been a member of the International Labour Organization since September 1993, has ratified the main ILO conventions, and joined Convention No. 122 on employment policy in 2021.

150. The Labour Code specifies that every citizen has the right to free choice of employment by applying directly to an employer or through public employment agencies or services.

151. The employment Act of Turkmenistan (2016) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) specifies that everyone has the right to freely choose a place of work and employment. This right is exercised by applying directly to an employer or through the employment agencies or services or with the assistance of individual recruitment agents or agencies that work in accordance with the law.

152. Women constituted 41.5 per cent of the total number of people registered with employment agencies in 2021; in 2018 the figure was 30.9 per cent. Of the total number of women registered, jobs were found for over 43 per cent in 2021 (compared with 89.7 per cent in 2018).

153. The extent to which women participate in the labour market reflects their engagement in economic activity. In 2020, women accounted for 45.8 per cent of the economically active population (compared with 43.2 per cent in 2018), and 46.1 per cent of the total number of people actually employed (compared with 45.6 per cent in 2018). Information on the employment of women, by economic sector, is presented in tables 3–5.

Table 3  
**Breakdown of workers by type of economic activity and gender (per cent)**

	2018		2019		2020	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Total	54.4	45.6	54.2	45.8	53.9	46.1
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	54.5	45.5	55.3	44.7	54.3	45.7
Mining and quarrying	90.7	9.3	90.5	9.5	90.6	9.4
Manufacturing	49.8	50.2	49.1	50.9	48.8	51.2
Electric power, gas, steam and air conditioning	80.6	19.4	80.3	19.7	80.5	19.5
Water supply, purification, waste processing and extraction of recyclable materials	81.6	18.4	81.7	18.3	80.8	19.2
Construction	80.3	19.7	80.2	19.8	79.3	20.7
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	55.2	44.8	52.1	47.9	51.2	48.8
Transportation and warehousing	67.0	33.0	67.5	32.5	66.7	33.3
Hotels and restaurants	56.2	43.8	56.8	43.2	61.2	38.8
Information and communications	60.9	39.1	59.6	40.4	60.9	39.1
Financial intermediation insurance	47.3	52.7	45.5	54.5	54.7	45.3
Real estate	59.0	41.0	57.9	42.1	56.4	43.6
Professional, scientific and technical activities	66.4	33.6	67.0	33.0	70.5	29.5
Administrative and support activities	60.0	40.0	58.6	41.4	60.2	39.8
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	77.4	22.6	78.5	21.5	81.8	18.2
Education	33.4	66.6	32.5	67.5	31.1	68.9
Health care and social services	30.1	69.9	30.0	70.0	29.6	70.4
Art, entertainment and leisure	42.4	57.6	41.3	58.7	41.5	58.5
Other service activities	42.3	57.7	39.9	60.1	41.3	58.7

Table 4  
**Breakdown of workers of all enterprises, organizations and institutions by ownership category and by gender, for 2018**

(As a percentage, based on findings of a one-off survey )

	<i>including:</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<b>Total employed for the full month of November</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>41.2</b>
Legislators, senior officials, managers (directors) of administrative bodies and authorities at all levels, including managers of enterprises	100.0	76.3	23.7
Specialists and professionals	100.0	46.8	53.2
Specialists and support staff	100.0	39.6	60.4
Employees engaged in the preparation of information, processing of documentation, financial accounting and information services	100.0	35.7	64.3
Employees in services, public utilities, trade and related activities	100.0	58.3	41.7
Skilled workers in the agriculture, forestry, hunting, fisheries and aquaculture sectors	100.0	79.1	20.9
Skilled workers at large and small industrial enterprises, in the handicrafts, construction, transport, communications, geology and mineral prospecting sectors, and in related professions	100.0	85.3	14.7
Technicians, equipment and machine operators, fitters and assembly workers	100.0	90.7	9.3
Unskilled workers	100.0	47.8	52.2

Table 5  
**Breakdown of workers at enterprises, organizations and institutions of all ownership categories, by job type and by gender, for 2020**

(As a percentage, based on findings of a one-off survey)

<i>Job type</i>	<i>including:</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<b>Total employed for the full month of October</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>38.3</b>
Legislators, senior officials, managers (directors) of administrative bodies and authorities at all levels, including managers of enterprises	100.0	76.5	23.5
Specialists and professionals	100.0	48.7	51.3
Specialists and support staff	100.0	45.7	54.3
Employees engaged in the preparation of information, processing of documentation, financial accounting and information services	100.0	40.1	59.9
Employees in services, public utilities, trade and related activities	100.0	63.8	36.2
Skilled workers in the agriculture, forestry, hunting, fisheries and aquaculture sectors	100.0	78.3	21.7
Skilled workers at large and small industrial enterprises, in the handicrafts, construction, transport, communications, geology and mineral prospecting sectors, and in related professions	100.0	86.0	14.0
Technicians, equipment and machine operators, fitters and assembly workers	100.0	90.6	9.4
Unskilled workers	100.0	52.9	47.1

154. As a result of the changes to the the Labour Code made in March 2019, restrictions on the employment of women in harmful and/or hazardous (extremely harmful and/or extremely hazardous) working conditions, with the exception of non-physical work or sanitary and domestic services, were removed. However, guarantees remain for certain categories of women when they work in adverse labour conditions, including pregnant women and women with children under the age of one and a half and under the age of three.

