



BEIJING+25: NATIONAL-LEVEL REVIEW OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES



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Executive Summary

As part of the global community, the Kyrgyz Republic has worked actively to prepare a comprehensive national-level review of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action over the past five years.

The value of this National-level Review (the “Review”) lies in its compliance with the nationwide approach and coordination provided by the *Ministry of Labor and Social Development* (MLSD) as the authorized government agency responsible for gender equality.

Five thematic and sectoral, one regional (in Osh) and two national consultations were organized as part of this process. Government and municipal officials, civil society activists—representatives of women's, youth and children's organizations, and representatives of the academic community and human rights and advocacy organizations contributed to the *Review*. The Review process engaged in total over 400 people.

The Kyrgyz Government, members of the Jogorku Kenesh (Kyrgyz Parliament) and development partners took part in validation of the results of *Review*. UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA provided a significant support in the preparation of this *Review*.

The Review is based on the Government reports, in particular, on the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), *Universal Periodic Review* (UPR), and other reports and surveys covering various aspects of women’s and girls’ rights. The Review also uses updated and detailed data, including indicators that create synergies with the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs).

The Report consists of four sections. Section One is focuses on the progress made and challenges encountered in Kyrgyz Republic’s implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action* and also priorities of the past five years and examples of specific measures taken to advance gender equality. In addition, as a result of consultations, the section outlines priorities for the next five years. It should be noted that elimination of all violence against women and girls as well as quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls are the country’s top priorities, both past and new.

According to the participants of consultations, problems with the introduction of gender-specific approaches; polarization of public views on women's rights; women’s low political participation; and radicalization and religious extremism remain challenging for accelerated promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment are. At the same time, gender-responsive budgeting, management improvement using ICT, education and awareness raising to transform stereotypes and discriminatory social norms are considered key to accelerated progress in the promotion of girls’ and women’s rights.

The second section consists of six dimensions. The first dimension focuses on inclusive development and engagement of women and girls in economic activities, shared prosperity and decent work. The second dimension concerns the provision of public services to women and girls in education, healthcare and social protection. The third dimension is devoted to discrimination and violence. The fourth direction describes processes that enable women’s participation in political life. The fifth direction covers women's participation in and impacts of climate change and environmental policies on women. The sixth direction centers on gender aspects of peacebuilding and security.

Section Three aims to cover processes and institutions responsible for the development and implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action* and the SDGs. The latter are key to the integration of gender approaches into national and sectoral development policies and plans.

Section Four covers gender statistics issues and data used to monitor the implementation progress of the SDGs.

The *Review* has become a platform for a dialogue on collaboration between stakeholders and helped document successful experience and practices and, most importantly, outline new priorities for the future and promising directions for action to enhance girls' and women's rights.

Section 1: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?

No country in the world has managed to achieve gender equality over the past quarter of a century since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration. Kyrgyzstan is no exception. The participants of national consultations emphasized repeatedly that the only evident achievement in the past five years since the Beijing+20 review was progress in law and policy making. As for the advancement of actual equality and opportunities for practical realization of women's and girls' rights, there are still many challenges and problems.

The status of women and girls was reviewed against the national commitments under the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) and *Beijing Platform for Action* (BPfA). The comprehensive nature of the SDGs and BPfA provides a fundamental basis for ensuring de-facto equality of rights and opportunities, and it applies to all areas and stages of the life cycle of women and girls.

SDG Target 1.2 aims to reduce poverty in all its forms. When a girl is born in a poor family, she is automatically put in an unequal position as compared to other peers. In Kyrgyzstan, the poverty rate decreased from 30.6% in 2014 to 25.6% in 2017. However, 1,601,000 people were still below the poverty line in 2017, with 72% from rural areas.

A girl from a poor family is more at risk of being forced into early marriage, addressed by **SDG Target 5.3**, which calls for an uncompromising fight against all kinds of harmful practices. In Kyrgyzstan, the number of girls who got married at the age of 15-18 was 948 in 2014, decreasing to 408 in 2017.

A girl forced into early marriage usually has no opportunity to continue education at school. In Kyrgyzstan, the number of girls not attending secondary school decreased from 1,170 in 2014 to 1,149 in 2017. To a significant degree, this is thanks to effective measures the government had elaborated as part of **SDG Target 4.1**, which aims to ensure free, equitable and quality education.

The likelihood of pregnancy and childbirth in early marriages is higher and accompanied by risks of both psychological and physiological complications. In Kyrgyzstan, the birth rate for women of pre-marital age was 7.4 newborns per 1,000 girls aged 15-17 in 2014 and 5.4 newborns per 1,000 girls in 2017. This downward trend is attributed to **SDG Target 3.7** on reproductive health.

In the woman's life cycle, pregnancy and childbirth can be accompanied by risks associated with poverty and limited access to quality nutrition, social and healthcare services, increasing the risk of maternal mortality. The maternal mortality rate in Kyrgyzstan is one of the highest in the CIS countries. In 2014, it was 50.1 women per 100,000 children born alive. In 2017, this number decreased to 31.9 women. The country continues its efforts to implement **SDG Target 3.1**, aiming to reduce maternal mortality.

Further in life, women can face many other difficulties, including violence. But if a country has an effective justice system, which **SDG Target 16.3** calls for, then a woman has a greater chance, with the rule of law and effective law enforcement, to stop ill-treatment and return to a decent life without

violence. In Kyrgyzstan, as a result of measures introduced to prevent violence, the number of domestic violence (registered) reports increased from 3,524 in 2015 to 7,333 cases in 2017. The number of issued temporary protection orders increased from 3,353 in 2015 to 7,323 in 2017. The number of individuals subjected to administrative liability under the “family violence” article increased from 1,137 in 2015 to 2,970 in 2017.

SDG Target 4.4 promotes measures to realize the right of women and girls to technical and vocational skills demanded in the labor market. The country still has gender segregation in the choice of careers available in higher education. Women usually choose humanities, pedagogy (86.6%), healthcare and social sciences (74.8%). Men choose engineering and technology sciences, for example, transport (91%).

SDG Target 8.5 promotes women’s right to employment and decent work. The country shows an alarming downward trend in women's economic activity: from 50.4% in 2014 to 45.9% in 2017. In 2017, the unemployment rate for women was 8.9% against men’s unemployment of 5.6%. As women usually work in low-paying jobs, the proportion of women’s earnings in 2017 was 75.2% of men’s earnings.

SDG Target 5.5, which aims to promote and ensure women’s right to leadership and full and effective participation in decision-making processes, is a key target that is both a goal and a means for accomplishing the *Sustainable Development Goals* and implementing the *Beijing Platform for Action*. A woman leader who participates in politics and governance will be in a better position to promote women’s and girls’ rights. Despite measures taken to advance women's leadership in Kyrgyzstan, the percentage of female MPs decreased to 15.8% in 2018 against 20% in 2015. Similarly, the percentage of women in local legislative bodies decreased from 19% in 2016 to 11% in 2018.

Key achievements in law and policy making

The pivotal law is the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic *On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women* (No. 184 of 4 August 2008),¹ which provides constitutional norms for the protection of citizens’ rights and opportunities.

The *National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic until 2020* adopted by Government Decree No. 443² of 27 June 2012 sets national gender policy priorities. The strategy is operationalized in the fifth *National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2020* (NAP on GE 2018-2020) for the upcoming period.

A number of important laws and regulations promoting gender equality in various areas were also adopted in 2014-2019.

Peacebuilding: On 21 September 2018, the Kyrgyz Government approved the third National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325³ on the role of women in peace and security (NAP1325).

Elimination of harmful practices (early marriages): as part of measures included in the *NAP on GE 2018-2020* to prevent early marriages, comprehensive campaigns aimed to raise awareness about negative consequences of such marriages and to inform religious organization and the public of the illegality and unacceptability of early marriages under the guise of traditional ethnic, cultural and religious views.

¹ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/202398>.

² <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/93343>.

³ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/216600>.

The main reasons leading to early marriages are the lack of economic and social opportunities for girls to exercise their rights; poverty growth and parents' desire to marry off girls as early as possible; prevalence of a traditional hierarchical family model where girls have the lowest status; early sexual activity of young people; increased religious influence (Islam and other religions that allow girls to marry early); and growing number of reports on underage girls being abducted for the purpose of marriage.

According to the *Gender in Society Perception Study* (GSPS) (2016), the majority of respondents (over 60%) criticize parents who marry off their underage daughters (under 18). At the same time, 27 percent of respondents believe that marrying off underage daughters is purely a parents' call. The overwhelming majority of respondents (77%) believe that a woman who got married at a minor age is more likely to become highly dependent on her husband and have no professional carrier in future.

On 17 November 2016, the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic *On Amendments to Some of the Laws and Regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic and Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)* was passed.⁴ As a result of this law, the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic now contains Article 155, which says that “parents (or individuals exercising parental authority) of the person involved in a religious marriage ceremony, the person who conducted such a religious marriage ceremony, as well as the adult person who participated in a religious marriage ceremony with a minor in violation of legal requirements on marriageable age are subject to imprisonment for a term of 3 to 5 years.”⁵ A provision stipulating that any individual who violated the stipulation of the *Family Code* on marriage age shall be held liable in accordance with applicable laws of the Kyrgyz Republic was also added to Para 3, Article 14 of the *Family Code* of the Kyrgyz Republic.

An Action Plan to implement the Law was developed to engage government agencies and civic society at both national and local levels so that they could meaningfully contribute to the elimination of violence against women and girls and to reduce the practice of early marriages in general.

The Action Plan progress evaluation⁶ in March 2019 identified the following results:

- Laws, regulations and other documents are brought in compliance with the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic *On Prohibition of Religious Marriage Ceremonies with Minors*.⁷ The working group developed five regulations and bylaws governing collaboration between government agencies to prevent marriages with minors and early marriages between minors. Development of guidelines and recommendations is also important. A reporting mechanism on early marriages to law enforcement agencies was put into practice. This mechanism is reflected in the Unified Register of Crimes and Offences (URCO, an automated information system).
- Training aids were prepared to enhance the capacity of all stakeholders involved in the prevention of early marriages.
- The country's population was informed, within a relatively short period of time, about the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic *On Prohibition of Religious Marriage Ceremonies with Minors* and related regulations and agency-level documents.

Elimination of violence against women and girls: the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic *On Prevention and Protection Against Domestic Violence* was passed on 27 April 2017 (No. 63). The law outlines fundamental mandatory principles for all responsible government agencies, whose number increased to 11. The law sets specific objectives for each of these government agencies and also a mechanism of

⁴ <http://cbd.miniust.gov.kg/act/refs/ru-ru/1327/200>.

⁵ <http://cbd.miniust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111458/10?cl=ru-ru>.

⁶ Monitoring Report on the Implementation Plan for the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic *On Amending Some of the Laws and Regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic and Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)* (No. 179 of November 17, 2016), Bishkek, 2019.

⁷ <http://cbd.miniust.gov.kg/act/refs/ru-ru/1327/200>.

inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation to facilitate the implementation process. In particular, the law stipulates that all persons who experienced domestic violence are entitled to all legal, medical and psychological assistance, social support and consultations as may be necessary. The law also contains innovative norms: law enforcement agencies are required at all times to respond to all reports of domestic violence no matter from whom they were received, i.e., not only from violence victims; a single protection order was introduced to replace two different types of orders (a temporary protective order and a court order); and intervention programmes for domestic abusers were introduced for the first time ever with the aim of changing abusive behavior.

In the law enforcement area, the **implementation mechanism** for the new legislation translated into a number of regulations and agency-level documents, in particular, Kyrgyz Government Decree No. 642 *On the Approval of the Restraining Order Form* of 3 October 2017, and Decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic *On the Approval of Guidelines on Prevention and Protection Against Domestic Violence by Law Enforcement Agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic* (No. 970 of 14 November 2017). In addition, Government Decrees *on an Intervention Programme for Abusive Behavior of People Who Committed Domestic Violence* and *On Prevention and Protection Against Domestic Violence* were drafted. They detail the mechanisms of interaction and collaboration between responsible government agencies.

In 2017, for the first time ever, **government and administration (agency-level) statistics has been analyzed and accounting and reporting forms have been improved** for the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, Supreme Court's Justice Department of the Kyrgyz Republic, and National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Improved reporting forms were introduced through the following agency-level documents:

- Decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic *On the Approval of Forms of Agency-level Reports on Issued Restraining Orders and Individuals Who Committed and Experienced Domestic Violence, and Guidelines on the Preparation of Agency-level Statistical Reports on Issued Restraining Orders and Individuals Who Committed and Experienced Domestic Violence* (No. 963 of 13 November 2017);
- Resolution of the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic *On the Approval of National Statistical Reports on Offence Statistics* (No. 17 of 9 November 2017).

Promotion of women's participation in politics: in 2017, as part of *NAP on GE 2018-2020*, in particular, "Specific measures to ensure gender representation in special political positions in public and municipal bodies (no more than 75% of persons of the same gender) and "Monitoring and evaluation of women's and men's representation in special political positions in public and municipal bodies," the electoral legislation has been amended to read: "in the event of early termination of the deputy's terms of office, his or her mandate should be transferred to the next registered candidate: 1) to a female candidate if the deputy whose terms of office was terminated was a woman; 2) to a male candidate if the deputy whose terms of office was terminated was a man. If there are no candidates of the respective gender on the list, the mandate should be given to the next candidate on the same list."

To address women's low representation at the local level, the Jogorku Kenesh deputies (MPs) initiated a draft *Law on Amending the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic On the Election of Deputies to Local Keneshes (Councils)*, with a reservation of 30 percent of mandates for women in ayil (village) councils as a special temporary measure (Articles 46, 47, 52, 59 and 62). The draft law was passed in the first reading. This objective is also included in the *Electoral Legislation Improvement Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2020*.

Promotion of women's representation in public service: *Resolution on the Selection and Promotion of Public and Municipal Officials in the Kyrgyz Republic* was adopted by Government

Decree No. 706 of 29 December 2016.⁸ In particular, it says that if multiple candidates have the same score, the selection committee should recommend the candidate whose ethnicity and gender are less represented in the respective government agency or local self-governance body. If candidates with the same score are of the same ethnicity and gender, the decision should be made by simple majority of the committee members present (para 50).

2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes?

Key challenges preventing the promotion of gender equality

- ✓ Gender-responsive budgeting – gender mainstreaming
- ✓ Political participation and representation
- ✓ Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes – polarisation of public opinion on women’s rights and gender equality
- ✓ Radicalisation
- ✓ Labour Migration

The Beijing Platform for Action defines integration of gender approaches into national policies and action plans of key national documents as a fundamental condition for effective promotion of de facto equality. As noted above, over the past five years, there has been some progress in law and policy making to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. However, poor implementation of these laws, policies and programmes and, as a result, reduced opportunities for women and girls to exercise their rights in real life are still pressing issues. There are several key factors underlying the lack of action in the implementation of laws and policies:

- International and national commitments of the country imply mandatory gender-specific expertise of its legislation. The requirement to integrate gender equality issues into programmes and plans is included in the *Strategic Planning Methodology for Sustainable Development*, which is mandatory for all public and municipal authorities.⁹ However, in ministry-level programmes, gender issues are treated only as a matter of the social sector (education, health care, social protection), while in sectors that essentially affect resources of economic development (industry, entrepreneurship, trade and agriculture), the gender component is very vague.
- Ministries and agencies have no personnel with expertise sufficient to assess and analyze the impacts of sectoral policies and programmes on different groups of women and men. The understanding of the gender equality concept in ministries, government agencies and local self-government bodies is limited to simple counting of men and women participating in events and activities. In fact, gender mainstreaming has not been institutionalized in the government system. Gender equality is still perceived as a niche area of the Gender Department of MLSD. This department is tasked to coordinate and ensure intersectoral cooperation on gender equality. At the same time, all government and municipal authorities are identified as main implementers of gender policy through inclusion of the gender component into sectoral plans and programmes and allocation of budgets to implement all planned events and activities. Today, government agencies do not sufficiently understand the roles and responsibilities in the area of gender equality. Ministries and agencies implement gender mainstreaming occasionally, depending on the availability/implementation of projects supported by international organizations.
- Consultation participants point out that the (international development) projects supported a range of capacity development events and activities for ministry and agency employees as part of intersectoral collaboration on prevention of gender violence (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Emergency Situations).

⁸ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/99691>

⁹ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/223520>

There are also examples of enhanced capacity of local self-government bodies in the areas of gender-sensitive planning and budgeting. All these activities were implemented in accordance with the objective of NAP on GE 2018-2020 “to increase gender competence of the heads of state and municipal agencies.”

- However, it applies only to the limited number of projects; the sustainability of gender competencies of public servants will be achieved only when the understanding and application of the gender equality concept becomes a mandatory part of public and municipal employee training/professional development programmes. Apart from employee capacity building, public and municipal authorities must institutionalize the gender approach. The requirement to integrate gender perspective in sectoral planning and budgeting processes must be included in job descriptions of all key ministry and agency officials.

Polarization of public views on women’s rights and gender equality. In the past five years, public views on social norms and relationships have continued to polarize. The tendency to perceive gender equality and the empowerment of women as an “alien” and pro-western concept is growing. The supporters of this idea rely on a false premise about the “traditionally” subordinate role of women in the society, referring to cultural traditions and norms that historically define and confine women’s roles exclusively to the family and household. The image of a humble and obedient wife, who is supposed to be “happy” to depend fully on her husband and family, is being romanticized as well. Apart from indirect submission of women, this public attitude has more dangerous implications that may lead to the “normalization” of such harmful and discriminatory practices as early marriage, kidnapping for the purpose of (forced) marriage and polygamy. The controversial public reaction to the annual march for women’s rights on 8 March 2019, where LGBT-community posters were demonstrated among others, shows that the risks of confrontation and a split in the society are real. This confrontation can be dangerous, so all progressive movements should be urgently consolidated to develop an alternative response to this rhetoric of pseudo-nationalism and false traditionalism. This alternative response should be based on the human rights concept. The value of any human being—a woman or a man, a girl or a boy—must lie in the heart of any national ideology, and this is fully in line with the concept of human rights, according to which the fundamental and indisputable principle of life is the right of all humans to self-determination, self-realization and choice to live in accordance with own preferences and mission.

Analysis¹⁰ of women’s images in commercial advertising identified that women are most often portrayed in the roles of wife and mother and, according to the “stereotypical patriarchal thinking,” are supposed to live up to these roles. The analysis says that “in addition to or apart from these roles, the men’s eye of patriarchy perceives women as sexual objects. Women who do not live up to the “female” standards of behavior and appearance are stigmatized as “different.” The society tries to ignore such women and make them invisible in every possible way. When it is not possible to hide or correct such women, the system makes every effort to discredit them in the eyes of the society.”

NAP on GE 2018-2020 outlines specific measures and activities aimed at “building a culture of intolerance to gender discrimination and violence among women and men from all cultural and age groups of society; regular awareness raising work targeting different social, ethnic and religious groups to eliminate patriarchal views on the roles of women and men in the family and society; integrating lessons on prevention of violence against women and girls and elimination of traditional discriminatory practices in educational plans at all levels; and providing trainings to mass media on coverage of gender discrimination and violence.”

Decreased women’s participation in political life. Article 11 of Law *Guarantees of Equal Voting Rights* of the Kyrgyz Law *on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women*¹¹ states that in elections, women, on equal terms with men, should have fair and real opportunities to exercise their right to elect and be elected to government office and local self-

¹⁰ <https://kloop.kg/blog/2018/10/19/pochemu-nuzhno-protivostoyat-obektivatsii-zhenshhin-v-reklame/>.

¹¹ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/202398/10?cl=ru-ru>.

government bodies. With the intention of achieving parity democracy, the State can introduce special measures to support candidates of the underrepresented sex/gender. Participation of political parties in any elections requires guaranteed parity representation of candidates of both genders.

Para 3, Article 60 of Constitutional Law No. 68¹² *On Elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and Deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic* of 2 July 2011 states that “in preparing lists of candidates, all political parties are required to ensure the following representation: no more than 70 percent of individuals of the same sex, and the difference in the listing of women and men candidates proposed by political parties should not be greater than three positions”. In the past five years, women’s representation in the Jogorku Kenesh has declined. The number of women deputies has decreased to 19 (15.8%) as compared to 20 percent in 2015 and 25.5 percent in 2007 after the first elections following the introduction of the mandatory 30 percent quota for the underrepresented sex in the Elections Code of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Challenges associated with women’s low representation in politics are driven by a range of institutional and individual factors. Party lists are made by party leaders, and the decision to include women is usually based on pragmatic considerations, such as the need to improve the image of the party or ensure formal compliance with the electoral legislation. However, according to women candidates to the Jogorku Kenesh, the parties start “pushing” women out immediately after the elections, at the mandate distribution stage, giving preference to men candidates. Today, the Kyrgyz Parliament consists of six parliamentary fractions. The *Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan* (SDPK) has the largest percentage of women members, while the *Bir-Bol* and *Kyrgyzstan* parties have no women at all.

There is a negative attitude in the society towards women politicians and social activists. This is explained by the growing tendency to standardize, or fix, social roles, where man is in the forefront and woman is placed in a subordinate position. Such a negative public perception of women as active members of society has shaped due to revival of old, conservative views on the role and place of women in the society and respective behavior patterns (mistrust, discrimination, humiliation, strengthening of stereotypes regarding women’s role and place, etc.).

Key conclusions on women’s participation in political life according to the UN Women’s *Gender in Society Perception Study*¹³ boil down to:

- People generally perceive women politicians as responsible, accountable and dedicated professionals, and over 60 percent of the population would like to see more women in the Kyrgyz politics. However, people continue voting for men, because women are supposed to fulfill “other” important roles as housewives and mothers first before turning to the public and social life.
- Women politicians are commonly perceived as “assistants” to or “implementers” of political ambitions of their men colleagues, not as “leaders.”
- The three main barriers that women are still to overcome to become equal to their men colleagues in the public sector are: lack of family/public support (50/24%), lack of experience in politics (46%) and lack of financial support (42%).
- Peacebuilding, as well as community project implementation, has been widely covered in the media as one of the distinctive skills of women politicians. However, this goes alongside with the opinion that women are only “negotiators” and “mediators,” while men are the actual “builders” of peace.

Gender rating of political parties in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2015 demonstrated a gender-blind agenda and patriarchal perception of women’s participation in politics by many political leaders. Though the

¹² <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/203244>

¹³ *Gender in Society Perception Study*, 2016, UN Peacebuilding Fund, UNFPA, UN Women, IOM

promotion of women's participation is a top priority for many women's organization, in the past five years, it has not been effective in the struggle with violations of women's political rights.

Hate demonstrations are a pressing problem that affects both public and political participation of vulnerable groups such as women, ethnic minorities and other social groups facing multiple discrimination. Online and offline attacks on feminists and LGBT activists after 8 March 2019 in Bishkek, as well as numerous other hate demonstrations contained threats to the entire gender community and positioned the gender equality agenda as an alien, pro-western ideology that undermines national and family values of Kyrgyzstan.

During consultations, women deputies of local *keneshes* (parliaments) and deputies of the national parliament raised the issue of violence against women during elections and political activities. This is a widespread problem in Kyrgyzstan, which responsible government institutions, such as the Central Electoral Commission, National Parliament, national gender mechanism and law enforcement agencies, still do not recognize and do not address. Women candidates face threats and harassment from their rivals and men family members who insist that women leave the election race. This is a common situation in election-winning political parties that women deputies have to return their mandates under the pressure from the party leaders and men party members. Women members of the national and local parliaments receive threats from their men colleagues when trying to raise the problems of corruption and violations of the law.

Double standards, blackmailing and smear campaigns in the media are actively used against women politicians, resulting in their short political influence. As a result of violence against women during elections and political activities, despite the mandatory 30 percent gender quota, two political parties sitting in the National Parliament, *Onuguu Progress* and *Kyrgyzstan*, have no women members at all. Another dismal result of violence against women politicians is that the number of young women willing to run in local elections is decreasing. Out of 450 municipalities, 60 have no women representation in local councils. There are no chairwomen in city councils and no women leaders in district and city administrations. Over the past decade, there have been no women in the top management (heads and deputy heads) of the city and state administrations of Osh. Women from religious and ethnic minority groups face significant barriers in access to decision making even at the family and community levels; they do not participate in political life and remain voiceless, suffering from social and economic marginalization and vulnerability to violence, poverty and radicalization.

In October 2018, for the first time ever, the *OHCHR Special Rapporteur* on violence against women recognized violence against women in politics as a violation of human rights before the General Assembly and called the member countries to action.

As a result of discrimination by sex, age and ethnicity, hate demonstrations and violence against women, participation of women and other vulnerable groups in decision-making processes is decreasing, and government and local institutions are becoming homogenous and prone to corruption and social conflicts. As noted by the participants of national consultations, these factors increase the fragility of democratic institutions and pose a threat to peace in Kyrgyzstan.

Radicalization. Social injustice, discrimination in both public and private life, poverty, unemployment, low religious literacy and low awareness are the key factors that make women vulnerable to radicalization. The IOM report (2016) states that, according to the State Committee for National Security, "7.4 percent of known active members of extremist organizations and 23.3 percent of those who left the country to participate in armed conflicts are women." Women are recruited through informal jamaats (groups), families, social networks and the internet. Today, the country has all basic conditions for the growth of radical attitudes, including systemwide and structural socioeconomic problems, weak control over activities of some radical religious organizations, and inability of religious leaders to ensure sound counterpropaganda to extremist ideologies.