155. Wage rates, bonus and compensation instruments are free of gender bias. The pay of both men and women is determined not only by the quantity and quality of the work performed, but also by a more objective assessment of their work, taking into account their qualifications, the complexity of the work, the services provided, and consideration of their work schedule and working conditions, as well as incentive payments.

156. The level of pay is influenced considerably by payments related to work schedules and working conditions; these include additional allowances for working in harmful and (or) hazardous (especially harmful and (or) especially hazardous) conditions, at night, on weekends, public holidays and memorial days, and for overtime and other reasons.

157. These provisions and principles apply to all employees of enterprises, organizations and institutions, as well as to those working for individuals under the terms of a contract, regardless of the employee's gender.

158. There has been a significant reduction in the gap between the salaries of women and men in various the sectors of the economy of Turkmenistan, as shown in the table below.

159. In 2019, women's pay in the Turkmen economy as a whole was 13.7 per cent lower than men's; in 2020 the figure was just above 10 per cent (see table 6).

Table 6

**The ratio of women's wages to men's wages at enterprises, organizations and institutions of all forms of ownership by type of economic activity**

(Based on the results of a one-off survey; as a percentage)

	2019	2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>89.8</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	90.3	89.7
Mining and quarrying	75.7	81.9
Manufacturing (manufacturing industry)	86.0	86.1
Electric power, gas, steam and air conditioning	87.9	89.0
Water supply, purification, waste treatment and extraction of recyclable materials	94.8	94.1
Construction	95.3	93.9
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	85.2	83.6
Transportation and warehousing	85.1	80.1
Hotels and restaurants	93.5	87.6
Information and communications	91.9	93.2
Finance and insurance	89.9	89.0
Real estate	95.8	91.4
Professional, scientific and technical activities	87.1	91.0
Administrative and support activities	82.9	83.6
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	69.5	69.6
Education	92.7	95.1
Health care and social services	91.4	91.1
Art, entertainment and leisure	85.9	85.5
Other service activities	86.7	82.4

160. Some differences in the average level of income of men and women in certain sectors of the economy are largely the result of jobs occupied by women *of their own volition* in the those sectors, as well as of the right of women with young children to refuse in writing to work in particular working environments (performing overtime work, working on weekends, non-working holidays and memorial days only with their consent), for which various additional payments and allowances are provided. However, where women perform work of equal value to that of men, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value applies.

161. According to official statistics, women make up 45.6 per cent of all minimum-wage employees in the various sectors of the national economy, while men make up 54.4 per cent.

162. The Act on the Tripartite Commission for the Regulation of Social and Labour Relations, adopted in October 2018 (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), specifies that the main tasks of that body are to conduct tripartite negotiations in accordance with labour law, develop a General Agreement between the parties (social partners), assist in the settlement of social and labour relations, and to consult on the development of draft legislation and other regulatory legal acts

163. The social partners of the Tripartite Commission are the following: the State body authorized by the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, in the form of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection; the National Trade Union Centre, which acts as a voluntary association representing the social and labour rights and legitimate interests of workers (employees); and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, which is a voluntary association representing the rights and legitimate interests of entrepreneurs (employers).

164. Since the establishment of the Commission, several meetings have been held in accordance with the Regulations approved by order of the Minister of Labour and Social Protection in August 2019, with the attendees being representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Turkmenistan (7 individuals), the National Centre of Trade Unions of Turkmenistan (7 individuals), and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan (5 individuals).

165. Women account for approximately 40 per cent of the current composition of the Commission as at 1 January 2022. It should be noted that the Commission is chaired by a woman, the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Turkmenistan.

166. The social partners regularly conclude three-year General Agreements.

167. In preparing normative legal acts on labour, employment, labour protection and wage regulation, account is taken of the results of the practical activities of social partners; the results of inspections of enterprises, organizations and institutions carried out by units of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the results of inspections by the technical and legal labour inspectorates of the National Trade Union Centre and of local trade union associations. Also considered are proposals from the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan regarding the establishment of a system of training, retraining and capacity-building for specialists, State-commissioned staff training and the expansion of such training, depending on the labour-market needs of branches of the economy.

168. Under Article 304 of the Code of Administrative Offences, the following are subject to administrative liability: unjustified refusal to conclude an employment contract; unlawful cancellation (termination) of an employment contract; non-compliance with bans on forced or compulsory labour, work by women or by persons under the age of eighteen; rules for limiting part-time work; rules for certifying jobs and workers; discrimination against persons with disabilities; non-payment (incomplete payment) of wages to an employee or refusal to make due



payment of wages or to carry out due issuance of an employment card; non-compliant processing of an employment card; and violation by an employer of other guarantees, rights and legal interests of workers as established in labour law. The second part of this article establishes liability for unjustified refusal to hire a woman on the grounds of her pregnancy, as well as for unjustified dismissal of a woman from her job on the same grounds (in the form taken by the legislation of Turkmenistan on 20 October 2018 (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>)).

169. Family, maternity, paternity and childhood are protected by the State; the matter is regulated by Article 40 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan.

170. Legislative acts of Turkmenistan cover measures and benefits applicable on an equal basis to all persons with family obligations, both women and men. Such measures weaken the stereotypes that impede the process of gender equality.

171. In accordance with the Labour Code, childcare leave until the child reaches the age of three may be granted to either the mother or the father (including adoptive parents) actually caring for the child, as well as the child's officially appointed guardian, if the father and mother cannot support and raise the child for special reasons.

172. One parent (or tutor or guardian) bringing up a disabled child under the age of 16 is entitled to one additional day off a month, to be paid at the daily wage rate.

173. In accordance with the labour legislation of Turkmenistan, maternity guarantees and benefits granted to pregnant women (restrictions on night and overtime work, work on weekends, non-working holidays and memorial days and assignments away from the workplace; unpaid leave; creation of special working conditions and other guarantees and benefits established under the law of Turkmenistan) also apply to fathers raising children without a mother (if she is deceased, has been deprived of parental rights or requires long-term treatment in a medical facility, and in other cases of absence of maternal care) and to tutors and guardians of minors.

#### **Paragraphs 36 and 37: Sexual harassment in the workplace**

174. Under the Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the State guarantees the equal right of women and men to protection from assault, including sexual assault.

175. In accordance with the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan, criminal liability is established for compelling a person to have sexual intercourse or to commit other acts of a sexual nature by means of blackmail, threatening to destroy property or taking advantage of material or other dependence.

176. To date, no allegations of sexual harassment in the workplace have been filed with the judiciary or other bodies in Turkmenistan responsible for enforcing gender equality legislation.

177. In April 2022, a new version of the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan was approved, to take effect on 1 January 2023.

178. Following the amendments, Article 135 of the Criminal Code criminalizes the coercion of a person to sexual intercourse, sodomy, or to commit other acts of a sexual nature in the workplace or other place by blackmail, threat of destruction of property or by taking advantage of material or other dependence.

179. Registration of the departure of citizens of Turkmenistan, including the departure of women, is carried out in accordance with the Migration Act (2012) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), which guarantees the right of every citizen of Turkmenistan to leave Turkmenistan and enter Turkmenistan. Pursuant to the article concerned, no

citizen of Turkmenistan can be deprived of the right to leave or enter the country. That right may be restricted temporarily only for the reasons established in article 30 of the Act: if the person is in possession of State secrets, for the period prescribed by the legislation of Turkmenistan; if the person is the subject of criminal proceedings, until the end of proceedings; if the person is found guilty of a crime, until their sentence has been served or they have been released; if the person fails to fulfil obligations arising from a court order, until the obligations are discharged; if the person is convicted by a court of committing an especially serious offence is found to have intentionally committed a particularly dangerous repeat offence, or is under the administrative supervision of the police, until the criminal record is expunged or the period of supervision is terminated; if the person is the subject of civil proceedings, until the end of proceedings; if the person is subject to military conscription, until the completion of military service or exemption from it, unless they are going to their permanent place of residence abroad; if the person, as a citizen of Turkmenistan, is considered to be at risk of becoming a victim of trafficking in persons or slavery while outside the country; if the person has broken the law of the host country on a previous stay abroad; if the person would endanger their life or health by leaving; or if the person's departure is incompatible with Turkmenistan's national security interests.

180. Turkmenistan systematically adopts and implements, including jointly with representative offices of international organizations, forward-looking national programmes and plans to develop and improve the national education system; construct educational facilities and enrich the educational and material base of teaching institutions; introduce modern innovative technologies, forms and methods of education and create a safe and effective learning environment, both in urban and rural areas.

### **Paragraphs 38 and 39: Health**

181. In terms of district hospitals, as at 1 January 2022 there were 923 rural health centres and 603 rural health houses in operation, enabling full health-service coverage of the population, including women, and including those living in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Health services for people living in remote mountainous and desert areas are provided in specially equipped ambulances or air ambulance helicopters.