Another equally important factor contributing to women's involvement in radical movements and practices is their families and men family members. Women often follow men and become victims of family propaganda. The result of this is women's presence in conflict zones or active engagement in recruitment processes and dissemination of prohibited ideologies in local communities.

The *National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Religion 2014-2020*¹⁴ stipulates government-level regulation of religious matters and calls for finding an optimal model of interaction between the State and religious confessions that would be based on the secular nature of the State. The document highlights the importance of preventing and stopping any intervention of religious organization or religious workers into activities of government agencies and local self-government bodies. However, today religion is one of many other social and economic factors leading to radicalization. As a result, more comprehensive and fundamental measures are needed to address this problem.

In November 2018, the State Committee on Religion of the Kyrgyz Republic held the 2nd International Conference "Islam in a Modern Secular State."¹⁵ Conference speakers emphasized the importance of building an international dialogue to ensure permanent peace and sustainable development of nations and finding balance between human rights and freedom, including the freedom of thought and religion, and public security. The conference highlighted the role of the modern secular and democratic state in building an inter-confessional dialogue and advancing principles of cooperation, mutual respect, religious tolerance and trust in the society. The participants stressed the need for raising public awareness about religion to prevent polarization of views on religious matters and association of Islam with extremist ideologies. An important achievement was that the role of youth and women in building and maintaining inter-confessional dialogue, peace and conciliation in the country was recognized as significant.

The conference demonstrated the need to enhance cooperation between government agencies, civil society organizations, religious communities, mass media and internet platforms to ensure unbiased and sensitive coverage of religious issues to retain peace and conciliation in society; to undertake more efforts to advance gender equality and promote the role of women in the society without curbing their rights and freedom of choice; to engage youth in social, cultural, economic and political life to build a multi-cultural society and promote their participation in the design and implementation of national policies and programmes.

Women from vulnerable groups (religious women, ethnic minorities, young rural women and women from transboundary communities) face multiple discrimination due to structural and system-wide barriers in decision-making and resource allocation even at the family level. Programme analysis and lessons learned from UN Women projects on prevention of violent extremism in transboundary communities of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan show that the number of communities where mobility and participation of women, especially young rural women, is controlled by men family members is growing. At the same time, UN Women projects on behavior change through the *Gender Action Learning System (GALS)* in closed patriarchal communities delivered impressive results in changing the behavior of men and women from vulnerable groups, who become agents of progressive changes in their respective communities. There is actual evidence that women's engagement helps make peacebuilding and conflict prevention more effective, strengthens protection efforts, enhances radicalization and extremism prevention measures, and accelerates economic recovery thanks to a wider range of peace dividends. The positive effect of women's leadership and participation on sustainable peacebuilding and conflict prevention, management and resolution has been validated by the evaluation of the implementation of NAP 1325 (2018) and serves as the engine of peace in the country.

Although periods of conflict and transition open a new door for major social changes, the input of women and girls in peacebuilding and peace consolidation is often underestimated, underused and

¹⁴ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/68294>.

¹⁵ <https://kabar.kg/news/v-bishkeke-zavershilas-ii-mezhdunarodnaia-konferentcia-islam-v-sovremennom-svetskom-gosudarstve>.

under-resourced. Significantly, this is due to poor understanding of gender aspects of conflicts, low engagement of women in peacebuilding activities at the local and national levels, and lack of institutionalization of gender-sensitive aspects of peacebuilding initiatives. According to UN Women, there is a number of barriers preventing full and effective participation of women in conflict management and peacebuilding:

- negative public attitude to women's participation in decision-making processes in general and conflict prevention initiatives in particular;
- extreme economic barriers (lack of differentiated access to / control over financial resources) are aggravated by gender time poverty caused by unequal distribution of labour between men and women; and
- disagreements in communities and post-conflict traumas strengthening the negative image of other groups.

Although Kyrgyzstan has implemented a range of peacebuilding and conflict prevention projects over the past two decades, national and local universities do not have institutionalized academic courses to train in-country conflict managers and provide public and municipal workers with structured theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the given area. Existing conflict management trainings under various projects do not cover gender analysis and peacebuilding that is based on gender aspects as important elements of successful and sustainable decision-making.

Psychological assistance to communities that went through conflicts and experience post-traumatic stress (with vulnerable groups suffering the most) is a necessity. Women, children and elderly people in post-conflict communities complain about sleep quality and high anxiety levels caused by the feelings of fear, uncertainty, helplessness and weakness.

The women, peace and security agenda is one of the top priorities under UN country programmes in the peacebuilding area. The outcomes and lessons learned in the global report by UN Women (Women, Peace and Security) show that active women's participation in peace agreements around the world has increased their sustainability by 70 percent. The UN Secretary General's 7-Point Action Plan defines gender-based peacebuilding as a key prerequisite to sustainable peace. The NAP1325 provides a regulatory framework based on three pillars: participation, prevention and protection with women's involvement in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, management and resolution being in the focus of national stakeholders. With support from the Women Peacemakers of KR, the Osh City administration designed its first ever Action Plan for localization of the NAP1325 and established a task force for its implementation.

In 2019, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians of KR published a Roadmap entitled "Women, Peace and Security" prioritizing three directions:

- Strengthening the role and participation of women, including at decision-making level, in peacekeeping and security activities;
- Enhancing collaboration between the national government, local self-government bodies and civil society to prevent conflicts and risks of violence against women and girls and promote measures to address post-crisis situations; and
- Improving the protection system and addressing specific needs of women and girls in emergency situations.

In general, **labour migration** helps migrants solve their everyday financial problems. An improved financial position increases the authority of labour migrants in the eyes of their families; migrants gain experience in and ideas for business and entrepreneurship and can give education to their children. Studies show that the financial position of families is better when women participate in migration processes. In 2017, Kyrgyz labour migrants transferred over two billions of dollars to the country in remittances. According to the World Bank, Kyrgyzstan is at the top among European and Central

Asian countries in remittances as percent of GDP, over 29.3 percent. Given that women participate actively in migration processes, their contribution to these numbers is also significant. In 2016, out of 7,100 migrants, 4,300 were women, or 61 percent. In 2017, the number of in-country migrants was 21,300, including 14,200 women, or 67 percent.¹⁶

At the same time, there is a number of problems contributing to risks of labour migration of women, including predominantly unofficial employment of women. Having no access to social protection services, 2/3 of employed women are paid in cash off the books and only 2/5 of interviewed women work under employment contracts. Other widely known factors with negative consequences of labour migration is the problem of children left behind and non-fulfillment of direct parental obligations; a “second family” phenomenon that creates social problems and hopelessness in a woman’s private life; stigmatization of women migrants by the society, “demonization” of their image as women engaged in “indecent work” far from their homes and families; high level of stress, despair and uncertainty about future among women migrants who return home and their families; and problems with social adaptation and integration of women migrants and their children in both the receiving and home countries. Given all this, one of the main topics of the Fourth National Forum “Mekendeshter” (i.e., “countrymen”) in 2018 was the recognition of women’s contribution to economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic. An important aspect of this discussion was the focus on the experience of successful countrywomen who have managed to achieve significant success abroad both in the academic/professional area and in the promotion and development of their businesses. The dialogue on the experience of successful and accomplished fellow countrywomen demonstrated the importance of women in the socioeconomic development of the country. This dialogue was important in creating an unbiased and positive image of a woman migrant, which may help reduce negative perception of women returning from migration and facilitate their reintegration in the society and families in the long run.¹⁷

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

- ✓ Racial, ethnic or religious minority women
- ✓ Women living with disabilities
- ✓ Women living with HIV/AIDS
- ✓ Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities
- ✓ Younger women
- ✓ Older women

Older women may experience multiple discrimination that is often related to the difficult economic situation and the necessity for younger family members to engage in labor migration. According to MLSD data, in 192,000 visited families, 72,000 children were left by their parents – one of the consequences of migration is the problem of children left behind.¹⁸ Elderly people and elderly women, in particular, play an important role in raising children (grandchildren). The burden of caring for grandchildren is significant. In addition to health problems and physical burden related to childcare and household chores, old parents of labor migrants can also face financial hardships. According to surveys among elderly people in a number of villages in Chui, Naryn, and Batken provinces, slightly over a third received support (mainly food, also money, clothes and medicine) from their migrant children (48% received support from sons, and 30% from daughters). For the majority of respondents (83%), pensions were the primary source of income, followed by remittances (24%). In households that do not receive remittances from migrants, pensions constitute a significant part of the family budget.¹⁹

¹⁶ <https://www.vb.kg/doc/356425>.

¹⁷ Mekendeshter Forum Concept, 2018.

¹⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/children-migrants>.

¹⁹ National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Kyrgyz Republic: Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, 2016.

Young women and girls, especially from ethnic and religious minorities, face substantial barriers in continuing their education and participating in public life, politics, and public service. The restrictions that women and girls from religious families face have the following factors: 1) a ban on wearing hijabs for girls and young women in some educational institutions; 2) a ban on continuing education upon the onset of puberty imposed on girls by their families; 3) a ban on attending school and other educational institutions for girls. Reduced mobility of women and girls from religious families is often due to restrictions the heads of families impose on them for religious reasons, further leading to denial of medical care, vaccination for children, professional training or work outside home.

Women with disabilities: the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted on 13 December 2006 is ratified in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan joined the Convention on 21 September 2011 at the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly with a commitment to facilitate, protect and ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, the prevailing approach to treating women with disabilities is still the medical one: it is believed that they are sexless ill citizens, invalids, who need only medical treatment. However, even medical treatment is not readily available due to the lack of infrastructure – buildings and equipment that would allow proper examination and treatment. For example, fluorography and mammography are technically unavailable to women with disabilities. Maternity hospitals do not have necessary equipment. What is more, doctors often persuade such women from having children. Women’s programmes do not cover the problems of women with disabilities, either.

The analysis of labor market and social protection policies²⁰ showed that existing measures to promote the rights of persons with disabilities do not facilitate inclusion or integration of such persons into public and economic life. As a recommendation, it was proposed to introduce a mechanism to revise disability verification rules to make them based not on disorders but on functions; this will allow the differentiation of persons with disabilities and disability allowances. Experience of many countries shows that persons with mental disabilities are fully capable of performing physical jobs in the labor market, and persons with cerebral palsy (CP) successfully perform functions that do not require constant movement.

Public Foundation “Ravenstvo,” Union of Persons with Disabilities, is the coordinator of the Central Asian Network of Women with Disabilities. The organization has implemented government’s social-sector procurement contracts from MLSD twice. In 2015, they organized trainings in sexual and reproductive health for girls with disabilities. The training aimed at educating girls and teaching them family planning. The trainings covered three regions: Chuy, Osh, and Issyk-Kul. The sum of the social government contract was 400,000 soms (around USD5,700). In 2018, the second government contract helped open a shelter. It provides training in nail art, makeup and cooking services for girls, facilitating rehabilitation of victims of violence through teaching and professional training. The sum of this government contract was 389,000 soms (around USD5,600). There are also summer camps where girls are trained in life skills: how to safely operate a wheelchair, how to sit, etc.

Rural women face different forms of discrimination, mainly due to patriarchal norms that prevail in relationships in rural areas. Women are particularly vulnerable in negotiations with service providers (private companies), water users’ associations, pasture management associations, and land banks that are usually headed by men. It is harder for women to secure better terms of irrigation water supply, get equipment for farming and harvesting, or lease larger plots of land. Usually, such women are at the bottom of the list and gain access to the above services on the least favorable terms. In a number of projects, rural women establish self-help groups and associations to support each other. However, as practice shows, in order to fundamentally change the vulnerable position of rural women, structural transformations in the system of relationships and norms that shape the roles of women and men are required.

²⁰ Labour Market Policy Analysis, ADB, Eurasia Foundation, 2017.

LGBT. In recent years, several cases of violation of the rights of LGBT community by radical members of society have been reported. For example, on 29 January 2014, the Spiritual Authority of Muslims issued a fatwa (a legal opinion on a situation), which proclaimed the unacceptability of same-sex relationships and contained a quote from hadith (a religious document on the words and acts of Prophet Muhammad) calling to kill people who have been found to engage in such relationships. After a speech by a mufti (a clergyman entitled to issue fatwas), human rights activist T. Ismailova approached the Prosecutor General's Office to "ensure security of sex minorities in Kyrgyzstan." The Prosecutor General's Office provided no response.

On 3 April 2015, there was an attack on the office of the LGBT organization "Labrys." In this incident, the organization did not insist on criminal investigation being concerned about security of their employees and clients since the police had requested all available records from video surveillance cameras. Another attack on an event organized by the LGBT community was on 17 May 2015. Among the attackers were representatives of the *Kyrk Choro* movement as well as *Eldik Revolutsia Korgo Keneshi* (Defense Council of People's Revolution), *Jashtar Keneshi* (Youth Council), and *Kalys* (Just(ice)). In this incident, law enforcement authorities opened a criminal case under Article 234 of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic: hooliganism. The case was later brought to trial, but none of the long-lasting legal battles was settled on the merits. On 16 May 2016, representatives of the *Kyrgyz Choroloru* and *Kalys* movements held a public protest against "LGBT propaganda" demanding the dismissal of the host of the "Tolerance or Spiritual Values" KTRK (public broadcaster) programme. In June 2017, a group of approximately 30 aggressive people caused a disturbance in a club where LGBT community members gathered. The police did not investigate this case. In both cases, the government failed to respond adequately to protect the violated human rights of LGBT individuals.

The government's attitude to LGBT people is attested by service providers' perceptions. Homosexuality is more acceptable for social workers than for medical workers and is absolutely unacceptable for the police. Social workers provide more advice on the prevention of HIV/STD to LGBT persons as compared to medical workers, and LGBT persons approach social workers more often than medical workers.²¹

In 2014, a draft law banning the "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships" and prohibiting LGBT persons from forming associations to protect their rights was submitted to the Jogorku Kenesh (national parliament) for consideration. The draft law proposed to limit "the organization of and participation in peaceful assemblies aiming at conveying any information or ideas on any forms of non-traditional sexual relationships to the society." After criticism from international organizations, the draft law was withdrawn for revision. After revision, it was returned to the parliament for consideration and passed in the second reading in February 2017. The third reading has not been held yet.

In January 2017, the Ministry of Health approved *Guidelines on Providing Medical and Social Assistance to Transgender, Transsexual, and Gender Nonconforming Individuals for Medical Workers at All Levels of Healthcare and Other Agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic*. Apart from recommendations on medical and social assistance, the Guidelines establish the procedure for examining (diagnosing) trans* individuals and changing their gender markers and names based on a clear list of medical checkup procedures, without surgical intervention or compulsory hospitalization. To change the gender/sex marker in the passport, a person has to meet the criteria of the *International Classification of Diseases*. After ambulatory examination, observation, and mental and psychological evaluation of a patient (no longer than four months), the Medical Consultative Board (MCB) of the Republican Mental Health Center (RMHC) provides a medical assessment report (Form No. 048/u). This document serves as a ground for the civil registry office at the place of residence to make necessary changes (name and gender/sex marker in the passport) and issue related documents (legal recognition). This procedure is regulated by Article 72 of the *Law on Vital Records and Instructions*

²¹ http://indigo.kg/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Otnoshenie-k-LGBT_infografika-1.pdf.

on Registration of Vital Records in the Kyrgyz Republic, which (para 155) allows for changing, amending, and correcting vital records of citizens.

Women with HIV. Despite significant resource support from partners, HIV rates in the country do not show positive dynamics. The number of women with HIV has increased by 2.8 times (from 802 in 2011 to 2,313 in 2016, cumulatively). In 2011, the percentage of women among newly registered PLHIV was 30.7 percent; in 2016, it increased to 41.8 percent.

In 2010, there were only 10 percent of women among HIV-positive persons, but today this number increased to 60 percent. This is due to changing trends. For example, heterosexual intercourse has become the most common route for transmission of the infection.²² The assumption is that the high incidence of violent practices and prevalence of dominant and patriarchal norms in interpersonal relationships between women and men are the factors that make this route of infection a leading one. Women working in the sex industry are most prone to the risk of infection. Considering that women drug users become sex workers more often (62% in Kyrgyzstan and 84% in Azerbaijan), this trend looks particularly alarming.²³

Women living with HIV are often abused by their sexual partners or spouses and family members when trying to conceal their status. Social discrimination may be even more significant since family members may not want the woman to receive treatment because other people in the community will become aware of her HIV status and dishonor her family. Since HIV requires lifelong treatment, these problems may surface many times. Among women living with HIV, the most vulnerable are pregnant women since a pregnant woman often denies her HIV-positive status even after three positive test results because she is worried that her family will refuse to support her, and she will be rejected by the community. Often, revealing the positive status to spouses and sexual partners has led to gender-based violence against women living with HIV. Economic and educational inequality is the main problem for these women; the lack of opportunities for education and work outside home means that women and girls are less likely to be aware of and be able to exercise their rights. The absence of social and economic autonomy leads to the lack of autonomy in decision-making and action to gain full access to HIV-related services. There are no instruments for women drug users and sex workers to exercise their basic rights and freedoms because officially these groups of women are either invisible to the government or viewed solely in the context of crime and moral condemnation by media.

Sex workers' rights. Despite the “equality for all” declared in Article 16 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, there is a high level of stigmatization against persons providing sex services, especially from police. Illegal police practices, such as harassment, extortion, false arrests and detentions, violence, rapes and/or inability to protect from violence, are the pivotal problem. Sex work is legal, but it is illegal to “involve others in sex work using violence, threats, and coercion” and to organize or support brothels. A draft law on decriminalization of sex work was proposed, but rejected later. Despite that, raids on sex work spots have become increasingly common. There are two rationales for this: (1) the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is concerned that not all sex workers have been properly examined for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and the police facilitates (illegally and forcibly) the HIV response action by subjecting (illegally and forcibly) sex industry workers to examinations on a regular basis, and (2) MIA received information that young women are transported into foreign sex industries and thus have to bring sex industry workers together to identify potential victims of human trafficking. There is a social movement called “nationalist movement” in the country; it is more active in the south and based on a fundamentalist version of Islam and idealization of Kyrgyzstan’s history and nomadic culture. National groups supporting this movement have specific views on morality and the role of women, narrowing it down and calling to limit women’s work to housekeeping and childcare. In fact, there is a divide in the

²² Previously prevailing was the parenteral route: injection drug use (with a syringe and through blood); <https://ru.sputnik.kg/Radio/20181201/1042243373/chokmorova-kyrgyzstan-spud.html>.

²³ http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2018/russian_updated_leaving%20no%20one%20behind%20in%20hiv%20response_%20factsheet_official_revised.pdf?la=ru&vs=4409.

society between those who think that all people in the country are entitled to constitutional rights and those who think that constitutional rights should be given only to those women who display socially acceptable behavior (meaning not to sex workers or women drug users). This nationalist movement uses lynch mobs that have run multiple raids on sex workers, harassing women who they think are “unfit” for living in Kyrgyzstan. The police and the nationalist movement watch sex workers closely and demand money in exchange for not uploading videos of them to the Internet. Some suggest that when law enforcement officers attack sex workers, they do so to appease both the lynchers and certain politicians who promote nationalistic ideals. The morality police (vice police) are a new team of the Bishkek City Police introduced as a pilot project, but similar squads exist in other parts of the country. The morality police focus on attempts to stop sex work. In the media, messages from top police officers calling to eradicate the sex industry in the country become increasingly frequent. The vice police forcibly test sex industry workers for HIV and STD even when they have documents confirming they were tested recently, illegally detain them and extort bribes; having identified the address of a woman sex worker, they contact her neighbors and ask them to file complaints against her.

Women drug users do not have the same opportunities and instruments for exercising their rights as the rest of the citizens. The lack of clear mechanisms for law enforcement performance evaluation and high turnover rates in law enforcement agencies create legal barriers leading to illegal actions, including unauthorized detention, and physical and sexual violence. The public opinion and practices of government bodies, particularly law enforcement agencies, healthcare institutions and groups of citizens promoting religious and/or “traditional values” leading to discrimination. In fact, these two groups of women (sex workers and drug users) face double discrimination: as women who do not have rights equal to those of men, and as women with “objectionable behavior.” A high level of violence creates barriers in access to HIV, TB, STD, SRH, and HV prevention and treatment. Even injecting drug users stigmatize women using drugs. Many such women experience violence; without identification documents they have no access to HIV-related services and legal support from government agencies. Most violence against women drug users comes from their sexual partners and police.

Sentenced women. Women are often released from prisons without their identification documents, or they have never had such documents because they were not given birth certificates. The absence of identification documents means women cannot exercise their basic legal rights.

The new *Correctional Code* of the Kyrgyz Republic, which entered into force on 1 January 2019, has been amended to include specific measures (Articles 45, 54, and 98) to ensure that pregnant women have access to all necessary services during pregnancy, labor, delivery and postpartum period.

Women in custody/prison need monitoring to ensure compliance with the standards and requirements set out by international and national norms. The *National Center for Prevention of Torture* (NCPT) plans to assess the compliance with legal requirements on women in 2019.

According to the *National Center for Prevention of Torture* (NCPT) 2018 report, detention centers (DC) overseen by the *State Service for Punishment Execution* (SSPE) of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic do not meet the norms of dwelling space per person. Specifically, cells for women in DC-1 hold up to 12 women each, with two-tier beds, while the standards prescribe that living space in a cell should be no less than 3.25 sq. m.²⁴ per person.

During preventive visits, the NCPT staff noted unsatisfactory detention conditions of LGBT persons. In DC-1, the cell for this category of detainees is located in the basement and does not provide sleeping accommodation. Instead of plank beds, the cell features a couch-like platform. Due to high humidity, the cell is wet.

24 KR Law No. 150 *On the Procedure and Conditions for the Custody of Suspects and Accused Persons* of October 31, 2002 (last amended on March 18, 2014). <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1107>.

The right to health is the most frequently violated right in such facilities. Forty-and-half (40.5) percent of women were examined by a doctor or a medical worker only when admitted to DC (and not to the temporary DC, as is the case with men). The percentage of women (12.2%) who reported they had not been medically examined at all at the moment of the survey is higher than that of men (7.3%).

Women (45.9%) reported they had experienced physical violence or psychological pressure in departments of internal affairs or temporary detention centers more frequently than men (32.4%). Women (17.6%) also more often reported physical violence or psychological pressure in SSPE and *State Committee of National Security* (SCNS) detention centers as compared to men (7.8%). It is important to note that, assuming that the government is ready and willing to ensure justice for all victims of torture and considering the Prosecutor General's Office statistics on the number of citizen petitions against torture, the hypothetical loss of the national budget in 2017 was over 1.2 billion soms, or one percent of the budget revenues.²⁵

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

- ✓ Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- ✓ Eliminating violence against women and girls
- ✓ Gender-responsive budgeting
- ✓ Digital and financial inclusion for women
- ✓ Girls Rights

Education. It is noteworthy that during consultations in Bishkek and Osh, quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls was named as the most relevant priority for the country. This highlights the importance of education and continuous learning in ensuring sustainable results in the promotion of gender equality. According to SDG4, “major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrollment rates in schools particularly for women and girls. Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education goals.”

A 72-hour course on gender aspects was included in professional development programmes for teachers at different levels. With support from international organizations (UNESCO, UNDP), a standardized programme on gender theory and standardized gender curricula were developed for a range of disciplines; national and regional universities created libraries with information and reference literature on gender issues; and the *Kyrgyz Republic National Library* set up a gender fund.²⁶ As for informal education, there are 12 *Adult Education Centers*²⁷ that operate in all the regions of Kyrgyzstan, offering a range of opportunities, including communication and personal development, professional education and additional training, basic education courses, and other courses with certificates of completion.

Education quality improvement issues remain relevant for the next five years as reflected in the *Kyrgyz Republic Development Programme for 2018-2022*.²⁸ According to the programme, further efforts in the education sector should be focused on full-scale use of the “digital dividends” in education, mobilization of education and science at all levels to update, expand and introduce the nationwide values-related content, and enhancement of the role, contribution, and participation of local communities and private sector to the development of preschool and school education systems.

In addition to 100 innovative schools earlier established across the republic, 91 more schools received the innovative status in 2018 as experimental platforms for implementing new teaching methods and

²⁵ <http://npm.kg/ru/analitika-i-dokumenty/ezhegodnye-doklady/>.

²⁶ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/216900>

²⁷ <http://edu.gov.kg/ru/high-education/obrazovanie-dlya-vzroslyh-i-neformalnoe-obrazovanie/>

²⁸ http://www.donors.kg/images/Программа_развития_КР_Единство_доверие_и_созидание_2018-2022.pdf

shaping information system skills. In 2018, the percentage of schools connected to the Internet increased to 84.45 percent. For comparison, in 2017 it was 67 percent only. The construction of 80 educational facilities, including 49 schools, was completed in regions. The facilities built from scratch include 30 schools and 19 academic buildings, 25 gyms, four kindergartens, and two educational facilities. At the level of digital transformation of preschool education, an electronic queuing system for kindergartens was developed and introduced in Bishkek and Osh.²⁹ On 15 February 2019, the Ministry of Education and Science, City Department of Education and UNICEF launched a pilot project “Electronic Queueing System for Schools” in Bishkek.³⁰ To enroll a child in first grade in the 2019-2020 academic year, the applicant needs to sign up in the queuing system. The enrollment process consists of several steps and is free. The applicants cannot influence their progress up the list, which increases transparency of the schoolchildren enrollment process.³¹

In Kyrgyzstan, there are about ten *TechWomen* graduates specializing in 3D modeling, telemedicine, app development, etc. For example, Ainura Sagyn, a software developer and one of the top five women leaders in the IT industry, has developed a web application *Tazar.kg*. The application allows waste sorting and disposal based on eight different characteristics.

Since 2015, the country has taken action to get more women and girls into STEM.³² A range of events was organized in Bishkek and across the country, including training courses in STEM disciplines (mathematics, chemistry, physics, information science, biology and English language) for high school girls, computer literacy schools for women, and others. In 2016, five provinces of the Kyrgyz Republic introduced winter schools in science and engineering, covering 194 high school girls and 110 women teachers. The *2019 STEM Winter School* was held in Bishkek in 2018. This one-week event allowed schoolgirls to immerse in engineering, including fields of mechanical engineering, renewable energy sources, hydropower, telematics, biomedical engineering, bio-informatics, logistics, food engineering, apparel and leather production, printing industry and applied mathematics. The project has significant effects, giving women and girls an opportunity to take a new look at technical and engineering jobs.

Management improvement, particularly by means of information technologies and ICT

The role of ICT in the promotion of gender equality is reflected in SDG5, which aims to enhance the use of ICT to empower women. This target is in line with the country’s priorities as per Section V of the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040*.³³ According to it, digital technologies should be introduced on a priority basis in such areas as education, healthcare, tourism, agriculture, telecommunication, banking, light industry, and construction. The main line of action in 2019 will be the promotion of digital frameworks for country’s development, including universal broadband internet connection throughout the Kyrgyz Republic. It will allow the country to achieve the most efficient, reliable and cost-effective connection to global networks and data transmission lines.³⁴

These priorities are in line with the needs discussed during national consultations on poor internet access, especially for rural women, due to weak internet connection in rural areas, and with the need to provide wide-scale training of women of all ages on ICT use in everyday life. Universal internet coverage will provide women in remote regions with an opportunity to develop new skills that will help them improve their living conditions and find additional sources of income.

The opportunities that ICT provides in ensuring equal access to services thanks to their mobility, transparency and availability are reflected in recent digitalization measures of the government.

²⁹ <http://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/post/5591>.

³⁰ <https://ru.sputnik.kg/society/20190209/1043262518/bishkek-ehlektronnaya-ochered-shkola-rebenok-registraciya.html>.

³¹ <https://ru.sputnik.kg/society/20190209/1043262518/bishkek-ehlektronnaya-ochered-shkola-rebenok-registraciya.html>.

³² Project of the International Foundation “Roza Otunbaeva’s Initiative”, with support from the Democracy Commission of the US Embassy in the Kyrgyz Republic.

³³ [http://C://Users/HP/Downloads/Национальная %20стратегия%20КР2018-2040%20\(3\).pdf](http://C://Users/HP/Downloads/Национальная%20стратегия%20КР2018-2040%20(3).pdf).

³⁴ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/430001>.

Nationwide digitalization aims to meet the needs of citizens and businesses in public and municipal services. On 14 December 2018, the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted the *Digital Transformation Concept: Digital Kyrgyzstan 2019-2023*.³⁵ The Concept allows for a range of measures that may directly accelerate progress in the empowerment of women and girls:

- Discontinue the requirement of hard copy documents related to the public service delivery. This measure is important for optimization and simplification of the social allowance process. Currently, the allowance mechanism is not simple because applicants are required to collect necessary documents from different authorities. The population is poorly informed of types of social allowance and services available and how to get them. Social media networks can help solve this problem through dissemination of information on available social services;
- Ensure wide-scale integration of information technologies in education and healthcare through an online system of non-cash and electronic payments. This measure will help optimize the work of *Family Medicine Centers* (FMC), currently overburdened and do not cope well with large numbers of patients. A pilot project, under which all FMCs will be supposed to work on a 24-hour basis and provide online consultations to patients via smartphones and computers, will be launched in Bishkek in July 2019. In addition, an electronic queueing system will be introduced in outpatient clinics.
- In education the country introduced a preschool enrollment system in 2018 and an electronic school enrollment system in February 2019. The systems are expected to optimize recordkeeping and transparency of the education system.
- Develop a job classification system in the information technology sector with integration of mechanisms to identify promising jobs in innovations and high technologies and subsequent development and introduction of training programmes compliant with the international standards.
- Introduce new financing instruments and increase the availability and accessibility of banking services in the regions through electronic payments and mobile banking. This measure is particularly important for women's empowerment allowing them to manage their own finances via online banking and electronic payments.
- Introduce internet technologies that will provide people in regions with access to new business development opportunities regardless of their place of residence. Internet platforms will become points of access to information for small and medium businesses in the regions. The use of new online commerce instruments will allow women to run businesses and grow their customer base.

Gender-sensitive budgeting

In recent years, Kyrgyzstan has been actively promoting the integration of gender-based approaches in national budget planning and implementation processes. The government, in partnership with international and nongovernmental organizations and other civil society members, supports initiatives aimed at advancing gender-sensitive budgeting in Kyrgyzstan.

The country's key strategic documents, such as the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017*³⁶ and the *National Strategy for Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040*³⁷ recognize the importance of achieving gender equality. However, the objectives and activities in these strategic documents do not prioritize gender-sensitive budgeting. The relevance and importance of gender-based approaches in budget planning and implementation is reflected only in the *National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality until 2020*.

As of today, the main achievements in promoting gender-sensitive budgeting may include:

³⁵ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/216667>

³⁶ Approved by Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic (No. 11 of 21 January 2013)

³⁷ Approved by Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic (No. 221 of 31 October 2018)

- Introduction of a sustainable mechanism for gender-based assessment of the national budget and the *Midterm Strategy on Budget Expenditures* (MTSBE). The budgets gender assessments remain selective and do not cover all local self-government bodies. Experts in gender budget assessments identify three gender-specific benchmarks for budgets and budget forecasts:
 - 1) targeted gender-specific expenditures of ministries and agencies;
 - 2) expenditures on promoting equality in employment and work relations of public employees;
 - 3) general budget expenditures that are not directly linked to the gender problem but need to be assessed in the context of their effect on women and men, girls and boys.
- Development of a gender-responsive and programme budget for the *Ministry of Labour and Social Development*, charged with gender policy implementation.
- Development of gender assessment standards for the national budget and increased gender focus of budget circulars.³⁸
- Mechanism of social service procurement at central and municipal levels³⁹ aimed at addressing social problems and achieving the public good goals using national and/or local budget resources. One of the objectives of social service procurement is to “fulfill government obligations in promoting human rights and freedoms through the lens of gender equality.” Expenditures under the social service procurement at national and municipal levels are explicitly gender-specific.
- Continuous cooperation between government agencies, civil society members and partners in developing and applying gender-sensitive budgeting.
- Capacity building of government officials and civil society members in gender-sensitive budgeting, including at the local level.

The main barrier to effective gender-sensitive budgeting is that the existing budget classification does not show how planned and actual expenses are shared between different social groups, so it is difficult to fully evaluate efficiency of budget policy through the lens of gender equality. Data on expenditures under the social service procurement contracts is not publicly available.

Budget implementation is not analyzed from the gender perspective because official budget implementation reports contain data on functional and economic classifications only. It does not allow retrieval of information on the efficiency of actual expenses on women and men though. Programme budgets (implementation) could have provided the best source of this information, but so far these budgets remain formal and are rarely used as an effective instrument to track the amounts of allocations and evaluate the efficiency of such expenses based on performance indicators.

As of today, programme budgets can be used only for tracking and analysis of planned budget expenditures that are explicitly gender-specific. The actual expenditures on gender equality are very difficult to identify at this point, but they can be tracked in future if actual, not formal, implementation of budgets in the *programme format* is ensured.

Violence against women. The review of measures taken in the Kyrgyz Republic in the past five years provides evidence of real improvements in government’s and society’s response to violence against women and girls. However, there are new threats and challenges, for example, related to the spread and use of new technologies. Of note, the Kyrgyz Republic undertakes special measures to consider gender aspects of the treat of radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism. Specifically, the Kyrgyz Government is implementing a joint plan with a number of UN agencies within the UN Peacebuilding Fund support. It also includes arrangements related to the implementation of the third *National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for 2018-2021*.

Despite measures taken to engage local communities and young men and awareness raising campaigns addressing youth and other people, the eradication of gender stereotypes and negative

³⁸ Innovative Solution Inc. Report: Gender-Sensitive Budgeting in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2015. As part of the Enhanced Accountability in Funding for Gender Equality Project: EU / UN Partnership.

³⁹ Law No. 70 *On Social Government Social Contracts* of 28 April 2017, and Law No. 101 *On Local Governance* of 15 July 2011.

practices presented as national traditions remains a pressing issue. In *CEDAW Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Kyrgyzstan*,⁴⁰ the Committee notes that “cases of violence against women are underreported, as it is considered a private matter and is taken mainly to elders’ (*aksakals*) courts, and that victim protection services and enforcement measures are insufficient, given the absence of shelters for women who are victims of violence and the fact that only one crisis centre operating in the State party is funded by the State.” there is a need for comprehensive measures to coordinate all stakeholders engaged in the prevention of violence against women.

Girls’ rights

The main approach in activities of organizations that advance the rights of girls is based on leadership development. This approach helps build a positive scenario of a girl’s life, where she will be able to make decisions on her own and defend her interests in both personal and public life. The key element required to make this approach effective is to provide girls with educational opportunities.

However, despite the generally positive statistics on educational coverage for girls, there is an ongoing tendency among girls to quit school after the ninth grade. This is due to the growing trend of going back to patriarchal values that use a certain model of girls’ behavior, where a girl is supposed to be “first an obedient daughter and then an obedient wife.” The polarization of public opinion and increasing dissemination of patriarchal ideas requiring subordination from women – all this directly affects the status of girls. According to these patriarchal norms, a girl’s life strategy should be entirely limited to servicing her husband, children, family and community. The only way to approach conservative communities supporting such models of behavior is to work with local authorities, such as the elders and religious leaders. An example of successful cooperation is the joint campaign of the *Muslim Spiritual Authority of Kyrgyzstan* and local government agencies to raise public awareness about criminal liability for “*nikah*” (marriage in Islam) with underage girls. Raising awareness on early marriages had positive effects on both parents and religious leaders, at least in terms of their decision not to let girls get married until they attain the age of adulthood.

With support from UNICEF, to continue to change norms that discriminate girls, deny their right to self-determination and promote their subordinate role in the society, the government plans to design a C4D (Communication for Development) plan as part of the upcoming *Government Plan on Early Marriages*. The C4D plan should focus on building a communication strategy that will lead to comprehensive transformations in behavior practices and norms, including through developing intolerance to early marriages and violence against girls in the society.

An integrated approach to promote the girls’ is required to ensure that girls’ rights are clearly incorporated in all development plans and programmes. The *National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2018-2040* underscores the goal of efficient human development with a focus on centers on the development of young generations. In recent years, there has been a stronger focus on youth as an active social group. The country has adopted a range of regulatory and policy documents on youth activities. However, the actual participation of youth in social and political life remain nominal. In 2015, the percentage of young people working in government and municipal sectors was 15 and 22 percent, respectively.⁴¹ Full and effective participation of youth in the country’s social and political life is often limited due to the “lack of work experience, knowledge and political maturity of youth and absence of a well-functioning system in institutions to prepare youth for actual participation.”⁴²

The Kyrgyz Republic Government Programme “*Youth Policy Development in 2017-2020*” is gender blind and does not cover specific challenges that girls and boys and young women and men face in different socioeconomic environments. In this programme, youth is a homogenous aggregated group. And it is impossible to assess how the programme activities impact girls and boys with different entry

⁴⁰ CEDAW/C/KGZ/CO/4, March 11, 2015

⁴¹ Kyrgyz Republic Government Programme “Youth Policy Development for 2017-2020.”

⁴² Access of Kyrgyzstan’s Youth to Participation in Politics: Opportunities and Challenges. Survey Report, 2016.

conditions and face different problems in exercising their rights to personal and physiological development.

A survey was conducted in 2017 to measure the *Youth Development Index* in the Kyrgyz Republic.⁴³ According to the survey, “for young people in the country, the youth policy should aim to create conditions for self-realization, take the needs of young people into account and ensure they are incorporated in national programmes/plans, and motivate/encourage youth organizations.” It has a range of important data on current trends in youth development, such as “low representation of youth in political parties (1.8%) and government agencies (0.2%), poor exercise of rights and freedoms (38.5%), in particular legal protection (25.3%), and lack of attention to youth from the government (21.6%).” Less than a third of interviewed young people showed interest in public and political life in the country (31.5%). The majority of young respondents said that in future they would want to work in the business sector (45.2%), some reported they would want to work in the public sector (28.7%), and only a few said they would want to work in local self-government bodies (1.4%). “Employment, career, recognition and self-realization” that generally imply hard work and ambitions were named as the least important values. The top three values chosen by the respondents were family happiness, health and wealth. Among the reasons explaining low interest in active public life were “influence of parents who advocate for the importance of starting a family and maintaining health, but do not attach much value to education as an investment in future; moral principles/norms in the environment not related to quality education, work, persistence and self-improvement; success models of young politicians and officials not related to self-education, professionalism or successful work experience.”

The next Youth Development Programme-2030 should be based on a systematic and comprehensive approach to civic engagement of youth and create a favorable environment that will encourage young people to participate more actively in public life, and promote values of equitable development, personal growth and continuous education as the key elements of a successful society. To increase youth policy efficiency, the programme should take into account specific needs of different groups of youth and children disaggregated by sex and social status. It is also important to introduce a system of indicators disaggregated by sex that would allow the government to plan and track the impacts of programme activities on different groups of youth and girls/young women in particular.

Identified priorities for girls’ rights promotion include the following:

- education as a continuous learning process from the early age and through all stages of girl’s development; promoting girl’s rights to self-determination and choice of career and lifestyle; empowerment beyond traditional ideas about what girls can and should do: for example, education in engineering and technology, IT and ICT;
- enhancing leadership of girls and shaping skills for actual participation in development processes both in the family and community and among friends;
- access for girls to quality services (healthcare and social) and resources that enable decent life and opportunities for preparing for adult life;
- information campaigns to transform stereotypes and discriminatory norms preventing full and effective development, enforcement and actual exercise of girls’ rights.

⁴³ *Youth Development Index in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2017*, Institute for Youth Development.

Section 2: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

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

- ✓ Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors
- ✓ Introduced / strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g., education and training, skills, subsidies)
- ✓ Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace

NAP on GE 2018-2020 aims to assist in reducing the number of economically inactive women of working age through engagement in jobs.

In 2017, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development established an inter-ministerial group to conduct **gender analysis of employment legislation** and suggest on legal mechanisms and instruments to overcome existing barriers for women in the labour market. The analysis⁴⁴ of employment laws and regulations showed that despite the declared prohibition of discrimination by sex/gender, certain elements of discrimination persist both at the legislation level and in the labour market in practice. Actual infringements of women's rights and freedoms include refusal to employ pregnant women and women with little children, lower wages for women, and factors that prevent women from having certain jobs and exercising their employment rights in certain occupations. The analysis included a survey that confirmed the vulnerable status of women in employment. According to this survey, out of 37 employers, 52 percent were against pre-maternity and maternity leaves for women; 12 percent agreed to provide an unpaid leave; 5 percent provided financial assistance upon the child's first birthday while maintaining the average monthly salary; 3 percent were ready to pay maternity leave for 1.5 years; 12 percent were not aware or did not want to be aware about maternity leaves for women; and 16 percent did not respond.⁴⁵ Such common practices as unlawful dismissal of "undesirable employees," not signing employment contracts, not providing support during temporary disability due to occupational injury, not keeping *employment record books*, which affects employees upon retirement, etc. also impede the exercise of labour rights.

Based on the analysis of the results, the inter-ministerial group developed recommendations to amend legislation to improve the national employment policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. The package of recommendations on legislation improvements includes the need to coordinate and harmonize existing tax, financial and credit policies to ensure that loans, subsidies and other support from the government are available upon employer's registration and payment of taxes and social contributions. For example, after having paid a certain minimum amount of social contributions, both the employer and employee become entitled to subsidies or investments. Recommended measures include:

- introduce administrative liability for employers that do not keep employment record books and do not sign labour agreements;
- make it mandatory to sign labour agreements that will bind employers to pay taxes and social contributions, thus ensuring pensions for employees in future;
- introduce the term "domestic work" and confer it the same status as the "productive labour" to standardize and guarantee the right to benefits, pensions, etc.;

⁴⁴ADB/Eurasia Foundation in Central Asia, Policy for Elimination of Gender Discrimination in Work Legislation, 2017.

⁴⁵ Ch.R. Kulueva. Nekotorye voprosy diskriminatsii v sovremennom Kyrgyzstane: sotsialno-ekonomicheskii i regionalny aspekt (Some Issues of Labour Discrimination in Modern Kyrgyzstan: Socioeconomic and Regional Aspect) // Young Scientists, 2016, No. 6, pp. 471-477; URL <https://moluch.ru/archive/110/27107/>.

- make an inventory of household activities that can be recognized as socially important and propose mechanism/models of recognition and payment;
- facilitate the inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities into public and economic life, revise disability verification rules to be based not on functions rather than disorders.

During national consultations as part of the Beijing+25 Platform for Action Review, the participants pointed out the need for action to **prevent sexual harassment at work**. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (Article 16, para 4) allows for such action, and the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on *State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women* supports it, prohibiting any discrimination towards persons of different sex/gender, including discrimination by marital status, pregnancy, potential pregnancy and family obligations, and sexual harassment. Under Article 21: Prevention and Elimination of Gender-Based Harassment at Work and Liability for Gender Discrimination:

- the employer has no right to expose employees of different sex to pressure or persecution on the basis that an employee has stood up to his/her sexual harassments or have filed a complaint against the employer for gender-based discrimination;
- in case of pressure or persecution of employees on the basis of gender stereotypes, including sexual harassment, the employer shall be held liable in accordance with applicable laws of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- the employer is required to take action to prevent sexual harassment at workplace;
- if the employer unlawfully forces an employee to quit, he or she shall be held liable in accordance with applicable laws of the Kyrgyz Republic.

However, organizations, institutions and businesses have no compliance practices with the laws on prevention of sexual harassment at workplace. The society's concern about this issue has been growing recently; there have been reports of harassment in public places. It is obvious that today there is a strong need for systems and mechanisms to respond to and act against harassment both at work and in public places. Such measures are also included in *NAP on GE 2018-2020*, Part 15.1: Gender policy implementation monitoring to identify discriminatory practices in employment and work relations in pilot ministries (Ministry of Emergency Situations, State Human Resources Department, and Ministry of Health); Part 15.3: Suggestions from the inter-ministerial working group on amending some of the laws and regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic (Criminal [Code](#), [Code](#) on Violations, [Code](#) on Offences, Criminal Procedure [Code](#), and [Law](#) of the Kyrgyz Republic on *State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women*), including on eradication of gender discrimination and violence, guarantees of women's employment rights, and protection against sexual harassment in employment and work relations. The *CEDAW Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report* of the Kyrgyz Republic outline the results of an anonymous social survey⁴⁶ conducted in Kyrgyzstan by "Tayanych" Public Trade Union Organization. The survey covered 1,200 respondents and showed the following:

- According to the respondents, sexual harassment (experienced or known about) takes place mainly in such institutions as universities and private businesses; it was highlighted that due to existing stereotypes, sexually harassed women usually keep silent about it and do not press for investigation to protect their rights.
- Respondents from the media community also reported similar cases, saying they faced sexual harassment during interviews with men, e.g., offers to meet in informally, etc.
- Some of the respondents working in private sector said that some men, owners of sewing shops, tried to persuade them into informal relationships using such an argument as "if you agree, I will raise your pay, if you don't, I will fire you." It is also emphasized that such cases are very hard to prove.

⁴⁶ Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Kyrgyzstan: Update / Information from Kyrgyzstan in Response to the Concluding Observations, 2018.

Given the survey results, the Ombudsman's Office in the Kyrgyz Republic planned comprehensive monitoring of the existing employment relations system with a focus on sexual harassment at work for the next ad hoc report for the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic.⁴⁷

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

- ✓ Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable
- ✓ Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women

The *National Strategy on Achieving Gender Equality until 2020* stresses the uneven distribution of reproductive and family obligations as a factor contributing to economic dependence and vulnerability of women.⁴⁸ The time-use survey by the National Statistics Committee in 2015 showed that women take much more responsibility for unpaid domestic work. On average, women spend 4.5 hours a day on domestic work, i.e., 18.8 percent of their time as compared to 6.5 percent (one hour and 20 minutes) spent by men. Women spend twice as much time on childcare than men.⁴⁹

In recent years, the preschool education sector has been making efforts to develop preschool infrastructure and introduce innovative programmes for early childhood development. In 2017, the country had 1,248 public and 142 private kindergartens. The number of children in preschool organizations increased from 132,000 in 2013 to 187,000 in 2017. However, despite this growing trend, preschool education coverage is still 23.5 percent only.⁵⁰

Preschool availability plays a significant role in children's development and their success in further education. It is also an important factor in ensuring access to preschool educational organizations and reducing the burden of unpaid domestic work. Along with preschool availability, an important condition for early childhood development is the quality of services provided by public and private preschools. A survey in 2019⁵¹ identified the need for systematic professional development and training of preschool teachers in early childhood development methods and facilitation of cooperation among preschool staff to share knowledge and innovative approaches to children's education. In this regard, the survey report mentions the first *National Forum on Early Childhood Development* (2018), which provided a platform for discussing potential improvements in the preschool education system. The survey results point out that parents' attitude to preschool education has started to change in recent years. Parents began to understand the importance of children's development and view kindergartens as not only organizations providing childcare, but also educational institutions. Parent's requirements to the level of service and quality standards as authorized by the educational license are growing.

In February 2018, the country introduced an electronic queuing system for preschool enrollment. The objective is to optimize the system of paperwork for enrollment in a preschool educational organization. Children are enrolled via an electronic database that contains data about a child for enrollment in a kindergarten. The *Electronic Preschool Queuing System* project is part of government efforts to promote digital transformation of public services. The project first of all aims to provide support to families, starting from the most vulnerable groups of social security beneficiaries. It should be noted that the project is based on the social justice principle: persons on the waiting lists in preceding years (about 5,000 people) were registered first. Every citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic can

⁴⁷ Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Kyrgyzstan: Update / Information from Kyrgyzstan in Response to the Concluding Observations, 2018.

⁴⁸ National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Kyrgyz Republic: Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, 2016

⁴⁹ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/>.

⁵⁰ Preschool Sector Analysis in Kyrgyzstan, ACDI/VOCA for USAID Agro Horizon Project, 2019.

⁵¹ Preschool Sector Analysis in Kyrgyzstan, ACDI/VOCA for USAID Agro Horizon Project, 2019.

register a child aged from 6 months to 7 years in the *Unified Electronic Register* at www.balabakcha.edu.gov.kg for the preschool education purposes.

A survey⁵² in two southern provinces of Kyrgyzstan showed that women “usually spend their energy and time on caring for family, ensuring conditions for regeneration of household members, while men’s contribution to housework is mostly related to production, which can be monetized (e.g., livestock or farming). So, even in the household economics system, man and woman are not equal: man’s work is considered to be “productive,” measurable and visible. On the other hand, even the symbolical value of caring for seniors that lies on the woman’s shoulders is automatically attributed to her husband – the community says the son “takes good care of his old parents.”

Improving access to infrastructure is important for reducing the burden of unpaid domestic work. In rural areas, women and children bear most of responsibility for household water supply. There are almost no flushable toilets connected to centralized sewage in villages. Women and girls are responsible for keeping the toilets clean. Many women reported health problems, such as urinary infections, due to the use of cesspits in nighttime and in winter; such toilets are also inconvenient for children.⁵³

The *Strategy for Development of Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Systems in Towns and Villages of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2026*⁵⁴ was adopted in 2016. Under this strategy, the country plans to build and rehabilitate water supply systems in 425 villages for a total value of 8,882,000,000 soms. As of 1 January 2018, there were 1,891 towns and villages in the Kyrgyz Republic, including 1,805 villages. In 267 villages, drinking water supply systems were built before 1960, in 595 villages – before 1990, and 390 villages have no water supply system at all.⁵⁵

A number of other important decisions were made in 2018 to implement the *National Programme for Irrigation Development in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2017-2026*. Specifically, in 2018, the country put to use around 634 hectares of new irrigated land, increased water availability on more than 1,901 hectares of land, and improved the agricultural condition of 1,600 hectares of land against 500 hectares of new irrigated land and 1,000 hectares of land with increased water availability in 2017.⁵⁶ However, women still have issues with access to irrigation water. Irrigation water is an economic asset, but managing this asset is a traditional niche area of men. The country has 477 water user associations that are responsible for irrigation water management. Women’s representation in these associations is less than ten percent. *Public Associations ALGA* and *Kyrgyz Alliance for Water and Sanitation* work on engaging women groups in natural resource management, including through participation in CDWUUs (*Community Drinking Water Users Unions*) and WUAs (*Water User Associations*).