182. Primary health care services, which include basic preventive examinations, diagnosis and treatment of outpatient medical and surgical conditions, as well as antenatal care, are provided free of charge in medical establishments.

183. Ninety five reproductive health offices across the country provide family planning and contraceptive services, cervical cancer screening, adolescent reproductive health, and safe abortion. Based on monitoring information from 2019, the unmet need for family planning for women is 9.3 per cent. The rate of modern contraceptive use is 47 per cent among women of child-bearing age (15–49).

184. Since 2017, reproductive health clinics have been providing uninterrupted supplies of contraceptives paid for from the State budget and the health care system budget. Women at risk, in particular those with chronic illnesses, those who have had multiple births and those at social risk, receive contraceptives free of charge. Despite logistical difficulties during the global pandemic, all 95 clinics are provided with three contraceptive methods (pills, injectables, intrauterine devices) and condoms until August 2023.

185. The national “Healthy Mother - Healthy Child - Healthy Future” strategy to protect mothers’ and children’s health in Turkmenistan for 2021–2025 was approved by a presidential decree (2021). The National Strategy emphasizes women’s reproductive health and maternal and child health.

186. Abortions conducted elsewhere than medical facilities or by unqualified individuals carry high risks to a woman's health and sometimes her life. In order to prevent the practice of illegal abortions, criminal liability has been established.

187. The Public Health Care Act establishes that abortion services are legal in Turkmenistan and are provided up to five weeks of gestation, that is, until the beginning of the fetal heartbeat (<https://minjust.gov.tm/ru/hukuk/merkezi/hukuk/331>).

188. Pregnancy termination services are further regulated in an Order of the Ministry of Health and the Medical Industry of Turkmenistan (2022) <https://minjust.gov.tm/hukuk/namalar/1579>.

189. Conducting home births in the presence of qualified medical personnel is not prohibited by the law of Turkmenistan. Exceptions are cases of complicated pregnancy, indications for caesarean section and stopping bleeding, because these situations require medical equipment, instruments and sterility.

190. The almost 100 per cent rate of deliveries in obstetric facilities is based on women's traditional trust in maternity institutions in Turkmenistan and is a well-established tradition.

191. Home births account for no more than 0.1 per cent of births, are attended by a qualified midwife or physician, and only if there are no indications for emergency obstetric care. Over the past four years, with the assistance of UNFPA, educational and methodological materials have been regularly updated, simulation equipment has been purchased, and the capacity-building for teachers at five medical schools across the country has taken place.

192. In 2021, vaccination against COVID-19 was carried out; over 90 per cent of the target group was covered, receiving two doses. Starting in 2022, a third dose of COVID-19 vaccination became available. This included immunization against COVID-19 for pregnant women. Anyone so wishing can be tested for COVID-19.

193. Testing for HIV among pregnant women is free of charge, and women and other citizens can be tested free of charge and anonymously at HIV prevention centres.

194. To address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls and women left without care, the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan, in cooperation with UNICEF, has developed a training package on nutrition counselling for adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women. Twenty-four trainers have been trained to improve national capabilities in this area. The package includes information resources for training workers and volunteers at the local level. The Regional Nutrition Partnership Platform for 2021–2022 was launched, with Turkmenistan assuming the secretariat role in 2021.

195. In collaboration with United Nations agencies, an assessment of readiness to implement the National Minimum Initial Service Package for Women in Humanitarian Settings and the development of a readiness action plan for 2022–2025 were conducted.

196. Women ages 15–19 have been eligible for free access to family planning since August 2018 (<https://turkmenistan.unfpa.org/en/publications/policy-brief-rights-and-choices-all-family-planning>).

197. The written consent of parents (or persons acting in loco parentis) for abortion is required only in cases where the girl is under the age of 18.

198. The rate of births among girls between the ages of 15 and 19 is 22 per 1,000 live births (MICS, 2019). More than 90 per cent of these women are 18–19 years old.

199. In addition to family planning services, reproductive health clinics provide information and education sessions for adolescents about reproductive health, with field trips to schools.

200. With the assistance of UNFPA, Turkmenistan conducted a Situational Analysis of Access to Reproductive Health Services for Women with Disabilities in 2021. Based on the recommendations of the study, information materials regarding reproductive health and reproductive rights were developed, and services provided in sign language and Braille for women with disabilities.

#### **Paragraphs 40 and 41: Women living with HIV/AIDS**

201. In accordance with the new version of the Act on the Prevention of Illnesses Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (2016) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) mandatory free testing for HIV infection is conducted for pregnant women, blood donors and recipients, medical personnel who have contact with the biological fluids of patients undergoing surgical treatment, and patients with cancer, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis and other infectious diseases

202. There are six HIV centres in the country that provide free and voluntary HIV testing services. Seven clinical protocols for the treatment of HIV infection have been developed, one of which is for reproductive health services for women with HIV.