In 2018, a countrywide survey was conducted under the European Union’s initiative to develop a new *Programme on Budget Support for the Integrated Water Resource Management System in the Kyrgyz Republic*. The survey objective was to provide recommendations on the inclusion of such issues as equal access to clean water, sanitation, energy, transport infrastructure and equal participation in infrastructure management for women and girls into the programme. It recommended to incorporate gender aspects in the *National Strategy on Water* – a mandatory requirement for obtaining budget support for the water sector from the European Union. The *Budget Support Programme* requires mandatory inclusion of gender approaches into the Kyrgyz Republic’s water management policies, legislation and systems, including development and adoption of a gender-sensitive action plan for all sectoral ministries involved in water supply and sanitation management.

⁵² Gender Survey Study for the Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Alai and Chon-Alai Programme, 2015 (Helvetas, Aga-Khan Foundation).

⁵³ National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Kyrgyz Republic: Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, 2016.

⁵⁴ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/99118>.

⁵⁵ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/99118>.

⁵⁶ <http://mineconom.gov.kg/ru/post/5591>.

The programme also allows for the operationalization of a unified information system on water management to integrate gender-disaggregated data in all water sector indicators, including one mandatory indicator as a budget support requirement from the European Union. To fulfill this requirement, it is planned to assist the *National Statistic Committee* in developing guidelines on collection of water access and management data disaggregated by gender, age and other social parameters.

This is an urgent matter because it helps address the lack of gender-disaggregated statistics on access to water and sanitation. Aggregate information, including on children’s, healthcare and social organizations, is currently available in the *Target Setting under the Protocol on Water and Health* document⁵⁷ and the country-level GLAAS profile⁵⁸ (2016-2018). Both documents were prepared by the inter-ministerial working group with input from experts; 90 percent of the working group members were women.

Home heating and fuel (dry manure) collection are mainly the responsibilities of women and girls. In winter, women and girls generally spend more time on home heating, cooking and laundry, sacrificing their leisure and self-education time. Efficient energy-saving technologies will help reduce the burden of domestic work. Positive examples of progress in energy efficiency and renewable energy are the *Sustainable Energy Solutions for Rural Communities under the UNDP “Jashyl Ayil” Initiative* project (2015-2018) and UNISON Group’s⁵⁹ projects that aimed to increase energy efficiency with a focus on gender-specific needs. In the formal education sector responsible for training experts in energy and infrastructure, there is still a gender gap. In the informal education sector, international and civil society organizations play an important role in professional development of women. In particular, the KYRSEFF project provides training in new energy-saving resource management technologies for women.

7. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?

In the past five years, both revenues and expenditures in the general government sector have been growing. Under the Budget Code,⁶⁰ the public sector includes government agencies, social security and pension authorities, local self-government bodies and related subordinate organizations and institutions funded from relevant budgets.

Table 1. Revenues and expenditures in the general government sector, billion soms

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Revenues	158	170	175	198	217
Expenditures	159	174	194	212	222

In 2018, the government passed a resolution⁶¹ optimizing staffing levels in government agencies. According to this resolution, the country abolished and restructured a number of subordinate organizations. However, staff downsizing affected only the following agencies:

- Mobile Employment Service Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (abolished, with functions and financial and technical resources transferred to the Bishkek

⁵⁷ Target Setting in the Context of the Protocol on Water and Health in Kyrgyzstan. https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/meetings/NPD_meetings/2013/Kyrgyzstan/SC_Mar2013/Target_setting_KG_final_report_130313_Ru.pdf.

⁵⁸ UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-water (GLAAS).

⁵⁹ <https://unisongroup.org/ru/content/kontakty>.

⁶⁰ Entered into force by KR Law No. 60 of 16 May 2016.

⁶¹ Resolution No. 227 on *Optimization of Staff Numbers in Executive Government Agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic* of 7 May 2018.

City Department for Employment Promotion of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development).

- Town-level social development departments of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (restructured) in the towns of Naryn, Talas, Tokmok, Batken and Uzgen and district-level social development departments in Naryn, Talas, Chui, Batken and Uzgen districts, with staff numbers reduced by 20 people.
- Southern Regional Center of the Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism (abolished);
- National Cultural Center of the Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism (staff numbers reduced by 15 people).
- National Cinema Directorates of the Cinematography Department of the Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism (staff numbers reduced by 23 people).
- State-owned province-level television and radio broadcasting companies and district- and province-level newspaper offices (restructured through merging to form seven province-level media centers, with staff numbers reduced by 64 people).
- Forestry departments and units of the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry (restructured through merging into 39 forestry departments, with administrative and management staff numbers reduced by 84 people and technical and maintenance staff numbers reduced by 17 people).

In addition, subordinate departments of the State Registration Service at the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, which used to be funded from the republican budget (646 public servants and 229 supporting workers), switched to self-financing.

Two more subordinate organizations were closed down, but staff was retained:

- Central Pledge Registration Office of the Ministry of Justice, with its functions, financial and technical resources, and six employees transferred to the Central Office of the Ministry of Justice; and
- *Youth Labour Exchange* at the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, with its functions, financial and technical resources and six employees transferred to the Bishkek City Department for Employment Promotion of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

The impacts of these measures on women and men have not been assessed.

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

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

- ✓ Broadened access to finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services
- ✓ Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities

The poverty rate decreased from 30.6 percent in 2014 to 25.6 percent in 2017. In 2017, the number of people living below the poverty line was 1,601,000, out of which 72 percent were rural residents.⁶²

The *CEDAW Concluding Observations on the Fourth Report of Kyrgyzstan*⁶³ contain concerns about “the disproportionately high rate of unemployment among women and about the high proportion of women working in the informal sector, in particular migrant women, to whom the labour law does not apply.” Between 2005 and 2018, the economic activity of working-age women was decreasing gradually. Over the past four years, the number of economically inactive women and men has increased by 13 and 3 percent, respectively. At the same time, in the last 11 years, the economic

⁶²<http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/>.

⁶³ CEDAW/C/KGZ/CO/4, 11 March 2015.

activity rate for working-age men has steadily been over 75 percent, while for women it has never increased over 45 percent. This means that only about 45 percent of working-age women are represented in the labour market (employed or unemployed).⁶⁴

The number of economically inactive people has been increasing rapidly as compared to economically active population. Available data on the numbers of economically inactive population clearly demonstrates the strong impact of traditional gender approaches to family relations in our country, according to which women “are supposed to stay home and give birth to children.” The number of women engaged in domestic work is 146,000 people more than the number of all economically inactive men in the country (2017). Moreover, economically inactive men are mostly students and pensioners, i.e., people categorized as economically inactive only because they study or have completed their employment, enjoying a well-earned rest. NSC data analysis shows that employment rates for women of working age are decreasing, while unemployment rates remain relatively high, about 9 percent.⁶⁵

Women more often engage in small farm management in the private sector as compared to other types of agricultural business. Today, women head only 9.7 percent of 518 collective farms and only one government-owned farm out of 38 (in Chui Province). Women who are agricultural entrepreneurs are a minority. Out of 323,262 registered farm households, only 62,212 (or 19.4 percent) have women leaders.⁶⁶ As a rule, agricultural development projects include women only in components covering household plots and vegetable farming. Women usually have access to microfinancing only and less opportunities for large loans, agricultural equipment leasing, or participation in agricultural land lease auctions.

The important role women play in the agricultural sector is widely recognized. However, the *Agrarian Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2017*, *Pasture Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2015* and *Cooperative Movement Development Programme* are gender blind, ignoring gender-specific barriers in agricultural practices or differences in the level of hardships faced by men and women farmers.

Since 2014, UN Women, World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have been implementing a joint *Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE)* project⁶⁷ in 82 pilot villages in Chui, Naryn, Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, covering over 2,730 rural women. During this period, project participants implemented 146 business initiatives and completed training in modern agricultural technologies, business and marketing fundamentals, and leadership. In addition, they received support in the form of start-up funding, seeds and equipment for business and collective farm development. The project also allowed for food assistance to families. To share experience and expand entrepreneurship among rural women, the project participants established four women associations now providing services to almost 2,000 women, consulting on agricultural technologies and how to set up own businesses or agricultural projects.

Women's entrepreneurship. Existing stereotypes and patriarchal views of the women's role in society are curbing women's entrepreneurship opportunities. Being expected to balance work with family responsibilities, women often engage in informal or part-time employment. The lack of access to preschools increases pressure on women, forcing them to work in areas with flexible work hours so that they could perform all unpaid domestic work. Due to time poverty, women have limited access to assets, skills and information, as well as professional contacts needed for business growth. Available data on small/medium and large enterprises in the country also demonstrates women's low

⁶⁴ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/>.

⁶⁵ SDG Information Note, N. Toktogulova, 2018.

⁶⁶ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/>.

⁶⁷ http://kg.one.un.org/content/unct/kyrgyzstan/ru/home/news/kg-news/2018/rwee_ruralwomen_2018.html.

representation in the top management of large (575 women and 1,290 men), medium (1,670 women and 2,374 men) and small (6,810 women and 15,708 men) businesses.⁶⁸

Entrepreneurship building, technology investments and business consulting services are key to successful participation of women in economic life. The country is currently implementing a number of projects aimed to support women associations, cooperatives and businesses to ensure full and effective women's participation in the value chain and access to domestic and international markets and international accreditation.

In 2018, to support women's entrepreneurship under top priority directions, UNDP launched a project to enhance women's and youth entrepreneurship via mentorship programmes in Osh, Jalal-Abad, Naryn and Issyk-Kul provinces. The objective is to improve entrepreneurial competencies and to establish economic ties between experienced and successful entrepreneurs and women and youth entrepreneurs in regions.

USAID⁶⁹ ACDI/VOCA's Advancing Women Leadership in Entrepreneurship project (2012-2005) aimed to build and enhance the capacity of women entrepreneurs. A thousand of women under the project received an opportunity to improve their business skills in the agricultural, tourism and clothing industries. The project implementers selected a hundred of women entrepreneurs with capacity for growth and provided them with individual consultations on business development.

In 2018, USAID ACDI/VOCA launched a new project until 2023 to improve the competitiveness of enterprises, including those headed by women. The project is based on investments in small enterprises that have capacity for new jobs and profit growth. Within five years, project-supported enterprises are expected to create up to 18,000 new jobs and increase sales to 39 million dollars. The project provides a set of capacity building measures for small and medium-sized enterprises.

There is a positive example of an alliance between women farmers who established the “*Dyikan Muras*” *Seed-Savers Network*. This network consists of 70 women seed producers. The main goal of the network is to create and save a bank of authentic vegetable seeds suitable for reproduction. “Dyikan Muras”⁷⁰ is a member to the Ministry of Agriculture's working group responsible for designing a *Seed Farming Strategy Advancing the Conservation of Biodiversity and Agricultural Variability to Ensure Food Security and Sovereignty of the Country*.

Direct foreign investments in January-September 2018 decreased by 31.5 percent as compared with the same period in 2017. The majority of direct foreign investments (about 84%) go to the mining and exploration sector, processing industries, finance and insurance, and information and communication sectors. Investments in the processing industries decreased 3.6 times and finance and insurance sector – by 1.8 percent.⁷¹ The decline in investment, as well as restructuring of the apparel production due to the introduction of digitally operated equipment may result in the loss of jobs for many women employed in the apparel production.

In 2018, the majority of microcredit clients were women – 55.1 percent (121,400 people).⁷² It is important to ensure that women have access to large loans that will provide opportunities for wider-scale women's entrepreneurship. To achieve this, special lending products with lower interest rates and smaller collaterals are required.

The *Women's Entrepreneurship Development Project* (JICA/ADB) aims to improve living standards among women entrepreneurs in rural areas and small towns in the Kyrgyz Republic. The project, in partnership with the *Ayil Bank*, *Bai-Tushum Bank* and *First Microcredit Company* (First MCC), used

⁶⁸ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/gendernaya-statistika/>.

⁶⁹ USAID – United States Agency for International Development.

⁷⁰ Dyikan Muras was established under the auspices of the Alliance of Development Initiatives.

⁷¹ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/>.

⁷² <http://stat.kg/ru/news/mikrokreditovaniya-naseleniya-v-i-polugodii-2016-2018gg/>.

microfinance products that the project survey identified as relevant for women entrepreneurs: a) lending with partial rebate of interest payments; b) lending against warehouse receipts (commodity-backed), c) contract financing, and d) credit line in microfinance organizations. The introduction of these pilot lending products helped address financing problems that are most pressing for economically active women, including problems with collateral security, need to use alternative types of collateral, and issues with loan processing arrangements. Under the project, women entrepreneurs received 405 loans for a total value of USD1,525,798.28. Thanks to these loans, their average annual income (after payback) increased by 18 percent and the number of jobs available for persons that are not family members increased to 4.66 on average, which is 0.26 more than the basic rate. The women spent up to 32 percent of their net profit on business growth.

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

- ✓ Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g., unemployment benefits, social assistance)
- ✓ Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels
- ✓ Improved access to the above for specific populations (e.g., women in informal employment, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian settings)
- ✓ System of Social Service Procurement Contracts

Under the Constitution, the Kyrgyz Republic is a social welfare state. The country has pensions and benefits for unprotected social groups. The Law on *Government Benefits in the Kyrgyz Republic*⁷³ allows for three types of allowance: a one-off (lump-sum) payment upon childbirth; a monthly benefit for low-income families with children aged under 16; and a social security benefit for citizens not eligible for pension.

According to the NSC, at the end of 2018, the total number of government benefit recipients was 365,200. Out of them, 276,500 children received the monthly benefit for low-income families with children (MBLIFC) ("Help to the Family"), and 87,000 people were social benefit recipients. It should be noted that the number of MBLIFC recipients may vary, but the number of social benefit recipients grows steadily, having increased by almost 14.3 percent in the past five years. The country is taking steps to improve the system of identification of beneficiaries and welfare payments. Thus, starting in 1 June 2018, the extent of social assistance to children with disabilities, children born by HIV infected women, and children living with HIV or AIDS is increased by 33 percent. Average amount of monthly social allowance at year-end has been 3,008 soms, which is 25 percent higher than the amount in 2013.⁷⁴

At the end of 2017, there were 181,500 persons with disabilities in the country, including 29,900 children. It should be noted that the percentage of individuals with disabilities has increased over the past years, so the number of children receiving disability allowance has also increased. At the end of 2017, the average monthly child disability benefit was 3,000 soms. However, it makes only about 72 percent of the subsistence level per child (4,158.42 soms per month on average).⁷⁵ In 2018, the amount of monthly social allowance to children with disabilities has been increased from 3,000 to 4,000 soms, which, makes the government allowance cover 98 percent of the subsistence level per child (4,070 soms) as of today.

In January 2019, the government introduced a new social service – a personal assistant for children with disabilities. The assistant's pay is 4,900 soms. Personal assistants are assigned to children with disabilities verified by the social security disability commission. A personal assistant can be a parent,

⁷³ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111766>.

⁷⁴ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/news/skolko-kyrgyzstancsev-prozhivaet-za-chertoj-bednosti-i-vozle-nee/>.

⁷⁵ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/zdravoohranenie/>.

a guardian or a close relative of a child under 18. The benefit amount is based on the living wage and may vary depending on the latter. Today, the country has about 30,000 children with disabilities.⁷⁶

Also, in January 2019, the country launched a pilot mechanism to simplify the provision of “*balaga suyunchu*” (one-off payment upon childbirth) in Bishkek and Chui provinces – now the benefit will be paid via an electronic system without involvement of district or city authorities. The pilot project will be run in Sverdlovsk District of Bishkek and in Sokuluk and Alamudun districts of Chui Province. The money will be transferred to transit bank accounts from which they will be available to beneficiaries. This measure will help avoid mistakes in applications for the childbirth allowance (“*balaga suyunchu*”) and make the payment process faster. Citizens will have access to information support on the terms and conditions of the benefit: operators will provide beneficiaries with a list of nearby banks to open accounts. Citizens can also apply for the allowance upon childbirth registration with the State Registration Service. In 2018, 90,849 people received the lump-sum childbirth allowance (*balaga suyunchu*) for a total value of 365.8 million soms (from the republican budget).

In November 2018, the government introduced a *Procedure for Granting a Pregnancy and Birth Benefit to Unemployed Women Inmates in Correctional Institutions*, approved by Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 19 November 2018 #534.⁷⁷ The pregnancy and birth benefit will be paid to pregnant women inmates in accordance with the Government Resolution on *Revision of the Benefit Granting Mechanism and Procedure*. In 2017, the government passed the Law “*On Social Service Procurement Contracts*” to improve the social service procurement contract (SSPC) system,⁷⁸ which is in line with the preceding law of 2008. The new provisions of this law update legal, organizational and financial requirements for preparing, placing and implementing social service procurement contracts. The law defines the process for selecting candidates from civil society to the grants commission and commission’s rules and procedures; regulates the provision of social services through the vouchers; and outlines qualification requirements to and qualification-based selection criteria for social service providers, and as well as the procedures of voucher issuance and refunding. The law creates a legal framework for the provision of social services by noncommercial organizations (NCOs) using grants from the national budget. In 2018, MLSD provided training and consultations on social service procurement contracts to their colleagues from the *Ministry of Health* and *Ministry of Education*. Crisis centers supported this initiative by including awareness raising activities on social service procurement contracts in their action plans. Given that civil society organizations are the government’s strategic partners in social care, developing the SSPC system is one of top priority directions to improve social services in the country.

In 2018, the government set out to develop the *Strategy of Social Services and Labour Development in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019-2023*. This effort includes the analysis of the previous experience. The analysis noted that due to objective economic reasons, MLSD’s efforts had not always been effective and social issues had not been addressed at the fundamental level. In 2017, MLSD completed a comprehensive sector review, which points out that social protection authorities in the country have inherited the paternalistic and protectionist approach to social groups and perceive them as passive recipients of social support. The current social protection policy aims to provide minimal social benefits out of the broader context of existing systemic social discrimination and inequality. This narrow-minded approach to social protection does not embrace the cause-and-effect relationship between poverty and negative socioeconomic factors. There are gaps in tracking and analyzing gender-specific factors of unpaid care work and weak infrastructure, especially in rural areas as the systemic barriers preventing women’s access to social services and resources. The result is that the national commitments to promote gender equality out of sync with the national sectoral policies, such as on social protection, migration and employment, local governance, decentralization of social services, etc.

⁷⁶ <http://www.gov.kg/?p=126341&lang=ru>.

⁷⁷ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/12711?cl=ru-ru>.

⁷⁸ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111577>.

The analysis also highlights such problems as the weak coordination capacity and lines of responsibility of sectoral ministries, inconsistencies between strategic goals, objectives and indicators, lack of funding due to the budget deficit, and poor implementation of action plans. Today, the social sector budget is considered as “expenditures” rather than “investments” into social capital to eradicate poverty in certain social groups. This approach plays down the importance of sufficient investments into social care as compared with investments in other sectors, such as energy, transport and construction.

As a result of the above factors, social protection services are usually ineffective in satisfying basic and special needs of social service beneficiaries and supporting such beneficiaries through preventive and proactive policies. Out of 20 MLSD-implemented sectoral programmes, state social benefits amount to 90 percent of the ministry’s budget spending.⁷⁹ Currently the corporate system of social care helps with the automated process of setting the state social allowances. Also, the interdepartmental electronic information exchange system is being developed to connect government agencies. It will decrease the volume of the paperwork necessary for setting the state social allowances and minimize the corruption risks associated with this process.

Top priority directions under the new strategy for 2019-2023 should aim at fundamental structural changes to reform existing systems that prevent timely response to new poverty challenges, high unemployment, and significant external and internal migration. The new strategy should focus on systemic changes that will facilitate comprehensive analysis and will shape general understanding of the complexity and multidimensionality of social inequality and structural discrimination and their impacts on poverty and marginalization of vulnerable groups. The approach to the social care system should be based on human rights and its links with education, healthcare, employment and migration policies and focus on gender equality and gender-responsive governance.

Beijing+25 review consultation participants pointed out that the strategy should allow for reforms in the social development system to ensure the balance between the employment and social care sectors. In this regard, it is important to introduce adequate allowances that will be sufficient for ending poverty and insecurity in vulnerable groups of women and men and ensure progressive transition from the informal (shadow) to formal (official and regulated) economy. Social benefits should be considered as a temporary measure; a set of proactive programmes is required for professional social service coverage to assist vulnerable groups in addressing their problems and issues. The empowerment of vulnerable groups should lie at the heart of social protection strategies and reforms. The following directions are particularly important: professional training and development to increase engagement in decent and official work; assistance to small and medium enterprises; investments in social care infrastructure; redistribution of unpaid care work within households; and support and empowerment of women and girls to increase their participation in social life.

An important issue is the improvement of inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to assist employment, including coordination between higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders capable of providing jobs in mutually beneficial partnership with the State. It is important to create an effective and efficient system to forecast labour market demands that would shape professional training of in-demand specialists with further employment. For example, labour market related programmes should allow for unemployment benefits and professional training and performance improvement measures to increase the likelihood of employment.

The strategy should clearly identify the system and mechanisms for information technology use and digitalization in the social sector to build a centralized database of eligible beneficiaries, or social service recipients, and ensure transparency and clarity of social assistance distribution through a digital system of calculation and distribution of government benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

⁷⁹ Assessment of the MSLD Budget Implementation and Forecast Analysis Using Gender-Responsive and Programme Budgeting Methodology, 2017, UN Women.

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

- ✓ Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services
- ✓ Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services
- ✓ Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes

Maternal health is one of the government's priority objectives under the general health policy. Despite the downward trends in maternal deaths in recent years, the maternal mortality rate is still relatively high in the country, with more than 50 pregnant women, women in labour and new mothers dying every year. The maternal mortality ratio has been changing in the past few years, decreasing from 50.1 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2014 to 31.9 in 2018, but still remain high on average. Maternal death rates are higher in rural areas than in towns and cities (36.7 deaths per 100,000 live births in rural areas compared to 31.9 deaths in urban areas). Hemorrhage had been the leading cause of maternal deaths for several years until 2016, when the incidence of hemorrhage cases started to decline steadily with a shift to indirect causes. According to the *Second Report on Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths (CEMD) for 2014-2015*, indirect causes are the second leading cause of maternal deaths after hemorrhage. In the structure of indirect maternal mortality causes, pre-existing medical conditions make up 40 percent of all cases, with epilepsy and cardiovascular diseases being the most common causes of maternal deaths in this category (11.4% and 8.6%, respectively).

The country has improved its perinatal assistance practices and the overwhelming majority of births now take places under supervision of qualified medical personnel. Problems in maternity hospitals (lack of technical equipment, interrupted water, power and heating supply, low quality emergency services) and lack of qualified obstetricians, gynecologists, neonatologists and anesthetists at the provincial and district levels, as well as socioeconomic status of women and cultural factors lead to high maternal mortality rates. Many women are not aware of warning signals during pregnancy, while reproductive health, family planning and safe contraceptives remain tabooed topics for discussion, especially in rural areas. According to 2017 data, staff coverage at the primary healthcare level was 87.3 percent for doctors and 96.5 percent for nursing staff. There is a disparity in staff availability between rural and urban areas. For example, over 70 FDGs (Family Doctor Groups) in rural areas do not have family doctors. In addition, 70 to 80 percent of medical staff working in primary healthcare are of pre-retirement or retirement age. Low wages and lack of housing remain a major concern, so medical graduates are not willing to work in rural areas.

The country adopted and introduced the World Health Organization's guidelines on antenatal care, including the minimum number of prenatal visits during pregnancy. While 93 percent of women living in cities maintain this standard, only 79.3 percent of rural women visited prenatal clinics four or more times.⁸⁰ Women in rural areas do not have access to antenatal care during pregnancy more often than women in urban areas (3.5% against 1.5%). The overwhelming majority of women in both urban and rural areas give births in the public health sector (home births are not common) under supervision of qualified medical workers (a nurse or an obstetrician in about 25% of cases and a doctor in almost 75% of cases). The country takes action to ensure that vulnerable groups of citizens, including pregnant women, are registered with health facilities regardless of place of residence and runs campaigns to build women's *awareness* about *safe motherhood*.

In the last five years, the country has done the following to expand general healthcare service:

- Adopted Law No. 148 on *Reproductive Rights of Citizens and Guarantees of Such Rights* on 4 July 2015.

⁸⁰ Demographic and Health Surveys in Kyrgyzstan.