203. Women are offered HIV testing services with pre- and post-test counselling free of charge, including anonymously.

204. The National Strategy to Increase Physical Activity for 2018–2025, approved by a presidential decree (2018), refers to the need to increase physical activity among women.

205. During 2021, while the world was struggling with the coronavirus pandemic, important activities were carried out to protect public health and improve the quality of medical services.

206. In the reporting period, the Communicable Diseases Prevention Act (2021), the Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Act (2021), and the Act amending and supplementing the Environmental Safety Act (2021) were adopted (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>).

207. During the reporting period, a new version of the State “Saglyk” (“Health”) programme, the National Plan of Preparedness for Prevention and Response to acute infectious diseases, the National Plan to boost the immunity of the population of Turkmenistan for 2021–2025 and the national “Healthy Mother – Healthy Child – Healthy Future” strategy were approved. The national “Healthy Mother – Healthy Child – Healthy Future” strategy integrates child health care at all stages of life and fully meets the objectives of the President of Turkmenistan’s 2019–2025 Social and Economic Development Programme and of national legislation, and fulfils Turkmenistan’s commitments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

208. Within the framework of the “Saglyk” State programme, efforts to modernize the system of sanatoriums are ongoing, and the National Programme for the development of the national system of sanatoriums for 2021–2025 and the plan of action for the implementation of the National Plan have been adopted and implemented. Services for recreation and rehabilitation of health are provided by rest homes, preventive and therapeutic sanatoriums equipped with advanced technology and located in all welayats of the country, and natural springs rich in healing properties.

**Articles 42 and 43: Economic and social benefits**

209. The Social Protection Code of Turkmenistan (2012) defines social protection measures for the public, while adhering to the principles of social justice.

210. The Act on State guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men provides for State guarantees of gender equality in the area of social protection in the form of material benefits and social services provided through pension payments, State benefits and welfare assistance.

211. The basis of the new pension system pursuant to the State Pension Insurance Act (2012) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) is a personal record of each person's contribution to the pension system.

212. Regardless of their form of employment, both men and women concluding a pension insurance agreement with the Pension Fund department at their place of residence and paying the mandatory pension contributions will be entitled to an old-age pension upon reaching retirement age. The above-mentioned individuals are also entitled to join the funded pension system by signing an agreement of voluntary pension insurance with the Pension Fund at their place of residence.

213. Indicators for recipients of pensions and state benefits by gender are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7  
**Social Security Indicators (as at 1 January 2022)**

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2022</i>
Number of pension recipients (in thousands)	457.4	524.3
Women	289.8	326.5
as a percentage	63.4	62.3
Average monthly pension, in manat	477.11	703.1
Women	398.79	599.3
Number of disability allowance recipients	151.3	179.6
Women	78.0	96.1
as a percentage	51.6	53.5
Average monthly pension and disability allowance, in manat	432.85	630.8
Women	394.25	586.7
Number of children under 18 with disabilities, in thousands	19.6	24.0
Girls	8.2	11.0
as a percentage	41.8	45.8
Average monthly allowance for children with disabilities, in manat	387.20	624.0
Number of persons with a childhood disability, in thousands	37.1	40.6
<b>Average monthly allowance for individuals with a childhood disability, in manat</b>	<b>494.59</b>	<b>728.5</b>

214. In November 2021, amendments and additions to the Social Protection Code were adopted; these introduced an early retirement procedure for women (reducing the retirement age for women depending on their number of children):

- for those who have given birth to five, six or seven children, or have a child with a childhood disability (regardless of when the child's disability was recognized), and who raised them until the age of eight, the retirement age is 54, provided they have participated in mandatory pension insurance for at least 15 years;

- for those who have given birth to, and raised until the age of eight, eight or more children, the retirement age is 52, provided they have participated in mandatory pension insurance for at least 10 years.

#### **State maternity and pregnancy benefits**

215. When a working woman takes maternity leave, she is entitled to state maternity and pregnancy benefits, which are assigned and paid to women in a lump sum for prenatal and postnatal periods at their main place of work (service) or of postgraduate, doctoral and academic studies.

216. Also eligible for the State maternity and pregnancy allowance are women who are tenants, working in private farm associations or on private farms, working for entrepreneurs who are operating without forming a legal entity, working as domestic staff under an employment agreement, or serving in religious organizations.

217. For workers with disabilities, state maternity and pregnancy benefits are paid in full, regardless of whether or not the worker receives a disability pension (State allowance).

#### **State benefit on the birth of a child**

218. In accordance with the Social Security Code, the mother (father) or guardian of a newborn child is entitled to the State benefit on the birth of a child.