- Approved the *Programme for Antenatal Care Improvement in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2008-2017*.
- Designed and implemented a mechanism to ensure access for uninsured pregnant women to *mandatory health insurance* (MHI) programmes through free of charge MHI policy coverage, thus providing such women with medicines on preferential terms under the *Supplementary MHI Programme for Medicine Provision to Insured Citizens at the Ambulatory Care Level* (Joint Decree of the Ministry of Health and MHI Fund (No. 219 of 30 April 2015 and No. 101 of 30 April 2015, respectively) on *Insurance Policy Coverage of Women Upon Pregnancy Registration*, adopted to provide women with medicines on preferential terms during the pregnancy and post-partum period under the *Supplementary MHI Programme* at the primary level).
- Developed 27 clinical protocols, seven standard operating procedures for *obstetricians and gynecologists*, and two clinical guidelines on protection of sexual and reproductive health of key population groups and people living with HIV.
- Opened over 50 schools providing childbirth courses for pregnant women to improve antenatal monitoring and care at the national level.
- Monitors contraceptive needs at the primary healthcare level with a focus on vulnerable groups.
- Designed a training programme in healthy living for secondary schools and vocational education facilities to promote health in schools and dormitories. The programme covers such topics as reproductive health, sexual identity, violence, menstrual health, early pregnancy prevention, and use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Apart from professional development of teachers, medical workers and dormitory mentors, the programme allows for peer to peer support among youth.
- Ensured access to life-saving antiretroviral treatment with coverage increased 3 times in the last five years, from 1,074 as of 1 January 2017 to 3,777 as of 1 May 2019.
- Achieved significant progress in HIV prevention and treatment among pregnant women and children. In particular, 80.8 percent of HIV-positive children receive life-saving antiretroviral treatment today. However, almost 20 percent of children (53 boys and 54 girls) remain uncovered. Out of those who receive treatment, only 66 percent show positive results (while the target indicator is 90 percent), which is indicative of poor compliance with therapy.
- Ensured prevention of mother-to-child (vertical) transmission of HIV. In 2017, PMTCT programmes covered 98.3 percent of HIV-positive mothers and 100 percent of newborns, and the incidence of mother-to-child HIV transmission decreased to 1.7 percent. However, cases of mother-to-child HIV transmission are still reported in the country among children born in previous years to mothers with unknown HIV status and mothers who knew about their status but did not join PMTCT and refused to have their children monitored. This prevents the achievement of the objective to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- Implements HIV prevention programmes and programmes for integrated HIV care and social and reproductive health to cover men and women from key population groups (sex workers, injection drug users and LGBT) and persons living with HIV.
- Approved the *Kyrgyz Government Programme for HIV Prevention for 2017-2021*.

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

- ✓ Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education
- ✓ Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy
- ✓ Ensured access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other education/training settings

There is still a gender gap among teachers in general education schools: teaching remains a women's niche area. At the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year, the proportion of women in the total number of teachers was 84.4 percent, while men's share was 15.6 percent only. Women teachers prevail both in primary (grades 1 to 4) and secondary (grades 5 to 11) schools⁸¹.

In 2018, teaching colleges and universities included gender equality issues in their curricula in accordance with the decree of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. This measure will promote systemic approach to teacher training and development with a focus on gender equality skills and knowledge.

The *Education Strategy Implementation Plan* includes specific measures, such as four mandatory expert reviews of school textbooks, including anti-discrimination expertise. The Human and Society course is part of school curricula starting from the fifth grade, covering children's and human rights among other issues. The government has also developed new standards on human rights for the 5th to 7th and 9th to 11th grades and included them into the *Framework Curriculum*.

As part of joint efforts under inter-ministerial cooperation arrangements, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoE) continues providing access to joint preventive education activities for schoolchildren and their parents (with participation of experts from healthcare and law enforcement agencies). In 2018, MoE issued the *Letter of Instruction* aimed at preventing early marriages and conducting regular classroom sessions on the matter.

The inclusive education concept and homeschooling guidelines were adopted in 2018.

The country is currently drafting a Provision on *Promoting Education in Mathematics, Engineering and Technology Areas*, planning a transition to new teaching standards that suggests the integration of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and languages. The *Republican Classifier of Jobs and Occupations* is being updated to include new professions, including in the IT area. New training courses and education programmes are emerging.

A Regulation on *Safe Educational Environment* will be soon submitted to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for approval. The regulation governs such issues as safe access to drinking water in schools, sanitation, girl friendly toilets, ICT, video surveillance, etc.

Learning and education standards and health and safety courses are in the process of development.

Since 2014, the mandatory school curriculum includes the *Healthy Living* course for 6th to 11th grade schoolchildren (a ten-hour course). In 2018, the *Healthy Living* course was integrated in the curricula of all teaching colleges and universities in the country.

Under the education digitalization programme, all schools should be connected to the internet and computer infrastructure until late 2019 (now only 86 percent of schools have internet connection). The country is also planning to implement the *School of Future* project, which aims to open in each region 10 schools with innovative approaches to education with a focus on STEM disciplines and languages.

The government prioritized digitalization in all areas of life for national development, which means that technology-based education of young generations will play an important role. In the context of gender equality objectives, a vital task for Kyrgyzstan is to create and enhance incentives for youth to study technology related fields. The STEM education movement in Kyrgyzstan has become truly successful through a range of projects that advance active participation of girls and young women in the promotion of innovative technologies, facilitate full and effective realization of their talents, and encourage young women to study in science and new technology fields and choose engineering and technical occupations. The successful experience of the STEM project in the Kyrgyz Republic shows

⁸¹ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/>.

that preschool, school and vocational education stages are crucial in shaping career choices of girls. It plays a significant role in overcoming the sex-role approach to education and facilitating girls' and young women's interest in learning science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

In 2016, Kyrgyzstan opened an IT academy based at the *Bishkek Vocational and Technical Lyceum No. 98*. This project is implemented with consultative support from the *Kyrgyz Association of Software Developers (KASD)*, *Belorussian IT Academy* and *High Technology Park (HTP)* of the Republic of Belarus and financial support from the *Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan* and *Asian Development Bank*. The academy is implementing the *Programmer Ayimdar* Project, which provides training in web development, leadership and entrepreneurship to 40 girls and young women. The project objective is to expand economic opportunities for girls and women through training in practical skills in the information technology (IT) area. The IT academy will help increase literacy and enhance women's leadership and entrepreneurship skills.

In 2018, the *Programming Without Barriers* project provided training to 13 girls with disabilities (ICP, vision and hearing disorders, heart diseases, haemophilia, spinal prosthesis, wheelchair users) from nearly all provinces of Kyrgyzstan.

Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

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

- ✓ Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- ✓ Child, early and forced marriages

The review of Kyrgyz Republic's actions to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls shows that in the period under discussion the main focus was on such forms of violence as intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence.

The actions include improvements in legislation and law enforcement practices. In particular, the government adopted Law No. 63⁸² on *Prevention and Protection Against Domestic Violence* of 27 April 2017, improved specific mechanisms for the enforcement of government decrees and ministerial guidelines that set clear action plans for responsible government agencies, and provided wide-scale staff training in all regions of the country in 2017-2018.

The above law aims to improve the institutional and legal framework for prevention of and response to domestic violence. It is based on international standards and outlines fundamental principles that responsible government agencies are required to follow. The number of such responsible government agencies has increased as compared to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on *Social and Legal Protection Against Domestic Violence* of 2003. The new law targets 11 responsible government agencies and not only defines their specific tasks, but also provides mechanisms for inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation. For example, there is a mechanism requiring that all victims of domestic violence receive necessary legal, medical and psychological assistance, social support and consultations. The target population groups under this law are both women with experience of domestic violence and children and other family members that are vulnerable and thus prone to higher risks, e.g. older people and persons with disabilities.

Budget support to implement the law includes (1) funding of responsible implementers, i.e. ministries and agencies, within their respective mandates under the law, and (2) funding of crisis centers under the *Social Service Procurement Contract* Programme (300,000 to 700,000 soms are annually provided to four crisis centers of the Kyrgyz Republic).

⁸² <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111570>.

The regulatory impact assessment of the law is based on statistical reporting data that shows an increase in the number of restraining orders issued by law enforcement agencies. For example, the number of issued restraining orders increased from 3,358 in 2015 to 6,966 in 2016 when the new law came in effect; and the number of individuals penalized under administrative and criminal law increased from 2,719 in 2015 to 5,100 in 2016. The assessment is also based on implementing regulations that were adopted to support the law: Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on the *Approval of the Restraining Order Form* (No. 642 of 3 October 2017), and Decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the *Approval of Guidelines on Prevention and Protection Against Domestic Violence by Law Enforcement Agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic* (No. 970 of 14 November 2017). There is also a draft Kyrgyz Government Decree on *Intervention Programme to Change Abusive Behavior of Individuals Who Have Committed Domestic Violence*; the programme is subject to mandatory implementation after design and approval.

Today, the mechanism of inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation, which is proposed in the above law for the first time ever, is an adequate solution to address the needs of victims, women and children mostly, because in the overwhelming majority of cases, victims of domestic violence need different assistance and support. From implementation experience of the preceding law (2003), early response to domestic violence generally boiled down to law enforcement and crisis center activities, which were not enough and not always effective for long-term improvement of lives of domestic violence victims and their escape from the difficult life situation. Given this, further efforts should be focused on such directions as social support for victims of violence. The country has already taken action in this regard: supported by UNDP, it is implementing a project to facilitate earlier launched *pro bono* programmes, not only in the form of free legal assistance, but also through involvement of the business community in different areas of support, such as employment, free consultations on how to set up a small or medium business, etc.

Two action plans to achieve gender equality, for 2015-2017 and for 2018-2020, are currently underway. The mandatory component of both action plans is prevention and response to violence against women and girls and improvement of access to justice. Other measures include improvements in data collection, registration and inclusion of reports from victims of domestic and intimate partner violence, including victims of sexual violence, into official statistics with details of investigation proceedings, criminal charges and court decisions.

In 2017, for the first time ever, national and administrative (agency-level) statistics⁸³ was analyzed for gender discrimination with a focus on violence and human trafficking. The analysis helped improve reporting and accounting instruments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecutor's Office, Court Justice Department and National Statistic Committee. Updated reporting forms were introduced through the following agency-level documents: Decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on *Approval of Forms of Agency-level Reports on Issued Restraining Orders and Individuals Who Have Committed and Experienced Domestic Violence, and Guidelines on Preparation of Agency-level Statistical Reports on Issued Restraining Orders and Individuals Who Have Committed and Experienced Domestic Violence* (No. 963 of 13 November 2017), and Resolution of the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic on *Approval of National Statistical Reports on Offence Statistics* (No. 17 of 9 November 2017).

Kyrgyz Government Decree No. 433 of 27 June 2012 was designed to improve the data collection system and create a full and comprehensive database of official statistical reports. This measure allowed the government to build a reliable evidence base to further develop effective strategies and programmes on prevention and response to violence against women and girls. Since 2015, in cooperation with the *UN Office for Drugs and Crime*, the National Statistics Committee has been coordinating efforts to improve the crimes data collection and analysis system.

⁸³ https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia//2018/GBV_TIP_crimes_data_collection_analysis_RUS.pdf.

The analysis provided an understanding of information flows in the area of gender discrimination, violence and human trafficking in authorized government agencies, what indicators they use, and how national statistics is collected. Each authorized government agency was analyzed in terms of its information architecture, data flows and indicators used for gender-specific crimes, domestic violence and human trafficking. Of particular importance were specific recommendations on how to improve registration and reporting practices based on international and national standards of gender statistics. The project results allowed the government to improve statistical data collection on gender violence in the *General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Court Justice Department, Ministry of Health, National Statistics Committee* and crisis centers, prepare four manuals on gender-specific violence statistics for employees of the above agencies, and provide relevant training.

The country developed institutional, legal and methodological frameworks to ensure effective response to sexual violence by law enforcement agencies, including the *Practical Guide on Effective Investigation of Gender Crimes Against Women and Minors for the Investigative Service of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic* approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2018.⁸⁴ The guide aims to provide a methodological framework for investigation of crimes against sexual integrity and forensic medical, biological and psychological examinations/expertise in accordance with the international standards on cooperation between crime investigators and women and minors that became victims of sexual violence or other violent acts.

The measures to prevent early, forced and child marriages include reinforcement of criminal and legal action, in particular, through amendments to the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Article 154: Forcing Individuals Under the Age of 17 into Actual Marital Relationships and Article 155: Forcing Women into Marriage, Abducting Women for the Purpose of Marriage, and Obstructing the Entry of Women in Marriage. Other legislation improvements include Law No. 179 on *Amending Some of the Laws and Regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code and Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)* of 17 November 2016.⁸⁵ As a result of this law, the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Article 155-1 contains a provision stating that “parents (or individuals exercising parental authority) of the person involved in a religious marriage ceremony, the person who conducted such a religious marriage ceremony, as well as the adult person who participated in a religious marriage ceremony with a minor in violation of legislative requirements on marriageable age are subject to imprisonment for a term of 3 to 5 years.” The Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Article 14, Para 3 was amended to add a provision that “all individuals responsible for violation of this Code on Marriage Age shall be held liable in accordance with applicable laws of the Kyrgyz Republic.”

The government developed an institutional and legal support framework to enforce new legislative norms based on the Implementation Plan approved by a joint decree (No. 1048 of 21 December 2017) of eight responsible government agencies. Among other things, the Implementation Plan allowed for wide-scale staff training across the country (provided in 2018). This measure helped increase the responsibility of all authorized government agencies and their preparedness for effective law enforcement. In addition, a range of guidance documents were prepared to provide an institutional and legal framework for comprehensive preventive action, including *Implementation Plan* to enforce the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on *Amending Some of the Laws and Regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic (Family Code and Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)* of 17 November 2016 approved by Joint Decree No. 1084 (of 21 December 2017)⁸⁶ of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism, Ministry of Health, State Committee for Religion, State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports at the Government of the Kyrgyz republic, and Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic; Decree No. 410 of the Muslim Spiritual Authority of Kyrgyzstan on *Prohibiting Imams from Performing Nikah with Underage Individuals* of 21 December 2016; MIA Decree No.

⁸⁴ https://crdp.asia/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Practicheskoe_rukovodstvo_sledovatelei_rus.pdf.

⁸⁵ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111458?cl=ru-ru>.

⁸⁶ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/.../CEDAW_C_KGZ_5_7663_R.docx.

1105 on Guidelines to Prevent Early Marriages Among Minors of 26 December 2017; and MoES Letter of Instruction No. 03-6/6440 on *Raising Awareness of School Students About Prohibition to Participate in Religious Nikah Marriages Until the Minimum Marriage Age* of 9 November 2017.

These documents provided a basis for comprehensive countrywide staff training of prosecutor's offices, departments of internal affairs, education and healthcare facilities, social workers, children and families commissions, local self-government bodies, and religious authorities. A total of 21 trainings were provided with support from UNDP and experts from stakeholder nongovernmental organizations (e.g. Association of Children's Rights Defenders, Emergency Center for Women).

In 2017-2019, the mass media ran an extensive information and awareness raising campaign based, among other things, on the *Practical Guide to Information Campaigns for Raising Public Awareness about Prohibition of Religious Marriages with Minors*⁸⁷ designed by the Public Association Research Center for Democratic Processes. Innovative approaches (thematic forum theaters, flash mobs, dedicated mobile applications, etc.) became a positive factor that increased the efficiency of information campaigns, especially among youth. Other events included the annual *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence* Campaign to raise public awareness about the gender violence problem. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development, local government agencies, self-government bodies, nongovernmental and international organizations joined efforts to conduct a range of awareness raising and other events and activities across the country. These campaigns led to an increased number of reports to police and increased hotline traffic. The evidence is available from crisis centers. For example, in 2016, the System 112 hotline received 94 calls, including 85 on violence against women and 8 calls on violence against children, while in 2017 it received 169 calls, including 144 on violence against women and 24 on violence against children.

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

- ✓ Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls
- ✓ Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g., shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)
- ✓ Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g., in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)

In addition to the examples above, the country has taken action to introduce and/or develop services for women who experienced violence and strategies for prevention of violence against women and girls. In particular, in 2017-2018 and 2019, the Social Service Procurement Contract Programme provided funding, from 300,000 to 700,000 soms annually, to a number of crisis centers across the country to enable comprehensive assistance to women who have experienced violence and development of social services for women with experience of violence and discrimination, and to introduce intervention programmes for individuals who have committed domestic violence (in pilot regions). The objective of government funding under social service procurement contracts was to improve qualified assistance that crisis centers can provide to victims of violence and to increase access for women and girls with experience of violence to comprehensive services that would meet their different needs.

The Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) of the Kyrgyz Republic introduced *System 112* for emergency calls from citizens on cases of domestic and gender violence against women and children. The *System 112* operators register all incoming calls and, depending on the type of message, forward

⁸⁷ <https://crdp.asia/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Prakticheskoe-rukovodstvo-po-informatsionnoj-kampanii.pdf>.

calls to relevant emergency response services to provide response and assistance. The *Unified Management Information System* with a single phone call number (112) aims to provide shared access for reporting emergencies that may happen with citizens and all other residents of the Kyrgyz Republic. In terms of protection from violence against women and girls, the objective is to provide response and assistance as soon as possible by promptly forwarding calls to relevant services such as police, ambulance, crisis centers, etc.

Data from the MoES show that *System 112* call statistics has been collected since 2016. In particular, in 2016, the system registered 94 calls with reports of violence, including 85 cases of gender violence against women, eight cases of violence against children and one case of violence against men. In 2017, the system received 169 calls, including 144 cases of gender violence against women, 24 cases of violence against children and 1 case of violence against men. The 2018 data is not available yet, but in the first half of 2018, *System 112* registered 79 calls, including 61 cases of gender violence against women and 11 cases of violence against children. Quantitative analysis of citizen calls on gender violence is indicative of increasing public awareness about qualified government assistance.

For further qualitative improvement of assistance available through *System 112*, the government supported by UNDP is introducing a dedicated mobile application that will have a special module “*What to Do If You Are a Victim of Gender Violence*,” among other emergencies. It will provide recommendations and references on domestic violence (both for women and underage children), sexual violence, forced (ala-kachuu) and early marriages, and polygamy. The mobile app is already developed and now under evaluation for further testing.

With support from OSCE and UNODC and involvement of stakeholder nongovernmental organizations, the government launched a campaign to develop a code of conduct for mass media and promote women’s leadership through media outlets. In 2016-2017, mass media were invited to contests for the best content on related themes. It aimed to assist mass media in the design of codes of conduct that would reflect, among other things, the principle of non-discrimination by gender in content generation. As for contests for the best content promoting women’s leadership, they pursued not only public awareness raising, but also promotion of women’s leadership, including in career growth and decision-making.

As a result of these awareness raising efforts, the coordinating ethics commissions that include different media representatives did not report any complaints on gender stigma or discrimination in the content of participating media outlets. Contest winners received special prizes, and this event received the widest publicity to shape positive public opinion and encourage mass media for further cooperation.

In 2018, the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Civil Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the *Provision on Intersectoral Cooperation to Prevent, Terminate and Respond to Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Situations*⁸⁸ (Prime Minister Meeting Minutes No. 23-5 of 28 February 2018). In addition, the government adopted a new *Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Civil Protection* (No. 54 of 24 May 2018) that reflects gender aspects in the reduction of risks of violence against women and children in emergency and crisis situations (Article 2, para 8, Article 3, para 2, Article 5, para 2.1 and 2.17, Article 7, para 10).

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

- ✓ Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours
- ✓ Grassroots and community-level mobilization

⁸⁸ <http://ru.mes.kg/2018/09/25/polozenie-o-poryadke-mezhsektoralnogo-vzaimodejstviya-po-predotvrashheniyu-presecheniyu-i-reagirovaniyu-na-gendernoe-nasilie-v-usloviyax-chrezvychajnyx-situacij/>

In 2016, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and the National Statistics Committee participated in the nationwide *Gender in Society Perception Study* under the joint programme of UN Women,⁸⁹ *United Nations Population Fund* (UNFPA) and *International Organization for Migration* (IOM) to study public opinion and build an evidence-based framework to promote gender-sensitive policies and strategies. The analysis of the results and recommendations provided a basis for new programmes and action plans. The study aimed to collect data at the national, community and individual levels on the key risk factors of gender inequality and violence against women and girls (knowledge, attitude, practice (KAP)). In particular, the study provided insight into:

- (1) pressing issues at the interpersonal and structural levels leading to gender discrimination, violence and exploitation;
- (2) community-level trends and changing public perceptions of gender stereotypes and relationships; and
- (3) correlation between gender inequality and potential conflict triggers, including the role of women in peacebuilding.

The findings of the study are useful both for government institutions in designing gender equality and inclusive peacebuilding policies and programmes and for international agencies, including UN country group members and civil society partners, in establishing sustainable peace and empowering women.

In 2017, under the UNDP project on *Prevention of Gender Violence in Kyrgyzstan* and with support from the US State Department, the *Kyrgyz Association of Women Judges* prepared a *Survey Report on the Court Practice of Crimes Against Women and Girls in the Kyrgyz Republic (2012-2015)*.⁹⁰ The report analyzes deficiencies in the law enforcement system and recommends, among other things, to build the capacity of responsible officials and employees through a wide-scale training campaign. The report laid a foundation for the following documents: *Practical Guide on Prevention and Response to Gender and Domestic Violence for Law Enforcement Officers in the Kyrgyz Republic*,⁹¹ *Training Package on Prosecutor Supervision in Combatting to Gender-Based Violence*,⁹² and *Practical Guide on Prevention of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Against Minors for Youth Liaison Officers in the Kyrgyz Republic*.⁹³

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with nongovernmental organizations and with support from the UN Nations Population Fund, implemented the *Fathering Schools* project in different regions of the country with innovative approaches and colorful visual aids, and ran the nationwide *Vigilant Husband* campaign with a focus on signs of health problems in children.

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

- ✓ Worked with technology providers to set and adhere to good business practices

A case of sexual harassment as an online stalking received wide coverage in the media in 2019. The resulting discussion underscored the need for legislative improvements, which is one of issues that the country needs to address at the next stage.

In the last five years, several stakeholder nongovernmental organizations, in cooperation with educational institutions and law enforcement agencies, have implemented a range of training, awareness raising and monitoring activities to protect against harmful and negative information,

⁸⁹ https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/kyrgyzstan/docs/Library/Newsletter_PBSO_GSPS_RUS.pdf.

⁹⁰ https://www.undp.org/content/dam/kyrgyzstan/Publications/gender/Analyticheskii_Otchet_po_Gendernomy_Nasiliyu_RU.pdf.

⁹¹ <https://crdp.asia/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Prakticheskoe-posobie-russ.pdf>.

⁹² <https://crdp.asia/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/UMK-GP-russ.pdf>.

⁹³ <https://crdp.asia/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Prakticheskoe-posobie-IDN-russ.pdf>.

including cyberbullying and suicide propaganda. These activities will remain a priority for the country in future.

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

- ✓ Supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct

With support from OSCE and UNODC and involvement of stakeholder nongovernmental organizations, the country:

- assisted in the design of codes of conduct for the media and promotion of women's leadership in the media;
- introduced a special module (gender.mvd.kg) on the official website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- organized competitions among media outlets for the best content on the given topic.

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

In 2017, the Government issued Order No. 946 of 14 December 2017 to ensure mandatory response to violence against women from vulnerable groups based on international guidelines for prevention of stigma and discrimination, national legislation and human rights. Specifically, the order requires to:

- enhance control during preventive, sweep operations and investigative activities to raise awareness of vulnerable persons who have experienced violence about their right to approach crisis centers and specialized public organizations, with an explanation of security aspects;
- ensure strict compliance with Instruction No. 49 on *HIV Prevention by Law Enforcement Agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic Charged with Drug Control and Corrections and Working with Vulnerable Groups* of 21 January 2014, including a mandatory explanation of the right to approach HIV prevention organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- use a non-discriminating and non-stigmatizing language when collecting initial information for investigation of the reports and undertake all measures guaranteed by the Kyrgyz legislation to prevent violence and ensure safety and security of persons from vulnerable groups who have experienced violence.

As directed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the entire staff was familiarized with the order through operational and work trainings, and the order was included into the set of regulations that law enforcement officers are required to follow in preventing and responding to gender violence.

On 18 March 2019, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted a ministerial *Implementation Plan for the National HIV Prevention Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic Until 2021*, which includes a set of measures for elimination of barriers that create a negative legal environment for women facing multiple forms of discrimination, including the existing practice of interaction between law enforcement agencies and such groups of women.

The MIA Academy designed and introduced a special training course for law enforcement officers on legal aspects of communication and interaction with vulnerable populations (including women facing multiple forms of discrimination: drug users, sex workers, etc.).

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

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

- ✓ Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets
- ✓ Encouraged the participation of minority and young women, including through sensitization and mentorship programmes
- ✓ Collected and analyzed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions

The Kyrgyz Republic follows a strategic course of action that relies on special temporary measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men. In 2014 and 2018, the Government issued two decrees approving the National Action Plans on Gender Equality 2015-2017⁹⁴ and 2018-2020⁹⁵ (NAP). Each of these documents aims to improve the system of special measures that were first introduced into the electoral legislation in 2007.

The use of gender quotas in parliamentary elections was an undoubtedly effective measure, having increased the representation of women in the parliament from zero in 2005 to 25.5 percent in 2007. Women's representation in 2015 was 20 percent.

However, the existing practice of “ousting” women from political parties after the elections affects women's representation in the deputy corps. Today, the Kyrgyz Parliament has six factions and their gender composition is very different. Specifically, women's representation in some factions (*Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan* – 29% and *Ata-Meken* – 27%) is close to the target level of 30 percent established by the Kyrgyz Law on *Gender Equality*. The proportion of women MPs in *Ata-Jurt Republic* (11%) and *Onuguu-Progress* (8%) is low, and two parties (*Kyrgyzstan* and *Bir Bol*) do not have women members at all.⁹⁶

Wide public discussions of this issue forced the Parliament to amend the electoral legislation in 2017. The Constitutional Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on *Elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and Deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic* (No. 96 of 5 June 2017, Article 65, Part 4-1) now features an important amendment: “In the event of early termination of a deputy's terms of office, his or her mandate should be transferred to the next registered candidate: 1) to a female candidate if the deputy whose term of office was terminated was a woman; 2) to a male candidate if the deputy whose term of office was terminated was a man...”

This norm will enter into force in 2020 during the next parliamentary elections.

However, the Kyrgyz legislation does not provide any special measures to ensure gender representation at the level of *ayil keneshes* (local parliaments/councils). Local elections use the majority system that is based on multiple mandates.