219. Parents who have adopted a child under the age of four months are also eligible for the State benefit if the benefit was not paid to the mother or father of the adopted child.

220. From 1 January 2022, the amount of the State benefit on the birth of a child has increased, depending on the number of children born. Accordingly, the size of the State benefit on the birth of a child ranges from 130 per cent of the basic amount established for the calculation of State benefits with the birth of the first and second child to 1200 per cent of that amount with the birth of the eighth child and subsequent children.

#### **State allowance for childcare**

221. Under the Labour Code, a working mother, irrespective of her duration of employment, has the right to take unpaid leave at the end of maternity leave in order to care for a child until the child reaches the age of 3.

222. Childcare leave may also be granted to the person who is actually caring for the child, including the father or the guardian, as well as another family member in cases prescribed by law.

223. Employees retain their jobs (positions) for the duration of their childcare leave.

224. In accordance with the Social Protection Code, a person on childcare leave is assigned and paid a State childcare allowance. From January 2022, the size of the State childcare allowance for each child under three years of age has increased from 65 per cent to 75 per cent of the basic amount established for the calculation of State benefits.

225. Regardless of whether or not they are engaged in socially useful activity, the mother, father or guardian who actually cares for a child until the age of three, and in some cases established by law, other relatives, are entitled to a monthly State childcare allowance.

### **Survivor's pension**

226. On 1 January 2022, the Social Protection Code introduced an additional gradation of the number of orphans in a family for the purpose of calculating the survivor's pension. Accordingly, the amount of orphans' (children left without parental care) survivor's pension payments ranges from 145 per cent of the basic amount established for calculating the minimum pension in the case of one child to 380 per cent of this amount in the case of five or more children.

227. Upon the death of a person working in the informal sector, or on a private or household smallholding, or engaged in some other form of work not based on a labour contract, family members dependent on that person during his or her life will be paid a survivor's pension, regardless of the deceased person's contributions to the State pension insurance.

228. The size of the base value established for the calculation of State benefits is increased annually by decrees of the President of Turkmenistan.

229. In December 2019, the Government of Turkmenistan and the United Nations signed the Joint Programme on Improving the System of Social Protection through the Introduction of Inclusive Quality Community-based Social Services, funded by the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund. The goal of the Joint Programme is to improve the existing system of social service delivery in Turkmenistan, to reach the most needy and vulnerable segments of the population, and to meet their special needs. The Joint Programme is piloting several social services that target broader groups, particularly women, including women in critical situations, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations.

230. One important area of implementation of the Joint Programme was a review of existing legislation and regulations related to social protection and social services, and their further improvement.

231. In December 2021, the Mejlis of the Milli Geňeş of Turkmenistan adopted the Social Services Act (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), which defines the legal, organizational and economic basis for the provision of social services to persons in special need of support and assistance from both State agencies and civil-society organizations. The Act applies to citizens of Turkmenistan, foreign citizens and stateless persons permanently residing in the territory of Turkmenistan, refugees, as well as legal entities regardless of ownership, and individual entrepreneurs operating in the field of social services. Non-discrimination measures were adhered to during this process. Thus, persons recognized as being in need of social services have the right to use social services, irrespective of ethnic background, skin colour, sex, origin, position with regard to professional or property status, place of residence, language, religious affiliation, age, state of health and other circumstances.

232. Through the Act, the State guarantees individuals, families, and groups of people recognized as needing social services the opportunity to use social services on the basis of an assessment of their individual needs in order to overcome a difficult life situation.

### **Paragraphs 44 and 45: Rural women**

233. In the framework of the National Presidential Programme for the Transformation of Social and Living Conditions in Villages, Settlements, Cities, Districts and District Centres the social infrastructure projects being implemented for the period 2012–2022 as at 1 May 2022 encompassed 70 hospitals, 146 clinics, 258 kindergartens, 251 secondary schools, 76 cultural centres, 115 sports schools and 73 sports facilities – a total of 989 structures and facilities. By region of the country:

- In Ahal welayat 15 hospitals, 38 clinics, 59 kindergartens, 49 secondary schools, 19 cultural centres, 17 sports schools, 12 sports facilities – a total of 209 buildings and structures – were built.
- In Balkan welayat built 11 hospitals, 18 health centres, 41 kindergartens, 36 secondary schools, 9 cultural centres, 17 sports schools, 8 sports facilities – a total of 140 buildings and structures – were built.
- In Daşoguz welayat 187 facilities were built, including 14 hospitals, 25 clinics, 34 kindergartens, 58 secondary schools and 14 cultural institutions.
- In Lebap welayat 11 hospitals, 38 clinics, 68 kindergartens, 40 secondary schools, 17 cultural centres, 32 sports schools, 16 sports facilities – a total of 222 social and cultural facilities and installations – were built.
- In Mary welayat 231 social and cultural facilities were built, including 19 hospitals, 27 clinics, 56 kindergartens, 68 secondary schools, 17 cultural centres, 25 sports schools and 19 sports facilities.

234. The legislation of Turkmenistan does not contain rules or provisions that establish different rights for urban and rural residents, and the necessary conditions are in place for free access to health care, education, employment and decent housing.

235. The State provides support to both men and women who wish to engage in agricultural production. In order to promote a market economy in the agricultural sector, a number of presidential and governmental acts have introduced incentives exempting the farming economy from taxes on land, water and cattle raising, as well as in a number of other areas. Such measures make it possible to increase women's entrepreneurship in rural areas, which in turn helps to raise the living standards of the rural population. Women make up more than 50 per cent of the total number of tenant farmers.

**Paragraphs 46 and 47: Women belonging to ethnic minority groups**

**Paragraphs 48 and 49: Refugee, asylum-seeking and stateless women and girls**

236. Turkmenistan is a party to the main international conventions concerning refugees and stateless persons. The Government of Turkmenistan has adopted a National Plan of Action to End Statelessness for the period 2018–2024, and within the framework of the global #IBelong campaign to end statelessness by 2024, is working in close cooperation with UNHCR to achieve this humanitarian goal.

237. More than 28,000 stateless persons have now received citizenship of Turkmenistan. In 2021 alone, in accordance with the Decree on Naturalization signed by the head of State, 2,657 people became citizens of Turkmenistan and 406 people received residence permits. In order to fully resolve the statelessness situation, measures are being taken to continue the accelerated naturalization of stateless persons.

238. The legal status of refugees and stateless persons in Turkmenistan is regulated by the Refugees Act (2017) and the Legal Status of Foreign Nationals in Turkmenistan Act (2021) in amended form (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), which improved the procedures for determining which persons were stateless in accordance with international standards. These laws provide legal, economic, and social guarantees to protect the rights of such individuals, including unimpeded access to free health care, employment, and access to education for women and girls.

239. The State guarantees the universal registration of the birth of every child, and, from the moment of birth, the right to a name and the right to acquire citizenship. The Civil Registration Act (2019) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>) regulates registration of the birth of stateless children, simplifying the naturalization of stateless persons and



protecting the rights of refugees and stateless persons. Any child born in Turkmenistan is registered and given a birth certificate. Discrimination on the basis of birth out of wedlock or being a stateless person, migrant or refugees is forbidden.

240. To date, Turkmenistan has achieved 100 per cent birth registration through legislative reform and practical steps. This figure is documented in Turkmenistan's Voluntary National Survey, as well as at regional conferences on birth registration, the October 2019 high-level segment in Geneva, and the December 2019 high-level forum in Geneva on the implementation of the Global Refugee Compact (<https://fineconomic.gov.tm/ru/vnrt>).

241. Turkmenistan's National Plan of Action to End Statelessness for the period 2019–2024 reflects aspects of inclusive protection for vulnerable categories of migrants without a particular status, including documentation of those individuals in order to gain access to legal channels of migration and unhindered movement.

242. In order to implement this Plan of Action, naturalization of stateless persons has been facilitated, to provide them with protection and basic human rights, access to procedures for determining stateless status and for admission to Turkmen citizenship.

243. An update of quantitative and qualitative statistics is expected after the results of the 2022 census and the 2022–2024 registration campaigns.

244. In accordance with a Presidential Decree of 25 October 2017, a comprehensive population and housing census will be conducted in December 2022. In developing the plans, the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing recommendations were applied, including the recommendations on the collection, processing and receipt of data on stateless persons, taking into account the gender and socioeconomic characteristics of stateless persons.

245. On the basis of the Civil Registration Act, Turkmenistan is working in cooperation with UNDP to develop Single State Civil Register.

246. The civil registry offices submit a monthly report to the Ministry of Justice of Turkmenistan on the records of births registered by the state.

247. According to the Family Code of Turkmenistan, a child's nationality is determined by the nationality of his or her parents. If the parents have different nationalities, nationality is determined, according to the child's wishes, with reference to the nationality of the father or mother when he or she is issued a passport, a matter which is regulated by the Regulations on the Passport System in Turkmenistan (1996).

248. According to the Citizenship Act (2013) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and diplomatic missions and consular offices of Turkmenistan in foreign countries are the State bodies of Turkmenistan with the authority to deal with citizenship issues.

#### **Paragraphs 50 and 51: Marriage and family relations**

249. Men and women of marriageable age, regardless of nationality or religion, have equal rights to marry and found a family. Turkmenistan recognizes marriages concluded outside the country, including marriages between Turkmen citizens and foreign citizens concluded in accordance with the procedure established by the law of the place of their conclusion, in the absence of circumstances that prohibit the conclusion of a marriage.