This system is “unfriendly” to women candidates due to the popularity of gender stereotypes and traditional views, especially in rural regions, and because women have limited resources. The percentage of women elected to *ayil keneshes* decreases with each new election. From 2004 (when the percentage of women deputies in local parliaments was 19%) to 2016 (10%), the number of women deputies decreased by more than a third. In some provinces, there are no more than 6-8 percent of women in *ayil keneshes*; and over 70 *ayil keneshes*, i.e., in each sixth one, have no women members at all.

⁹⁴ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/93343>

⁹⁵ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ky-kg/93343/20?cl=ru-ru>, *Action Plan to Promote Gender Parity in Decision-Making and Expand Women's Political Participation*, Section IV.

⁹⁶ <http://kenesh.kg/ru/article/show/667/zhenshtini-deputati-vi-soziva-zhogorku-kenesha-kirgizskoy-respubliki>

After long discussions and an active advocacy campaign launched by women's NGOs to address the issue, the Parliament passed a bill on *Amending the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Elections to Local Keneshes*⁹⁷ (No. 6-18135/16 of 29 June 2016) in its first reading. The bill reserves 30 percent of *ayil kenesh* mandates for women (Articles 46, 47, 52, 59 and 62).

The *Strategy for Improvement of Electoral Legislation in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2020*,⁹⁸ approved by the National Council for Sustainable Development in 2018, also addresses this issue. The strategy underscores the need for a mechanism that would guarantee minimum representation of women in *ayil keneshes* through a 30 percent mandate reservation (Action 1.2.2).

An outstanding example of overcoming resistance in the legislature and cooperation between civil society organizations, government agencies and parliamentarians is how the draft law on *Elections to Local Keneshes*, which reserves 30 percent of mandates for women, was prepared and promoted. The bill was drafted in 2016 by a working group charged with improving the electoral system of the Kyrgyz Republic.⁹⁹ The working group included representatives of all six parliamentary factions, political parties, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations. In June 2016, the Parliament registered the bill (it is important that out of 11 deputies who initiated the law, eight were men) and sent it for public discussion. In parallel, a petition in its support was launched across the country, hitting 10,578 signatures. Parliamentary hearings were held on 31 October 2016. The majority of participants, first of all women from regions, spoke in support of mandate reservation. As a result, on 10 October 2018, seven members of the parliament, with only one woman among them, initiated a bill on *Amending the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Elections to Local Keneshes*. Articles 59-1 and 62 of this bill describe the process of reserving 30 percent of *ayil kenesh* (village council) mandates for women. The bill is currently under review by the Jogorku Kenesh.

The NAP on GE 2018-2020¹⁰⁰ provides for a training module on gender as a distance education option for public and municipal employees to create an on-the-job opportunity for learning the fundamentals of gender knowledge and national legislation.

Young women, especially from ethnic and religious minorities, face significant barriers in their participation in political life, such as limited access to public service.

A significant step to reducing these barriers was taken in June 2016 with the enactment of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on *Public Service and Municipal Service*.¹⁰¹ Article 4 of this law ensures equal access for all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic to public service regardless of sex, race, language, disability, ethnicity, religion, political or other opinion, birth, property, or other status.

The law led to amendments in a range of regulations governing stages of public and municipal service, from entrance to completion, competition-based recruitment and promotion to vacant jobs. Gender-sensitive norms were introduced into several regulations.

In particular, the *Regulation on Competition-Based Recruitment and Promotion of Public and Municipal Employees in the Kyrgyz Republic*¹⁰² states that upon completion of interviews, of the candidates who received the highest score in each stage of the competition, the selection commission should recommend the candidate whose ethnicity and gender are the least represented in the given government agency or local self-government body.

According to the Regulation on *Establishment of the National Pool of Human Resources in the Public and Municipal Sectors of the Kyrgyz Republic*,¹⁰³ of the candidates with the same number of votes, the

⁹⁷ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111287>.

⁹⁸ www.president.kg/sys/media/download/51348/.

⁹⁹ Decree No. 109 of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on Actions to Improve the Electoral System of the Kyrgyz Republic (as amended by Decree No. 276 of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic of 11 December 2015).

¹⁰⁰ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ky-kg/93343/20?cl=ru-ru>, clause 5.1.5. Integration of a training course in gender sensitivity into the annual training programme for public servants (1% of the government agency's budget).

¹⁰¹ <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111354>.

¹⁰² Decree No. 706 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 29 December 2016, clause 50.

¹⁰³ Decree No. 706 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 29 December 2016, clause 25, para 4.

commission should recommend for inclusion the candidate whose ethnicity or gender is the least represented in the public or municipal sector.

These two measures give advantage to women candidates, including women from ethnic minorities.

The Regulation on *Performance Evaluation in the Public and Municipal Sectors of the Kyrgyz Republic*¹⁰⁴ secures an impartial and unbiased attitude of all civil servants and their performance in government agencies and local self-government bodies that denies all forms of discrimination. The regulation also states that the evaluation commission should include administrative officials and allow for gender representation (clause 58).

Over the years of independence, the country has established a national data collection and analysis system that is based on gender-sensitive indicators, including regular statistics of women's participation in political life in appointed and elected office. This allows the government to track the representation of women at all levels of governance.

Specifically, as of 1 January 2017, the share of women civil servants in Kyrgyzstan was 40.1 percent, including 27.4 percent of women in political and special office.¹⁰⁵

The government annually monitors the number of civil servants filling vacant administrative positions, with a particular focus on women. In 2017, 29 percent of top administrative positions with a special appointment procedure were held by women. On average, women filled 42 percent of available positions at all levels of civil service (top, political, leading, senior and junior).

Additional statistics is collected separately on the composition of administrative staff based on the length of service, level of education, age profile, and the number of persons with disabilities.

The same categories are used in annual monitoring of municipal employees.

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

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

Access to information. Neither the law, nor government practice secure gender-disaggregated access to information. Despite the recommendation to effectively control and monitor the implementation of the right of access to public information, policy makers have removed liability for non-provision of such information by government agencies or officials. It will decrease government accountability to the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, since there is no mechanism to ensure accountability of government agencies.

In 2018, with support from the *Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan*, the **School of Data Kyrgyzstan** launched a web-portal "Open Data in Central Asia" to spread all open data sources. It became a platform for the *UN Women-supported data-driven storytelling project on the rights of women and gender equality*. They used an innovative approach, providing information, including survey and statistical data, in visualized stories that are shared through social media. In particular, they posted a number of publications with infographics and video on such topics as unpaid care work and limited economic opportunities of women; women's representation in decision-making, including in local parliaments and in the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic; career choices of women and participation in STEM; reproductive health and contraceptives; domestic violence. The approach turned out to be quite popular: within a month and a half, the publication on domestic work received 5,227 views and the video on Facebook hit 7,223 views.

¹⁰⁴ Decree No. 131 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 1 March 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic, National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013-2017, Bishkek, 2018; pp.35-40.

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

Tracking gender-responsive public expenditures is unsystematic and fragmentary, and mostly initiated by women’s NGOs. The existing budget classification does not show the proportion of the national budget invested in the promotion of gender equality. Despite the government’s declared commitment to promote gender equality at both central and local levels, actual expenditures in this area can be measured only through special surveys and/or inquiries.

Government agencies that relatively explicitly identify gender-responsive expenditures in their programme budgets include:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Development;
- Ombudsman’s Office;
- Ministry of Health;
- Mandatory Health Insurance Fund; and
- Ministry of Agriculture.

Programme budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MLSD). The ministry is in charge of the implementation of the gender equality policy. For a long time, gender equality promotion could not “find its way” to programme budgets, so this budget activity has often been moved from one programme to another.

For example, in the 2016 budget, gender policy as a budget activity was part of the “Planning, Management and Administration” programme, while the 2017 budget did not have it, with gender-specific expenditures shared between several programmes. In the last two years (2018-2019), the ministry’s budgets have consisted of six programmes, two of which include budget activities with targeted gender-specific spending. These budget programmes are “Labour and Employment” and “Implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality Until 2020.”

The “Labour and Employment” programme consists of three key components (sub-goals):

- 1) provide effective assistance to citizens in employment (proactive employment policy implementation) and job search and social support to the unemployed and persons looking for jobs through state employment agencies;
- 2) create an effective system of remuneration based on the job hierarchy and employee performance results;
- 3) ensure maternity allowance payments.

To implement the third sub-goal, the ministry introduced a budget activity entitled “Payment of maternity allowance starting from the 11th working day.” This expenditure is explicitly gender-oriented. It has also been the most sustainable gender-specific expenditure in the ministry’s programme budget in the last five years (2014-2019). The efficiency of this activity is evaluated based on the percentage ratio of the average monthly maternity benefit to the average monthly wage.

Table 2. Allocations to budget activity implementation,¹⁰⁶ thousands soms

Budget activity	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Payment of maternity allowance starting from the 11 th working day	340,914.2	567,699.3	553,699.3	567,699.3	617,699.3

Until the end of 2017, the maternity allowance as a budget activity was part of the programme “Monetary Compensations, Allowances and Social Benefits to Certain Groups of Citizens,” i.e., fell under the social category. Since 2018, this budget activity has been part of the “Labour and Employment” programme, which means these expenditures are now perceived as an economic category.

¹⁰⁶ Law No. 112 on Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019 and Budget Forecast for 2020-2021 of 26 December 2018

The budget programme “Implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality Until 2020” was first introduced into the programme budget in 2018. This fact is a significant achievement in the promotion of gender-sensitive budgeting. The goal of this budget programme is the same as the goal of the *National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Gender Equality Until 2020*,¹⁰⁷ and this is in line with the programme budgeting principles.

The budget programme on gender strategy implementation consists of seven budget activities embracing all key directions under the *National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2018-2020* in the area of ministry’s responsibility.

Table 3. Budget programmes in MLSD budgets,¹⁰⁸ thousands soms

Budget programmes / budget activities	Financing (per programme / activity) (000 KGS)		Performance indicators
	2018	2019	
Implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality Until 2020. Programme goal: build an institutional basis to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all citizens of the country regardless of sex, age, social status, health, gender identity and other grounds of discrimination for full-scale development of human potential in the Kyrgyz Republic.	3,560.4	6,960.4	
Provision of local career guidance and motivational trainings to economically inactive population of working age to reduce the number of economically inactive women		510.0	Increased number of economically active women of working age
Introduction of amendments to existing legislation to prevent gender discrimination and gender violence through monitoring of gender policy implementation in pilot ministries (State Personnel Service, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Emergency Situations)		916.0	Completed monitoring with a report
			Amended/drafted laws and regulations
Two-day workshops for employees of local self-government bodies and local activists to provide guidance on community-level committees for prevention and protection against domestic violence and develop work plans	3,560.4	1,418.1	Report on workshops held and committees established
Development of a methodology to assess social services provided to victims of domestic violence		1,380.0	Survey report
Strengthening of social services / crisis centers to support victims of gender and domestic violence		1,352.3	Number of crisis centers providing services to victims
Development of a methodology to assess the need in intervention programmes for domestic abusers		-	Report on assessment methodology
Introduction of intervention programmes for domestic abusers in pilot provinces		1,384.0	Number of individuals included in intervention programmes

Low government spending on implementation of the *National Strategy on Gender Equality Until 2020* is due to the fact the *MLSD* budget cannot include expenditures of other government agencies and development partners that also work on strategy implementation, while programme budgets of other involved agencies do not have budget activities related to strategy implementation.

In general, the proportion of gender-specific expenditures in approved *MLSD* budgets remains insignificant, though it is increasing gradually. The 2019 budget provides for a minor decrease in

¹⁰⁷ Approved by Decree No. 443 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 27 June 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Law No. 112 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019 and Budget Forecast for 2020-2021* of 26 December 2018.

gender-sensitive spending due to maternity allowance payments, but the level of this expenditure will be adjusted during the year subject to actual payments.

Table 4. Gender-specific expenditure in MLSD budgets¹⁰⁹

	2016 (approved)	2017 (actual)	2018 (actual)	2019 (approved)	2020 (forecast)	2021 (forecast)
Total budget, million soms	8,245	8,417	10,835	11,746	10,978	11,124
Gender-specific expenditures, million soms	307	342	571	561	573	620
Proportion of gender-specific expenditures in the budget, %	3.7%	4.1%	5.3%	4.8%	5.2%	5.6%

Programme budget of the Ombudsman’s Office. The Ombudsman’s budget consists of two budget programmes: a standard administrative management programme and a programme aimed at protection of all human rights in accordance with the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Gender-specific expenditures in this budget are indirect and can be classified as such only based on gender discrimination indicators. The budget programme “Oversight over Freedoms, Human Rights and All Forms of Discrimination” includes such budget activities as “Protection of Socioeconomic and Cultural Rights” and “Protection of Children’s and Youth’s Rights.” In the first case, the performance indicator is defined as “Proportion of Complaints on the Infringement and Gender Discrimination of Socioeconomic Rights.” In the second case, the performance indicator is the “Proportion of Complaints on the Infringement of Children’s, Women’s and Family Rights.”

These indicators cannot reflect changes caused by budget interventions. They are more likely to characterize the process and procedures the Ombudsman’s Office can use to measure its activities rather than the final outcome – guaranteed protection of rights.

Table 5. Gender-specific expenditure in Ombudsman’s Office budgets¹¹⁰

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total budget, million soms	29	32	32	32	32	32
Indirect gender-specific expenditures, million soms	4	2	3	3	3	3
Proportion of indirect gender-specific expenditures, %	12.4%	7.6%	8.5%	7.9%	8.7%	8.6%

Programme budget of the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund (MHIF). Until 2019, programme budgets of MHIF had not covered any gender aspects. In 2019, a gender-sensitive indicator was introduced for the budget activity “Ensuring Public Access to Basic Medical Services at the Primary Healthcare Level” under the budget programme “Provision of Primary Healthcare Services.” This indicator is “Proportion of Women Registered Before the 12th Week of Pregnancy, %.” The budget allocates over 4.3 billion soms to this activity. Of course, the entire amount cannot be qualified as gender-responsive spending, and it is impossible to clearly identify gender-specific expenditure.

Programme budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration. The ministry’s second budget programme “State Support of Agriculture” includes to budget activities with gender-sensitive indicators:

- establishing self-help groups among farmers, including women (in 2017, 698 self-help groups were established, covering 4,774 farmers and 4,120 women);

¹⁰⁹ 2016 data according to Law No. 233 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2016 and Budget Forecast for 2017-2018* of 31 December 2015; 2017-2018 data according to Law No. 112 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019 and Budget Forecast for 2020-2021* of 26 December 2018.

¹¹⁰ 2016 data according to Law No. 233 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2016 and Budget Forecast for 2017-2018* of 31 December 2015; 2017-2018 data according to Law No. 112 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019 and Budget Forecast for 2020-2021* of 26 December 2018.

- creating permanent jobs (40% for women) in farming.

These budget activities duplicate two public investment projects: the *Support to Public Seed Funds* Project (WB) and *Access to Markets* Project (IFAD). Of course, these projects include components promoting gender equality, but in general they focus on economic goals and cannot be qualified as gender-responsive spending. It is impossible to identify gender-specific expenditures under these projects based on the approved budget data.

Programme budget of the Ministry of Health (MH). The ministry’s programme budget includes two programmes with specific budget activities providing for targeted gender-specific expenditures. These programmes are “Public Healthcare” and “Provision of Healthcare Services.”

The “Public Healthcare” programme includes a budget activity “HIV Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care,” which focuses on diagnosing and counselling of pregnant women (including treatment if required).

The budget activity “Maternal and Child Health (Early Medical Monitoring of Pregnant Children and Professional Medical Care for Women in Labour and Children)” under the “Provision of Healthcare Services” programme is qualified as an explicit gender-specific expenditure. The performance indicator is the coverage of women from medically and socially vulnerable populations with contraceptives.

Table 6. Gender-specific expenditure in MH budgets ¹¹¹

	2016 (approved)	2017 (actual)	2018 (actual)	2019 (approved)	2020 (forecast)	2021 (forecast)
Total budget, million soms	3688	3212	3320	4603	3774	3858
Gender-specific expenditures, million soms	0	213	271	276	286	294
Proportion of gender-specific expenditures, %	0.0%	6.6%	8.2%	6.0%	7.6%	7.6%

Programme budget of the Ministry of Justice. With well-formulated budget activities and indicators, the budget programme “Guaranteed Legal Support from the State” could have been qualified as gender-responsive. By providing legal support to traditionally marginalized populations, the government could have significantly reduced or mitigated violence, discrimination and other large-scale violations of women’s rights as evidenced by the Ombudsman’s reports. In addition, the programme indicator (“Provision of Guaranteed Quality Legal Support by the State”) does not meet indicator requirements.

Public investments. In recent years, a number of explicitly gender-specific public investment projects have been implemented, such as:

- Women’s Entrepreneurship Development Project (ADB);
- Mother and Child Care IV+V (KfW).

Table 7. Gender-specific public investments¹¹²

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Women’s Entrepreneurship Development Project (ADB)	17	30	11	0	0	0	0
Mother and Child Care IV+V (KfW)	10	130	222	613	568	117	65

¹¹¹ 2016 data according to Law No. 233 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2016 and Budget Forecast for 2017-2018* of 31 December 2015; 2017-2018 data according to Law No. 112 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019 and Budget Forecast for 2020-2021* of 26 December 2018.

¹¹² 2015-2016 data according to Law No. 233 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2016 and Budget Forecast for 2017-2018* of 31 December 2015; 2017-2018 data according to Law No. 112 on *Republican Budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019 and Budget Forecast for 2020-2021* of 26 December 2018.

Public investment projects are only a part (and possibly a very small one) of external assistance that development partners provide to the country to advance gender equality. Unfortunately, external assistance is not fully tracked, so the amount of input from development partners is impossible to measure today, even roughly.

Local budgets. Local budgets are also used from time to time to support gender-sensitive activities. For example, since 2005 the Bishkek City Mayor’s Office has been supporting the “Sezim” shelter with lodging and utility payments. Some other local authorities support crisis centers and other local gender activists in their jurisdictions, including through the municipal social service procurement mechanism. However, the data on this support is non-transparent and almost inaccessible.

Conclusions. It is not possible to measure the entire amount of public expenditure (both annual and planned) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality.

Gender-specific public expenditures are reflected only in programme budgets of government agencies. These programme budgets are approved annually as part of the national budget. In other words, only the planned gender-specific expenditure can be indirectly tracked and evaluated, and programme budget implementation is not sustainable yet.

The national budget is not subject to gender analysis, as budget implementation reports are based on functional and economic classifications that do not allow distribution of spending across different social groups. Expenditures under social service procurement contracts at national and municipal levels are not transparent.

Government agencies charged with the implementation of the *National Strategy on Gender Equality* do not include this activity in their programme budgets.

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

NO. Not applicable.

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

The country has the ongoing *National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Gender Equality Until 2020*, which was developed and approved in 2012.¹¹³

The national strategy is the first long-term document on gender equality in Kyrgyzstan. It is a logical extension of the national gender policy that the country has implemented over 20 years of its independence.

The strategy aims to emphasize the problem of gender inequality and the impossibility to address all gender issues and challenges through ministerial or sectoral programmes. Extensive consultations with all stakeholders during the strategy development process helped identify intersectoral priorities and targets to enable comprehensive and consistent eradication of gender inequality.

The goal of this long-term strategy is to build an institutional basis to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all citizens of the country regardless of sex, age, social status, health, gender identity and other grounds of discrimination for full-scale development of human potential in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Priority directions under the Strategy include:

- 1) enhancing economic opportunities for women;
- 2) creating a functional education system;
- 3) eliminating gender discrimination and enhancing women’s access to justice; and
- 4) promoting gender parity in decision-making and women’s participation in political life.

¹¹³ Decree No. 443 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 27 June 2012

Each priority direction requires to set and implement a number of long-term targets. Target implementation and monitoring is based on progress across the following key dimensions:

- institutional and policy changes;
- level of representation;
- impacts on outcomes; and
- nature and content of public discussions and stakeholder dialogue.

In addition, the Strategy proposes regulatory policy changes to achieve targets under the above priorities.

The strategy implementation process is divided into three mid-term periods. To achieve the strategic goal, the government approved detailed three-year action plans covering all of the priority directions:

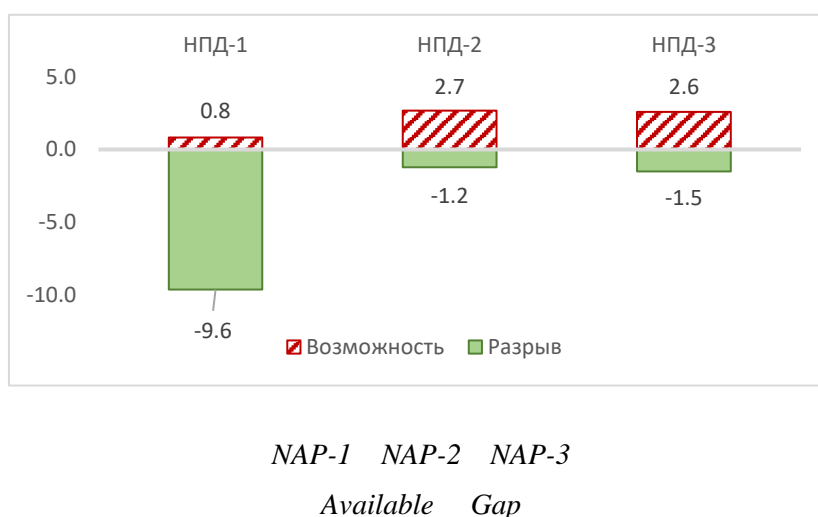
- National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2014 (NAP-1);¹¹⁴
- National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2015-2017 (NAP-2);¹¹⁵
- National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2020 (NAP-3).¹¹⁶

Financing requirements were identified separately for each mid-term action plan during the design process. To identify financing requirements for NAP-1, a calculation methodology was developed. It was tested during NAP-1 implementation and later became part of the Strategic Planning Methodology, which is now mandatory for use in the design of all strategic documents in the country.¹¹⁷

According to calculations, the total financing requirement for strategy implementation in the period from 2012 to 2020 was USD18.4 million. The amount of available financing, from all sources, was USD 6.1 million in general (33%). The financing gap was USD12.3 million (67%).

It is important to note that full-scale strategy implementation in fact required more resources than estimated. In designing the mid-term action plans, the authors had to exclude some activities due to the lack of financial resources and high implementation costs. Mid-term plans with significant financing gaps were not sent for government approval, so the only approved NAP with a financing gap of over 90 percent is NAP-1. The reason is that the calculation methodology was not finalized at that moment. This is why the total financing requirement for NAP-1 is more than 2.5 times higher as compared to NAP-2 and NAP-3 (see Fig.1).

Figure 1. Implementation costs of the mid-term action plans under the National Strategy (secured financing vs. financing gap), US\$ million



¹¹⁴ Approved by Decree No. 443 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 27 June 2012.

¹¹⁵ Approved by Decree No. 537 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 19 November 2018.

¹¹⁶ Approved by Decree No. 537 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 19 November 2018.

¹¹⁷ Approved by Order No. 45 of the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic of 27 February 2015.

As mentioned above, NAP-1 had the biggest financing gap. This is partially because the plan included activities intended for support by development partners. However, support from development partners was not included in the NAP-1 budget as a warranted resource due to the low transparency of most development partners that failed to provide their budgets for gender analysis and did not have clear processes to guarantee minimum funding for activities promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Despite additional, extra-budget funding raised during implementation, NAP-1 could not be fully implemented. Based on monitoring data, NAP-1 was 77 percent complete, with 16 percent of successfully completed activities and 61 percent of partially completed activities.

Available financing for NAP-2 was 68.5 percent of the total financing requirement, but the latter was significantly lower as compared to NAP-1, as many activities were not included in the plan due to the lack of financial resources. The inclusion of financially uncovered activities posed a threat to the approval of NAP-2 in general. This action plan was completed by 83 percent (56% of activities were successfully completed, and 27% of activities were partially completed).

The situation with NAP-3 is similar to the above. The total financing requirement was US\$4.1 million, including 63.3 percent of secured financing. All activities requiring significant financial resources, but financially uncovered were ruled out at the review stage to ensure approval of the government.

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

After ratifying the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* in 1996, the Kyrgyz Republic submits periodic reports on implementation progress to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The fifth periodic report was submitted to CEDAW in April 2019.

To implement the CEDAW *Concluding Observations (CoBs) on the Fourth Periodic Report*, on 19 April 2018, the government approved a respective action plan to follow up on the CoBs' recommendations. The country plan was developed by MLSD supported by the UN Gender Theme Group and in coordination with UN Women. It covers 13 activities that are not included in the current NAP on GE and other policy documents. The document is a product of close and multilateral consultations with nongovernmental organizations, including those submitting alternative reports on the CEDAW implementation.

The Universal Periodic Review mechanism is also used to mainstream the protection of women's and girls' rights. Implementation reports on the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* also address the rights of women. In addition, the Kyrgyz Republic reports on progress under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which advances and protects the girls' rights.

24. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?

Under Article 108 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, the national institution charged with parliamentary oversight over human rights and freedoms is *Akyikatchy* (Ombudsman). The *Law on Ombudsman (Akyikatchy)* states that parliamentary oversight aims to 1) protect human and civil rights and freedoms declared in the Constitution and other laws of the Kyrgyz Republic and international treaties and agreements ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic; ensure respect for and observance of human and civil rights; 3) prevent violations of human and civil rights or assist in their restoration; 4) assist in harmonizing Kyrgyz legislation on human and civil rights with the Constitution and applicable international standards; 5) improve and promote international cooperation on human and civil rights; 6) prevent all forms of discrimination in the realization of human rights and freedoms; and 7) increase legal awareness of population and protect confidential personal information.

The *National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040* recognizes the need to strengthen the efforts of the Ombudsman institute in protection of children's, women's and family rights.

Peaceful and inclusive societies

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

- ✓ Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security
- ✓ Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks

Unprecedented events in the south of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2010 became triggers that made the country design and adopt its first *Action Plan on the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (AP 1325) for 2013-2014*. After the regime change in April 2010 and transition to the parliamentary political system, armed clashes broke out in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, leading to human and economic losses. The events during and after the clashes (which lasted about a month in their active phase) showed that national institutions were unprepared to work and provide services to people in a conflict setting. In contrast, nongovernmental organizations, including women's NGOs, demonstrated skills and competencies in resource mobilization and conflict prevention in emergency and armed conflict settings and also capacity in peacebuilding.

Unfortunately, post-crisis strategies, except for *NAP 1325*, did not reflect conflict-related cases of sexual and gender violence. As a result of violence against girls and women and an unstable security situation afterwards, the number of early marriages has increased significantly in southern regions after 2010.

Current situation and challenges under the Agenda 1325

Analysis of post-conflict needs and peacebuilding priorities in the Kyrgyz Republic identified a number of persisting factors that today continue to grow because of stereotypes, nationalism, inequality and discrimination, inefficient management, including in the natural resource sector, etc.

Socio-cultural norms and stereotypes promoting inequality and discrimination against women often find support in the public and national media, in particular, OTRK (Public Broadcasting Corporation), which spreads the image of passive women without agency that play a utilitarian role in the lives of their husbands and families.

Low representation of women in politics and business is another indicator of inequality. Labour discrimination against women has become part of the employers' culture.

Unresolved regional conflicts such as border disputes (over access to and distribution of resources) remains a pressing issue. They result from social tension in cross-border areas and slow down peacebuilding processes in several regions of the Kyrgyz Republic. Resurgent patriarchal culture, radicalization, including Islamic radicalization, and violent extremism create favorable environment for armed conflicts and violence.

Lack of proper regulation of border disputes over economic assets and the lack of border infrastructure undermine socioeconomic development of border regions. It is very important to continue systematic work to prevent terrorism and violent extremism that target both youth and women.

Kyrgyzstan was the first country in Central Asia and the second post-Soviet country (after Georgia) to design and adopt a *Policy Document on UN Security Council Resolution 1325*. *NAP 1325* was also one of the first plans that government officials designed using own resources based on expert analysis of conflict and post-conflict situations with facilitation of national experts (and support from

UNIFEM). So, the very process of NAP 1325 design helped enhance the planning capacity of public servants.

Since government agencies were behind the implementation schedule, the Government Office decided to extend the first NAP 1325, which initially targeted the period of 2013-2014, to 2015.

Action Plan of the Kyrgyz Republic on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for 2016-2017

In 2015, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued an order (Order No. 534 of 7 April 2015) to establish an inter-ministerial working group (IMWG) to design the second NAP 1325. The working group comprised representatives of 11 ministries and agencies.

UNDP provided technical and expert assistance to IMWG, through two national experts, a three-day workshop on NAP design, and publication of guidance documents for officials in implementing ministries and other agencies charged with monitoring of and reporting on NAP progress.

The process of development of each new NAP 1325 has been challenged by the lack of institutional memory in government agencies because of high staff turnover and rotation in the public sector and the lack of formal accountability among public servants in the Women, Peace and Security area. That is why it is important to support, enhance and even institutionalize IMWG.

Large-scale national consultations with representatives of women's NGOs and local self-government bodies were held in Osh and Bishkek in May 2015.

In designing the action plan, the working group used both conclusions and recommendations from the Overview Report (NGO *Emergency Center for Women*) and international analytics on UNSCR 1325 national action plans, including the 2014 OSCE *Study of National Action Plans on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*.

Specifically, IMWG took note of the recommendation to choose a more relevant approach to the plan's structure. The OSCE study points out that the majority of NAPs use the conventional approach where the plan is based on four pillars (participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery) and specific measures are proposed for all potential scenarios ('no conflict,' 'conflict' and 'post-conflict'). Instead, the study proposes to identify NAP priorities based on the actual situation in a country.

In November 2015, the Government approved the *Action Plan on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on the Role of Women in Peacebuilding and Security for 2015-2017* (Government Order No. 560-p of 17 November 2015). The action plan had the following goals:

Goal 1. Strengthen women's participation in the implementation of UNSCR 1325, including at the decision-making level.

Goal 2. Prevent conflicts and their impacts on women and girls.

Goal 3. Ensure protection of population, including women and girls, in conflict settings.

Since the period of post-conflict recovery after the 2010 events was generally over by that time, the action plan did not cover this area. The plan included 9 targets, 36 activities/actions and 36 indicators.

The key activities under each goal were:

1. implementation of mentorship programmes to build the capacity of women in law enforcement, security and defense agencies;
2. development of a security data sheet for the pilot area;
3. development of ministerial guidelines on preventing, stopping and responding to gender violence in emergency situations (subject to approval by the Government).

Given the lack of resources for implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the government organized a donor meeting to present the approved action plan to international agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

After the meeting, UNFPA, UNODC, OSCE and UNDP expressed interest in supporting a range of activities, and a number of civil society organizations (e.g. Public Foundation *Research Center for Democratic Processes* and Public Association *Ensan Diamond*) offered partnership in implementing some parts of the action plan.

Unfortunately, the *Ministry of Internal Affairs* as the authority charged with coordinating NAP 1325 implementation at the government level, did not institutionalize the monitoring and evaluation process. As a result, the implementation rate of the NAP 1325 2016-2017 was hard to evaluate.

Quantitative analysis of NAP 1325 2016-2017 outcomes attests to positive implementation dynamics. Specifically, 74 percent of planned activities were complete by the end of the NAP 1325 cycle (i.e., 25 out of 34 activities). When the third NAP 1325 was initiated, completion progress under NAP 1325 2016-2017 was 94 percent.

In May 2017, NAP1325 engaged Jogorku Kenesh deputies, academic community representatives and renowned *akyns* (improvising poets and singers) in a TV campaign to increase public awareness about the role of women in peacebuilding on the international arena.

Key activities that were not completed are: a) security data sheet approval to enhance security of the pilot area, and b) joint command-staff exercises to work on instructions and guidelines. That is, new protocols and joint operating procedures that focus on protection and enforcement of girls' and women's rights for conflict prevention were not backed up by practical training in requisite competencies.

The main reasons why NAP could not be fully implemented include:

- lack financing, lack of support from the State, and lack of synchronization between all stakeholder ministries and agencies;
- existing NAP indicators (including at the formulation level) do not provide an accurate picture of activities implemented by government agencies, so government agencies include all activities related to domestic violence and gender equality policy in general in their reports;
- weak coordination between government agencies and poor cooperation with local self-government bodies and civil society;
- lack of synchronization between NAP 1325 and other policies on conflict prevention, violent extremism and radicalization;
- low public awareness about NAP 1325 (decreased number of NGOs that include NAP 1325 implementation and monitoring in their agenda and mission; and NGOs promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda).

Action Plan of the Kyrgyz Republic on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for 2018-2020

Prior to plan design, UNODC, UN Women and Public Association *Innovative Solution* conducted a survey to analyze the reasons for incomplete implementation of the second NAP 1325 and identify threats and challenges for the third NAP 1325. The survey was conducted in December 2017 and January 2018.

Proposed recommendations included:

- for the next action plan, use new and relevant data on the security situation, challenges, conflict factors and risks;
- given the current situation in the country ('no conflict'), identify *peacekeeping* and sustainable development as priority directions;
- to improve the reporting practice, develop indicators for planned activities and, in addition to the draft NAP, a clear reporting system that will rule out "boilerplate letters" from the government agencies and other implementers;
- harmonize goals and targets of the new action plan with other policy documents on gender and with pressing issues in peacebuilding, security and sustainable development;

- use a three-year period for the new action plan to ensure better synchronization with the NAP on GE 2018-2020 and other policy documents to achieve synergy and cumulative effect upon their implementation;
- keep the focus on the empowerment of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels;
- continue public awareness activities, educational workshops and trainings on the rights of girls and women;
- enhance cooperation between government agencies, local self-government bodies, civil society organizations and women's movement activists to promote security and prevent conflicts; and
- focus on the main threats of today: radicalism and lack of education among girls and women, religious extremism, ethnic and border conflicts.

National consultations with NGOs and civil society activists were held in January 2018 to discuss the results of the survey and participants' recommendations.

The third NAP 1325 was approved by Government Order No. 334-p of 21 September 2018. The plan has three goals:

1. enhance the role and participation of women, including at decision-making levels, in peacebuilding and security;
2. enhance cooperation between government agencies, local self-government bodies and civil society to prevent conflicts and risks of violence against women and girls and facilitate recovery from crisis situations; and
3. improve the protection and tracking of specific needs of women and girls in emergency settings.

The current action plan has neither an indicator matrix, nor estimates or budgets due to its specific format that does not allow for implementation instruments. The development and adoption of a monitoring and evaluation map with both output and outcome indicators, as well as budgets for planned activities at least at the implementing government agency (MIA) level would have increased the effect and impact of NAP 1325.

An important achievement is a Roadmap on the implementation of NAP 1325 that the *Forum of Women Deputies* developed and adopted based on consultations with local self-government bodies and activists from seven regions of Kyrgyzstan. UNDP and Public Association *Innovation Solution* supported this process under the global pilot project on the role of parliaments as partners in the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Institutionalization of this process by the Jogorku Kenesh will create vibrancy and take peacebuilding and women's participation to a new level.

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

- ✓ Promoted and supported women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements

The promotion of women's participation in peacebuilding processes and implementation of peace agreements is not institutionalized and tightly knit with the context of women's political leadership at the local level. The decrease in formal participation of women in politics and decision-making (because of the lack of special measures of electoral support) negatively affects the extent of women's participation in peacebuilding processes and implementation of peace agreements.

Recent armed conflicts between residents of Aksai village border area in Batken province and Tajik citizens, with fatalities and of uncertain origin (at least officially, as the government failed to provide

any plausible statement, let alone analysis of causes), demonstrated that local authorities and government agencies are not prepared for proactive action. Despite the readiness of women peacebuilders from Osh and Batken provinces, neither they, nor women activists from Batken Province were engaged in negotiations. The existing system of early warning and response is not gender-responsive and does not imply women's participation in conflict prevention and management.

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

- ✓ Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls

There is a range of barriers to judicial reforms and women's access to justice. People do not trust government agencies in general and judicial authorities in particular and believe they are corrupt and sluggish. Women and men from rural areas have almost no access to justice due to the limited coverage of the official judicial system. There is an ethnic and religious subculture that collides with and prevails over the official rule of law, impeding or preventing direct access to justice for women. It is important to deconstruct this subculture and the whole system of social control that forces women to use local mechanisms of dispute resolution first, such as *aksakal* (elderly) courts that consists mainly of older men, including for issues related to women's rights, although *aksakal* courts are not supposed to adjudicate criminal offences.

The *Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid* (No. 201 of 16 December 2016) expands access to justice. It gives low-income women the right to access professional legal assistance in civil, administrative and criminal proceedings.

Without regard to annual income,¹¹⁸ professional legal assistance is provided to:

- underage children in their own interests or to their parents (guardians or custodians) in the interests of children;
- single mothers with underage children;
- elderly people living in state-owned residential care facilities.

It is recognized that gender crimes under Articles 129, 154 and 155 of the *Criminal Code* are latent in nature. There are also such problems as:

- stigmatization and re-victimization of victims;
- lack of positive measures, both practical and procedural, to ensure reimbursement of direct medical expenses and compensation for moral damage;
- special rules and procedures are needed for victim protection at each stage of interaction between victims of crime and law enforcement and judicial authorities¹¹⁹.

From the moment of crime to offender's conviction, victims of gender violence face multiple violations of rights, wrongful approaches and stereotypes at all stages of interaction with the law enforcement and justice system. The stereotypes that law enforcement and judicial officials, trial participants and society in general support and spread are a significant barrier preventing victims of gender crimes from the exercise of their right in an unbiased criminal investigation and fair trial. These specific stereotypes also do not allow victims to approach law enforcement authorities for help and force them to withdraw their statements on the grounds of reconciliation for early termination of criminal proceedings.

Violence. Kyrgyzstan has one of the highest intentional female homicide rates per 100,000 population, as of 2010 (<http://www.unwomen.org/>-

¹¹⁸ This applies to individuals whose annual income is no more than 60 minimum wages, except as otherwise provided in Article 8, Part 2 of the *Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Assistance*. The size of the minimum wage is fixed annually in the *Law on Republican Budget*.

¹¹⁹ *Survey Report on the Court Practice of Crimes against Women and Girls in the Kyrgyz Republic*, Bishkek, 2017, 126 p.

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

- ✓ Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children
- ✓ Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training

Organizations across the country conducted awareness raising campaigns to inform people of such harmful practices as early marriages and of actions taken to prevent risks for girls. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Internal Affairs, the *League for the Rights of the Child* and the *Center for Child Protection* met with and organized workshops for girls and their parents to explain actions taken at the legislative and regulatory levels to eliminate early marriages.

Public Foundation *Open Line* designed two board games on early marriages: "Get It Right" and "I Have a Choice." In 2017, with support from the Office of Juvenile Affairs (MIA), the games were distributed across the country. In 2018, two mobile applications, "Lifebuoy" and "Safety Map," were developed and distributed through schools among girls and their parents.

The country has examples of innovative development approaches promoting the girls' right to self-determination. For example, child welfare organizations implemented a number of out-of-school programmes with a focus on girls, such as "School of Leadership," "STEM Education," "Mykty Baldar" ("Successful Children"), "Iygiliktuu Kyz" ("Successful Girl") and "Ilim Kyz" ("Science Girl"). The programmes aimed to overcome existing stereotypes about occupations and careers that can be equally attractive to girls and boys depending on the individual interests of each child. Under the *STEM Education* programme, many girls learned for the first time about technical occupations that will allow them to enter the labour market and become competitive professionals in future. Through communication with successful women, participation in thematic lectures and scientific conferences, and visits to technical universities and industrial facilities, girls discovered a world of new disciplines, such as microbiology, satellite construction, graphic design, mathematics and informatics. They also had an opportunity to participate in actual development of mobile apps by proposing various ideas.

An important component of career guidance programmes was parent involvement to change their understanding of responsible parenthood and parents' role in providing girls with self-determination and self-realization opportunities. Career guidance activities also supported mentorship. Having analyzed the needs and interests of girls, the programme teams selected mentors in different fields to provide girls with individual support and advice on career choice. The mentorship programme covered 70 girls, giving them a chance to choose a profession and continue education in the selected field in future.

The *Mykty Baldar* programme aimed to enhance cooperation between parents and children through joint trainings in leadership, social entrepreneurship and business planning. Upon completion of the training, groups of parents and children designed and implemented own social entrepreneurship projects.

Municipal centers for responsible parenthood provided trainings to foster families as part of NAP on GE 2018-2020,¹²⁰ Goal 2.1. *Develop a Functional Educational System for Responsible Parenthood in Pilot Areas*. In 2017, the country prepared a set of documents on fatherhood and launched *Oi Jigit* magazine with articles and case stories on the role of father in childcare and parenting.

In 2011, the *Youth Parliament* project, which aims to support youth leadership, grew into a youth movement, giving young women and men an opportunity to apply their leadership skills in practice, engage in civic activities, and address and solve issues of concern and importance to youth.

¹²⁰ <http://cbd.minijust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/93343>.

Participating in debate meetings, young leaders learn how to draft, review and pass bills that address youth problems. “Since 2016, the Youth Parliament has turned into a self-funded, sustainable project thanks to the efforts of partners, Youth Parliament graduates, and the Youth Parliament Board.”¹²¹ The Jogorku Kenesh and the State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic also support this movement. In 2019, the Youth Parliament convened again; during sessions, young leaders had a chance to communicate with representatives of different government and nongovernmental organizations, including Jogorku Kenesh, Ministry of Education and Science, State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports under the Kyrgyz Government, province and city administrations, and *ayil okmotus* (local governments).¹²² The Youth Parliament movement is a platform that helps develop leaderships skills in girls. It is also very important that government authorities understand gender-specific impacts of such projects on girls and boys.

The expert board of the Ministry of Health designed and approved *Clinical Practice Guidelines on Early Pregnancy*. The Guidelines include standards of child protection against violence in a range of settings that are based on international approaches to early pregnancy and forensic medical examination of victims of violence. The Guidelines also include a progressive norm stipulating that each girl should have access to healthcare from the age of 16 to be able to register with a local health authority on her own and get a *gynecologist* appointment.

Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

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

- ✓ Supported women’s participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance
- ✓ Strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)
- ✓ Increased women’s access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources
- ✓ Taken measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities related to traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques

The integration of gender aspects and challenges into environmental policies is a relatively new approach for the country. Environmental and social dimensions do not intersect much in the policy area and their integration is confined mainly to individual initiatives and projects.

At the national level, there are no women in policy-making positions in both the *Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration (MoAM)* and *State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry (SAEPF)*. At the local level, women’s representation in community-based forest and pasture management organizations is low. The traditional approach to pasture management remains prevalent, making land ownership and use rights the domain of men as the heads of households. Based on the MoAM data (2016), the country has 454 pasture committees, with women heading only about 11 of them (or 2.4%).¹²³ The integration of women’s knowledge on and experience in sustainable forest management could have significantly contributed to the conservation of forest and pasture resources at the community level.¹²⁴

¹²¹ http://sdpk.kg/ru/press_tsentr/novosti/2876_molodeghniy_parlament_2017.

¹²² <http://www.sport.gov.kg/news/view/idnews/3619>.

¹²³ UNDP. A note on including gender issues in projects across sectors. A case of ‘Pasture management’ project: Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <http://undpgendermadeeasy.org>.

¹²⁴ Community Resilience Initiative in Kyrgyz Republic. Available at: <https://globalforestcoalition.org/community-conservation-kyrgyzstan/>.

There is no gender-disaggregated data on forest tenure and employment in the forestry sector or other businesses related to forest production. However, qualitative analysis shows that forest tenants are usually older men, heads of households, while women and young men have very limited access to “forest land in high demand.” Pilot projects (GFC, Christensen’s Fund, SLT) showed that active involvement of women in biodiversity conservation ensures better and more sustainable results.

In 2016, SAEPF (Order of 6 September 2016) established an inter-ministerial expert group to improve national performance and public understanding of why preserving the unique biodiversity of the Kyrgyz Republic is important. The expert group consisted of 27 members, including 10 women, from stakeholder government agencies, institutions and NGOs.

To adapt SDG indicators to the national context, UN Women and *Social Technologies Agency* (STA) implemented a project entitled “*Recommendations on Mainstreaming the Gender Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals in the National Context of Kyrgyzstan*” and the National Statistics Committee adopted gender-sensitive indicators of SDGs 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 15.

Gender aspects are also integrated in the *Sixth National Report on the Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) (GFC, BIOM). National consultations on the gender dimension (CBD) were held in Bishkek in 2018 (UNDP, Women 2030, BIOM).

The country is currently reviewing gender aspects of chemicals and waste management in Kyrgyzstan (under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, WECE, BIOM) to develop recommendations on the integration of gender aspects in the convention implementation plans.

The key engines of this effort are international actors (international environmental conventions and international agencies). The expert community of the Kyrgyz Republic and civil society organizations (environmental and gender movements) are also active supporters and drivers of change.

Other activities included independent surveys on: gender aspects of access to natural resources (drinking water and infrastructure; STA, WECF);¹²⁵ gender aspects of access to drinking water;¹²⁶ pesticide risk assessment (BIOM 2015),¹²⁷ impacts of POP (persistent organic pollutant) pesticides on health of children, women and men, including reproductive health (R. Toichuev, National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic)¹²⁸ and impacts of mercury pollution on health from the gender perspective (A. Sharshenova, NGO *Preventive Medicine*).

The UNDP project “*Protection of Human Health and the Environment from Unintentional Releases of POPs and Mercury from the Improper Disposal of Medical Waste in Kyrgyzstan*” included gender analysis and assessment¹²⁹; 400 medical workers (12 men and 388 women) from 68 healthcare organizations in Bishkek received training in treatment, storage and transportation of mercury waste.

The proportion of women employees in agricultural, forestry and fishing industries decreased from 41.4 percent (2013) to 36.9 percent (2017). The share of women in small enterprises in the majority of sectors also declined in 2017 compared to 2013. Eighty (80) percent of small business employees in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector are men. Men also hold 79.4 percent of management jobs in this sector. The proportion of men heading agricultural farms is 80.8 percent, which means women have limited access to land. Registration of women’s land rights may often clash with customary norms that may preclude them from inheriting land or retaining it in case of divorce.¹³⁰ FAO’s “*National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods: Kyrgyz Republic*” (2016) provides the most comprehensive review of this issue.

¹²⁵ Global Water Solidarity: Improving Access to Water and Sanitation through Decentralized Cooperation in the Kyrgyz Republic - <http://www.biom.kg/informatory/publications/5812cb34a6016dcc8ae57a4a>.

¹²⁶ Analytical Recommendations: Gender Aspects of Access to Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation, STA, Bishkek, 2013.

¹²⁷ Pesticide Risks: Survey Presentation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FXoXXrc4rQ>.

¹²⁸ Impacts of Organochlorine Pesticides on Births of Children with Congenital Defects in Osh Province - <http://izron.ru/articles/aktualnye-problemy-i-dostizheniya-v-medsine-sbornik-nauchnykh-trudov-po-itogam-mezhdunarodnoy-nauch/sektsiya-46-epidemiologiya-spetsialnost-14-02-02/vliyanie-khlororganicheskikh-pestitsidov-na-rozhdaemost-detey-s-vrozhdennoy-patologiyev-v-oshskoy-obl/>
¹²⁹ [http://www.donors.kg/ru/4406-gendernyi-aspekt-v-upravlenii-meditsinskimi-otkhodami#](http://www.donors.kg/ru/4406-gendernyi-aspekt-v-upravlenii-meditsinskimi-otkhodami#.XMXmOegzaUk)

¹³⁰ Deininger, K., Selod H., and Burns. 2012. The Land Governance Assessment Framework: Identifying and Monitoring Good Practice in the Land Sector. World Bank: Washington, DC. p. 69.

The country does not maintain gender-disaggregated statistics on access to water and sanitation; available data applies to general water and sanitation access. As of early 2016, the situation in this area has not changed much (over the last five years) and even worsened in some regions of the country. Aggregate information, including on children's, healthcare and social organizations, is available in the *Target Setting under the Protocol on Water and Health* document¹³¹ and the country-level GLAAS profile (2016-2018). Both documents were prepared by the inter-ministerial working group with input from experts; 90 percent of the working group were women.

The *National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040* aims to ensure access to safe drinking water (provide no less than 228 villages with drinking water supply) and build and rehabilitate drinking water systems in the city of Jalal-Abad (Phase Two) and domestic water supply systems in the towns of Kara-Balta, Talas, Kant, Tokmok, Naryn, Batken, Bishkek, Osh, Uzgen, Kara-Suu, and Kyzyl.

The *Community Development and Investment Agency* (ARIS) is currently in charge of water and sanitation projects in Kyrgyzstan. As part of project implementation, the agency conducts gender-sensitive sociological surveys in the target towns and villages to improve project impacts on women and men and involve women in water management at the local level.

Women still have problems with access to irrigation water. Irrigation water is an economic asset, but managing this asset is a traditional niche area of men. The country has 477 water user associations in charge of irrigation water management. Women's representation in these associations is less than ten percent.

Public Associations *ALGA* and *Kyrgyz Alliance for Water and Sanitation* work to engage women groups in natural resource management, including through participation in CDWUUs (*Community Drinking Water Users Unions*) and WUAs (*Water User Associations*).

Positive examples of progress in energy efficiency and renewable energy are the *Sustainable Energy Solutions for Rural Communities under the UNDP Jashyl Ayil Initiative* project (2015-2018) and UNISON Group's projects that aimed to increase energy efficiency with a focus on gender-specific needs.

The formal education sector still shows a gender gap in this area. In informal education, international and civil society organizations are major contributors to professional development of women.

Women have always played an important role in acquisition and sharing of knowledge. Women in rural areas are the holders of traditional knowledge in such areas as seed collection and storage; seed growing techniques, medicinal properties of plants, climate change adaptation, etc.

Kyrgyzpatent (State Service for Intellectual Property and Innovations under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic) has a database of traditional knowledge. The database currently contains about 1,000 units of traditional knowledge information. It is mainly about traditional medicine, livestock care practices, healing properties of plants, and leather tanning and colouring techniques (many traditional knowledge holders are women). Since 2009, Kyrgyzpatent has received 60 patent applications for traditional knowledge and registered 26.

The *Akylga Tirek* programme (Public Foundation *Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy* (ISDS)) helped establish and develop a national biocultural diversity network and enhance the capacity of local organizations through an educational platform based on the "peer to peer" and networking cooperation principles, and build a knowledge database on biocultural diversity, including local traditional knowledge. The programme covered 92 villages in four provinces and provided trainings to 4,427 people, including 2,847 schoolchildren and young people and 2,538 women.