250. The Family Code of Turkmenistan prohibits polygamous marriages.

251. The Criminal Code of Turkmenistan criminalizes polygamy.

252. Representatives of Turkmenistan's Milli Geňeş and civil society organizations work in all regions of the country on family and family values and women's rights. In 2022 (6 months), more than 50 meetings were held for young people in all welayats of the country and in Ashgabat.

253. In 2021, employees of the civil registry offices held consultations for young people on the topic of "Family Values". Lawyers of Lebap and Daşoguz welayats spoke to residents of rural areas on the following topics: relationships in the family; property rights and responsibilities of spouses; State registration of dissolution of marriage and registration of documents; Dissolution of marriages by civil registry offices; Dissolution of marriages by court order; Parents' and children's obligations to pay child support.

254. As part of their cooperation programme, the Institute for State, Law and Democracy of Turkmenistan and UNFPA have been training specialists working with young people and couples planning to start a family on the following topics: structure and functions of the modern family; rights and responsibilities of spouses; life cycles of the family; spousal conflicts: causes, typology, prevention and resolution; Domestic violence. forms of domestic violence; Family planning is the key to a healthy family relationship; Conditions and procedure for registration of a marriage. Developed a draft training manual and materials to educate young people. In 2021, seminars with civil registry office staff were held, and the piloting of this project is scheduled for the second half of 2022. This project will evaluate the impact of this intervention in strengthening families, preventing divorce, and preventing domestic violence.

#### **Paragraphs 52 and 53: Data collection and analysis**

255. In accordance with the Statistics Act (2012) (<https://minjust.gov.tm/>), the State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan collects and processes gender-related statistical information, paying attention to territorial attributes (urban settlements and rural areas) in many branches of statistics (demographic statistics, labour and wage statistics, health statistics, education statistics, households, etc.) formed on the basis of state and agency-related statistics reporting and administrative data, and distributes official statistical information. Statistical records by socio-demographic indicator are developed taking age and disability into account

256. Every year, there is a review of State statistical reporting forms in accordance with requests from State agencies, as well as international organizations. In addition, international standards (recommendations) on the conduct and organization of statistical activities, including the adaptation of static methodology for the collection and processing of indicators of socio-economic development, both from the gender perspective, and taking into account territorial attributes (urban settlements and rural areas), are studied and implemented.

257. Turkmenistan, as part of the global MICS program and with technical support from UNICEF, has participated in all rounds of MICS, including the 2019 MICS 6 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. The main leader of this follow-up is the State Statistics Committee. MICS surveys measure key indicators that allow countries to generate data for use in policies, programs, and national development plans, as well as to monitor progress toward achieving the SDGs and other internationally agreed upon commitments.

258. The cluster survey for many indicators is based on international methodology and provides a unique opportunity to obtain an objective picture of the lives of women and children in Turkmenistan. These surveys complement the existing official statistical information resources on the quality of life of the country's population, thereby drawing the attention of the State and society to new aspects.

259. The results of the survey are one of the most important sources of information for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. Turkmenistan is one of the first countries in the world to collect data on selected SDG indicators as part of the MICS6 round.

260. The MICS report is available on the official UNICEF website at <https://mkts.unicef.org/>.

#### **Paragraph 55: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

261. Turkmenistan presented its National Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action ([https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing\\_20/Turkmenistan.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Beijing_20/Turkmenistan.pdf)), which contains information on key legislative, administrative and other measures taken between 2014 and 2019 that are directly related to the provisions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The National Comprehensive Review focused on the measures already taken and being taken by the State, and progress in women's rights.

262. In preparing the review, use was made of Turkmenistan's legislation, information from State bodies and civil society associations, periodic national reports of Turkmenistan on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and other thematic materials.

263. Preparation of the National Review was carried out by the Interdepartmental Commission on Compliance with the International Obligations Undertaken by Turkmenistan in the Field of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Working Group, which includes representatives of 17 ministries and agencies and 5 civil society organizations. As part of the preparation of the National Review, a number of interagency seminars and consultations were held with experts and specialists of United Nations agencies in Turkmenistan.

264. In preparing the final version of the National Review, comments and suggestions from ministries, agencies, and civil society organizations were taken into account.

#### **Paragraph 58: Ratification of other treaties**

265. Accession to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance is currently being considered by national experts. To that end, the provisions of the above-mentioned international instruments are being analysed, national legislation is being reviewed for the purpose of harmonizing it with those provisions, and mechanisms for accession are being considered.

266. Informational workshops and consultations are being held with members of the Milli Geňeş and representatives of relevant State entities, in cooperation with international organizations. Decisions in this regard will be based on the findings of a comprehensive review of all components of the national legal system and of the transposition and harmonization of these international norms within that system.