¹³¹ Target Setting in the Context of the Protocol on Water and Health in Kyrgyzstan.

https://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/meetings/NPD_meetings/2013/Kyrgyzstan/SC_Mar2013/Target_setting_KG_final_report_130313_Ru.pdf

The *Women 2030* project (GFC) supported women from pilot communities in preserving traditional knowledge in medicine (Jargalan Village, Issyk-Kul Province), soap making (Krasnaya Rechka, Chui Province) and sustainable pasture management (Shabdan Village, Chui Province). In total, the project covered over 50 women from five local communities.

With support from UNDP, gender experts developed a set of gender mainstreaming recommendations as part of the *Programme for Development of "Green" Economy in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019-2023*. The recommendations are integrated in such sectors as energy, agriculture (pasture management, irrigation, access to knowledge), tourism, waste management and chemical risk mitigation. The programme is currently under review by the Government.

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

- ✓ Strengthened the evidence base and raised awareness about the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters
- ✓ Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g., disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)

In 2018, the *Inter-ministerial Commission (IWC) on Civil Protection* approved the Regulation on *Inter-sectoral Cooperation to Prevent, Terminate and Respond to Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Situations* (Prime Minister Meeting Minutes No. 23-5 of 28 February 2018). The country also adopted a new law on *Civil Protection* (No. 54 of 24 May 2018), which reflects gender perspectives of risk mitigation in prevention of violence against women and children in emergency and crisis settings (Article 2, Clause 8; Article 3, Clause 2; Article 5, para 2.1 and 2.17; and Article 7, Clause 10). In addition, the government introduced standard operating procedures on inter-ministerial response to gender-based violence in emergency and other crisis situations, including mechanisms for referring victims of violence to appropriate services based on their specific needs. These operating procedures are in line with the international standards.

At this moment, impact assessment can be premised on the outcomes of the first phase of work, i.e. ministerial guidelines and instructions for authorized government agencies that have to operationalize their duties and responsibilities in internal documents in accordance with the above regulation. To date, government has approved the *Regulation on the Ministry of Emergency Situations* and drafted instructions for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Development.

The Ministry of Health designed the *Programme of the Healthcare Sector of the Kyrgyz Republic on Adaptation to Climate Change for 2011-2015*, which incorporates gender aspects. After 2015, vulnerability of women and girls to climate change and emergencies are addressed in the *Programme for Transition of the Kyrgyz Republic to Sustainable Development for 2013-2017* and gender-disaggregated indicators of SDGs (number of affected persons with a breakdown by sex). NSC periodically collects data on the number of people living in potentially hazardous areas and subject to relocation (men and women) and the number of diseased, missing, injured and hospitalized individuals (men and women), Form No. 1-ES (1-ҮС).

With financial support from UNDP, expert groups and SAEPF prepared the *Climate Profile of the Kyrgyz Republic* (2013) and the *Third National Communication of the Kyrgyz Republic on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (2016). Gender perspective are integrated in both documents.

The *Gender, Environment and Climate Change* survey by UN Women and BIOM covers risk issues.

The Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) prepared and adopted regulatory documents:

- *Regulation on Inter-sectoral Cooperation to Prevent, Terminate and Respond to Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Situations*, IWC MoES Meeting Minutes No. 23-5 of 6 March 2018; and
- *Ministerial Action Plan on Gender Equality* (MoES Order No. 1005 of 17 November 2012);
- MoES also established permanent commissions and working groups on gender in both the ministry and its divisions to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the national and ministerial action plans.

Section 3: National institutions and processes

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

The recent trends in institutional relations show that it is institutions/government agencies that lay the foundation for human development and gender equality in particular. It is hard to deny today that there is sustainable and statistically significant correlation between the quality of national institutions and gender progress. The quality of institutions is one of the factors explaining differences in the gender equality progress in different countries.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, gender equality and the empowerment of women depend on a national institutional machinery that consists of a) legislative and b) executive government bodies that have not experienced any significant structural or substantive changes since 2014.

The institutional mechanism consists of the following government agencies:

A) Jogorku Kenesh¹³² represented by:

Committee for Social Issues, Education, Science, Culture and Healthcare, which address issues pertaining to the competence of the Jogorku Kenesh:

a) gender equality: fundamentals of gender equality in different areas of public relations; guarantees of gender equality; gender equality implementation mechanisms; improvement and enforcement of legislation on gender equality;

b) social and legal protection against domestic violence: protection against domestic violence; government agencies, organizations and institutions providing social support to persons with experience of domestic violence; social services supporting victims of domestic violence.¹³³

These issues fit the legislative, oversight and institutional functions of the Parliament.

The **Ombudsman** implements parliamentary oversight over constitutional human and civil rights and freedoms through the *Department for Protection of Children's, Women's and Family Rights*.

Of note, none of the formal responsibilities of the Department is related to protection and monitoring of women's rights and gender equality. The Ombudsman Office prepared two special reports on women: women's labour rights and women's reproductive rights.

B) Government represented by:

National Council on Gender under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, a coordinating, consultative and advisory body.¹³⁴ The National Council is supposed to convene four times a year, but this schedule is not always maintained. In practice, the Council meets once a year.

Ministry of Labour and Social Development represented by the Gender Department, a working body providing organizational, methodological, information and other support to the *National*

¹³² According to the Constitution, the Kyrgyz Republic has a mixed parliamentary-presidential government system.

¹³³ Order No. 24-VI of the Jogorku Kenesh on *Approval of Powers of Committees of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic* of 12 November 2015.

¹³⁴ Regulation on the *National Council on Gender under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic* approved by Government Decree No. 268 of 2 May 2012 (as amended by Government Decree No. 570 of 2 October 2014).

Council. MLSD, as an executive authority and the government agency in charge of gender policy implementation, suggests priorities and targets for the national gender policy, conducts gender situation analysis, and monitors the implementation of the national gender policy.¹³⁵

There are also other, informal institutions advancing gender equality, such as the *Forum of Women Deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh*.¹³⁶ The Forum provides a platform to mainstream and promote gender-sensitive legislation and initiatives. It aims to address gender issues through cooperation with different ministries and civil society members; assist in increasing women's participation in social, economic and political areas; and promote international and national commitments of the Kyrgyz Republic on women's participation in political processes and gender sensitivity.

Institutional progress and gaps

Institutions from which society expects systematic and consistent steps in the development and implementation of an equal opportunities policy should integrate and follow the declared gender equality principles in their own organizational culture, practices and procedures.

Low (qualitatively and quantitatively) capacity does not allow institutions to fully exercise their powers and combat existing stereotypes and forms of discrimination to promote women's rights and ensure de-facto equality of women and men.

Policy making is often limited to adoption of laws and regulations presented as an outcome rather than an instrument for achieving equal rights and opportunities for women.

Institutions remain weak and gender competencies are still on the fringe of both government agency functions and mandates of government officials and authorities.

The lack of understanding and gender awareness and knowledge among public servants in government agencies of all levels, as well as the lack of commitment to the gender equality principles, especially when it requires the loss of control and ties – all these are factors undermine de facto gender equality. It appears today that only a few officials perceive gender equality as a responsibility, while the rest address this issue in accordance with their personal views.¹³⁷

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

The *Coordinating Committee for SDG Adaptation, Implementation and Monitoring until 2030* was established by Government Order No. 867 of 22 December 2015. The committee is a consultative and advisory body that coordinates government and other agencies involved in adaptation, implementation and monitoring of country activities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The next important stage in the transition of the Kyrgyz Republic to SDGs will be analysis, adaptation and integration of SDG targets and indicators in national strategic documents.¹³⁸

The Parliamentary Committee for International Affairs, Defense and Security established a working group to implement SDGs in the Kyrgyz Republic (Resolution of 29 May 2018).

In July 2020, the Kyrgyz Republic is going to submit the *Voluntary National Review (VNR)* on SDGs progress. On 29 April 2019, the government approved five working groups in charge of VNR preparation and a regulation on their activity. The main implementing agencies are the Ministry of Economy and the Government Office.

83 Regulation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development approved by Government Decree No. 888 of 28 December 2015 (as edited by Government Order No. 633 of 12 December 2016).

¹³⁶ Under the UNDP project, the Roadmap of the Jogorku Kenesh on Gender Sensitivity and Roadmap of the Jogorku Kenesh on Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 were developed in 2019. The second roadmap was designed by Forum of Women Deputies and is now at the initial stage of implementation.

¹³⁷ Common Country Assessment for the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2016.

¹³⁸ To harmonize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the *Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2022: "Unity, Trust, Creation"* and analyze entry conditions for SDG achievement in the Kyrgyz Republic, a workshop was organized for government bodies, UN agencies and the MAPS mission (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support). Participants from government bodies included officials charged with implementation of the *Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2022*.

The country's previous experience with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with low institutional capacity did not bring about a significant progress, especially on health, education and gender equality goals. Nonetheless, the country managed to meet some of the target indicators. Existing government agencies responsible for MDG implementation in most cases were not prepared to set targets and indicators and design action plans. Thus, the MDG process was operationalized only at sectoral policy development and implementation levels but had no effect on targets and performance of public servants involved in the MDG process (e.g., medical workers or health officials). Besides, the traditional sectoral approach to implementation was ineffective, because the MDG achievement process required an intersectoral approach and cooperation between a whole range of institutions.

33. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Monitoring the Beijing Declaration and PfA and some of gender-specific SDG targets is included in the *NAP on GE* and *NAP on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for 2018-2020*, which are based on the above global guidelines. Annual reports on NAP progress are submitted to the coordinating body. In case with NAP on GE, this is the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, and in case with NAP 1325, this is the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The *National Council on Gender* is intended to monitor and oversee progress on both international and national gender equality commitments of the Kyrgyz Republic. However, its activities are not systematic and hindered by the turnover of ministries, agencies and province administrations in charge of gender issues. The Council also needs to improve control over implementation of its decisions. Oversight is generally limited due to inefficient monitoring and evaluation and weak harmonization of national strategies and programmes with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The *Coordinating Council on SDGs*, which includes representatives of women's NGOs and gender experts, has never convened.

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

Beijing Declaration and PfA	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
✓ Civil society organizations	✓ Civil society organizations
✓ Women's rights organizations	✓ Women's rights organizations
✓ Academia and think tanks	✓ Academia and think tanks
✓ Faith-based organizations	✓ Faith-based organizations
✓ Parliaments/parliamentary committees	✓ Parliaments/parliamentary committees
✓ Private sector	✓ Private sector
✓ United Nations system	✓ United Nations system
✓ Other actors, please specify	✓ Other actors, please specify

b) Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes?

The country does not have mechanisms to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in processes of BD, BPfA and SDGs implementation and monitoring. This task will be assigned to responsible government agencies after the national review.

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

The only legitimate documents on SDG implementation are the *National Development Strategy until 2020* approved by Presidential Decree No. 221 of 31 December 2018 and also the *Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2022 “Unity, Trust, Creation”* approved by Order No. 2377-VI of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic of 20 April 2018.

The above policy documents do not prioritize gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Section 4: Data and statistics

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

- ✓ Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- ✓ Improved administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- ✓ Produced knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)

The country has conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time-use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability).

In the past few years, the Kyrgyz Republic has made significant progress in collection and dissemination of gender statistics and data on a range of gender-sensitive indicators, including gender-based violence.

Apart from regular integrated household budget and labour force surveys (KIHS), the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC) conducted new household surveys that provide an important source of information on gender statistics: multiple indicator cluster surveys, time-use sample surveys, and the *Gender in Society Perception Study*.

In 2014, NSC conducted the **Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of Children and Women in the Kyrgyz Republic**¹³⁹ (MICS-5) as part of the global MICS programme with financial and technical support from the *UN Children's Fund* (UNICEF) and *UN Population Fund* (UNFPA). MICS-5 provided an update on children's and women's status in the country and data for monitoring of ongoing strategies and action plans. The MICS data were used to develop key indicators for monitoring progress on the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) and identify indicators for the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) and other internationally agreed commitments.

With support from UNICEF, the country is currently completing the **2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of Children and Women in the Kyrgyz Republic (MICS 2018)**. The survey aims to fill gaps in data on women and children in Kyrgyzstan, monitor progress on target indicators of some of the national programmes and strategies, and also to monitor SDG indicators.

In 2014-2015, with financial and technical support from the *International Labour Organization* (ILO) and in partnership with ILO-IPEC (*International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour*), NSC completed the **Second National Child Labour Survey in the Kyrgyz Republic**.¹⁴⁰ The survey

¹³⁹ National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Kyrgyz Republic, Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014. Final report. Bishkek, 2015. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/projects-researches/>

¹⁴⁰ Child Labour in the Kyrgyz Republic. Child Labour Survey, 2014-2015. International Labour Office, ILO International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour, National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Decent Work Technical Support Team and ILO Office in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Bishkek: IOL, 2016

used the ILO methodology and provided comprehensive data on different facets of children's life, education, labour and health with a focus on gender aspects.

Time-use surveys¹⁴¹ are conducted on a regular basis (once in five years) among households participating in KHIS (Kyrgyz Integrated Household Surveys). Information on the use of daily labour time enables analysis of gender-specific differences in activities of men and women, e.g. distribution of working time, time spent on unpaid care and household work as the ratio of paid to unpaid work, time spent on childcare, etc. The survey data allows NSC to study gender aspects of rest and leisure time, preferences in leisure and sports activities, etc. The results of time budget surveys are posted on NSC's official website.

In 2015-2016, MLSD and NSC conducted the *Gender in Society Perception Study*¹⁴² (GSPS) under a joint programme (UN Women, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and International Organization for Migration (IOM)) entitled "*Development of an Evidence Base to Promote Gender-Sensitive Policies and Programmes to Ensure Equality and Sustainable Peace in Kyrgyzstan.*" A comprehensive national survey of gender perceptions in society was included in the *National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2015-2017* as part of the *National Strategy on Gender Equality until 2020*. The need for such surveys was emphasized in the *CEDAW Concluding Observations on the Fourth Period Report of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. The Gender in Society Perception Study was funded by the *UN Peacebuilding Fund* and implemented in cooperation with country offices of UN Women, UNFPA and IOM in Kyrgyzstan.

The *UN Peacebuilding Fund*-supported project aimed to enhance the empowerment of women and girls and eliminate threats to gender equality through clear identification of risk factors and opportunities for promoting gender aspects of peacebuilding at community levels and also to strengthen the capacity of government, UN agencies and NGOs to improve policies and develop gender-responsive programmes.

In general, the project aimed to collect data at the national, community and society levels on the key risk factors of gender inequality and threats of violence affecting women and girls through a *qualitative and quantitative survey* of women's political participation, economic empowerment of women, forced marriages and marriages with minors as a form of violence against women, religious radicalization of women and its impact on migration, and women's participation in labour migration.

The coordinating government agency under the project was the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic. *NSC was responsible for the quantitative component of the project, including the household survey.* Survey methodology and instruments were developed with support from representatives of leading local colleges and universities, research institutes, civil society organizations, ministries and administrative institutions, including the President's Office; National Academy of Sciences; National Defense Council; Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism; and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The project helped collect information on the *knowledge* of women and men, their *attitude* to issues in question, and *practices* used by women and men in different situations (*KAP* methodology). The final GSPS report combines quantitative and qualitative data analysis. As a follow-up on issues identified by GSPS, the country organized workshops on policy and strategy development for a wide range of government and nongovernmental organizations and also to inform stakeholders of further action.

The GSPS conclusions laid the foundation for recommendations in NAP 1325, Implementation Plan for the National Strategy on Gender Equality on 2016-2018 and strategic action plans of UN agencies

¹⁴¹ National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Time Budget Sample Survey Results. Bishkek, 2015. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/obsledovaniya-byudzheta-vremeni/>.

¹⁴² Gender in Society Perception Study, Bishkek-2016. National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/gendernaya-statistika/>.

on engagement of civil society in the development of priority programmes. The results of the study will provide a basis for a gender equality policy after 2020 and will be used by international agencies, including the UN Country Team and community-based partner organizations, in establishing lasting peace and empowering women.

In 2018, the Public Foundation *Research Center for Democratic Processes* conducted a **survey to identify negative stereotypes about women and men with disabilities**¹⁴³ under the joint project of UNDP and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland “*Towards Sustainable Access to Justice for Legal Empowerment in the Kyrgyz Republic.*” The results of the survey included infographic publications and recommendations for the media campaign aimed at eradicating gender stereotypes against women and men with disability and rural women. To study public opinion on and attitude to persons with disabilities and rural women, the survey used both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The survey demonstrates the attitude of the public and lyceum students in two cities (Bishkek and Osh) and two provinces (Osh and Chui) of the country to persons with disabilities and provides an insight into negative stereotypes about these populations.

The results of the survey can also be used in the development of programmes and media campaigns aimed at improving lives of persons with disabilities and rural women and can be useful to non-specialist audiences interested in the public attitude to persons with disabilities and rural women.

As a follow-up to the recommendation of the UNECE Steering Group, the question about functional disabilities (for individuals aged 5 years and older) was included in the **Population and Housing Census Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2020**. This question is one of the SDG indicators and is totally new to population censuses in the Kyrgyz Republic. Responses to the question on disabilities should be subjective, i.e. express respondent’s opinion rather than the medical diagnosis, etc. This is why this question is mandatory for all respondents aged 5 years and older, including persons with disabilities.

Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)

Kyrgyzstan regularly publishes information on gender-disaggregated statistics. The National Statistics Committee (NSC) provides statistics on women and men in a range of statistical digests that meet international standards. In particular, gender-disaggregated statistics is available in such publications as *Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic*, *Demographic Yearbook of the Kyrgyz Republic*, *Employment and Unemployment*, *Health and Healthcare*, *Education and Science*, *Children of Kyrgyzstan*, *Youth of Kyrgyzstan* and others. Gender statistics indicators are also provided in a statistical digest entitled “Crime and the Justice System in the Kyrgyz Republic” (Sections *Family Violence* and *Domestic Violence*).¹⁴⁴

The statistical yearbook *Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic* has been published in Kyrgyzstan since 1996 with support from international organizations. It is regularly updated to meet the growing demand for information and expand the qualitative data content to cover gender aspects in all areas of life. The yearbook currently contains data on population, representation of women and men in government authorities, employment and unemployment rates, standard of living, education, healthcare, violations of law and crimes against women and children, and family violence for the period of 2013-2017. The latest publication included a new section on gender-specific SDG indicators for women and men in Kyrgyzstan. The section covers 48 SDG indicators (11 global and 37 national indicators) describing the status of men and women in the Kyrgyz Republic.

¹⁴³ Report on negative stereotypes about women and men with disabilities and rural women – Bishkek: 2018; p. 80.

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/sbornik-prestupnost-i-pravoporyadok-v-kyrgyzskoi-respublike/>

The yearbook is intended for a wide range of users: top managers; owners and employees of businesses and organizations; academic, business and banking communities; teachers, postgraduates and students; civil society organizations; independent experts and others interested in policy and programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Statistics, analytics and press releases on gender-based discrimination and violence are regularly posted on NSC's official website at www.stat.kg. The monthly report *Socioeconomic Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic*, section *Crime*, provides information on registered cases of family (domestic) violence, number of temporary restraining orders issued to protect victims of violence, etc. (based on MIA data). The electronic version of the report is available on NSC's website.¹⁴⁵ In addition, NSC issues quarterly statistical bulletin *Microfinancing*, with gender indicators. NSC posts the bulletin on its website¹⁴⁶ and circulates hardcopies to all stakeholder ministries (agencies).

Apart from publications, NSC maintains a gender database with statistics-based priority indicators. The database is available on NSC's website in the *Gender Statistics*¹⁴⁷ section. It is in the Excel format and includes over 50 indicators under six statistical categories: demography, education, standard of living, labour market, healthcare, crime, and disability. The database is updated annually by NSC's sectoral department experts.

NSC's website also contains analytical articles on gender¹⁴⁸ (in contexts of demography, healthcare, education, labour, employment, and status of rural women). The articles are updated annually based on NSC's statistical data. Each year in late December, NSC issues an article entitled "Facilitating Gender-Disaggregated Statistics as NSC's Priority" as part of the international *16 Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign*.

Statistical capacity development to increase use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, workshops, statistical appreciation seminars)

In 2014, the country released the results of the *Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey 2012* (KRDHS) with data on violence against women. The survey report was also posted on NSC's website (www.stat.kg). The results were presented through a number of events, including a nationwide conference (30 January 2014), a workshop in Osh (5 June 2014) and a seminar for media outlets (16-17 June 2014). Each event included presentations on the rights and opportunities of women and violence against women.

With support from *UNFPA*, *UN Peacebuilding Fund*, *UN Women* and *IOM* and as part of the nationwide *Gender in Society Perception Study* (2015-2016), the country organized a roundtable to present the results of the survey to key policy makers, representatives of the Kyrgyz Government, *Jogorku Kenesh*, ministries and agencies, NGOs, international organizations and other stakeholders.

In May 2018, with technical support from *UNECE*, the country held a workshop on dissemination, communication and use of gender statistics in Kyrgyzstan for stakeholders from the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Italy, Moldova, Ukraine, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The workshop aimed to assist in capacity building of NSC staff and a wide range of statistical data users in the gender statistics area (identification, use and interpretation of gender indicators) and *SDG (Sustainable Development Goals)* progress monitoring.

In November 2018, NSC organized a *UNFPA*-supported roundtable on the *Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic* yearbook with participation of statistical data users. In cooperation with sectoral NSC departments and based on suggestions from stakeholder data users, NSC prepared an updated

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/doklad-socialno-ekonomicheskoe-polozhenie-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/o-mikrokreditovanii-naseleniya/>.

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/gendernaya-statistika/>.

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/ekonomicheskie-zapiski/>.

version of the yearbook with more detailed analytics in key sections, and a new section on SDG indicators, and developed data for infographics.

NSC has significant experience in providing technical and methodological support to government agencies in gender statistics collection, analysis and dissemination. In recent years, NSC has actively cooperated to improve the system of statistical data collection and analysis on gender discrimination. This activity is largely related to the development of administrative (agency-level) statistics in MIA, Supreme Court Justice Department (SCJD), Ministry of Health, General Prosecutor's Office (GPO) and other authorities.

With support from UNODC, MLSD and other ministries and agencies, NSC held a seminar on crime statistics (including gender-based violence and human trafficking) with participation of an international expert in criminal statistics (Bishkek, June 2017).

A new phase of gender statistics development began with the adoption of the Law on *Prevention and Protection against Family Violence* in 2017. Same year, to bring statistical reports in compliance with the new law and implement Target 3.1.6: *Improve the Collection, Analysis and Quality of Statistical Data on Gender-Based Discrimination and Violence* of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAP on GE) for 2015-2017,¹⁴⁹ the government established an inter-ministerial working group (IWG)¹⁵⁰ to analyze available government and administrative (agency-level) statistics on gender discrimination, gender-based violence and human trafficking. The analytical review was prepared with support from the *UN Office on Drugs and Crime Programme for Central Asia 2015-2019* and in cooperation with the Public Foundation *Research Center for Democratic Processes*. The working group included representatives of MLSD, NSC, statistical departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Prosecutor General's Office (PGO), Supreme Court Justice Department (SCJD) and Ministry of Health, crisis centers, civil society organizations and expert community.

In 2018, the government published the *Analysis of Government and Administrative (Agency-Level) Statistics on Gender Discrimination with a Focus on Violence and Human Trafficking*,¹⁵¹ which included specific IWG recommendations on improvement of existing reporting practices based on international and national standards of gender statistics. As a result, IWG helped improve registration and reporting of gender-based violence and discrimination in MIA, GPO, SCJD and NSC. The key results and recommendations from the analysis of government and administrative statistics on gender-based violence and human trafficking and also new forms of statistical reports to NSC, MIA, Ministry of Health and Supreme Court based on the Law on *Prevention and Protection against Family Violence* and Law on *Preventing, and Combating Human Trafficking* have been presented at a roundtable in Bishkek.

In 2018, the country provided training in completing new forms of government statistical reports on gender discrimination with a focus on violence and human trafficking under the joint project of UN Women and UNODC implementing the national component of the *UN Women's Flagship Programme: Making Every Woman and Girl Count* (MEWGC). Workshops on *Improving Quality of Government and Administrative (Agency-Level) Statistics on Gender Crimes, Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking* were organized in Bishkek and Osh for territorial statistical organizations and law enforcement, judicial and health authorities, and also crisis centers and *aksakal* (elderly) courts.

The trainings used specialized information and trainings aids, including a practical guide for territorial statistical authorities and organizations providing social services and support to population of the Kyrgyz Republic on collection of data on gender-based and domestic violence and human trafficking, and practical guides for law enforcement, judicial and health authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic on collection of data on gender-based and domestic violence and human trafficking.

¹⁴⁹ Approved by Government Order No. 443 of 27 June 2012.

¹⁵⁰ Order No. 35 of MLSD of 20 June 2017.

¹⁵¹ https://www.unodc.org/documents/centralasia//2018/GBV_TIP_crimes_data_collection_analysis_RUS.pdf.

These guidelines contain data on national legislation governing registration and reporting of gender-based and domestic violence by NSC and social services organizations, and information on the definitions and types of violence. The practical guides can be of use to non-specialist audiences interested in registration and reporting of gender-based violence against women, domestic violence and human trafficking.

In cooperation with the *PARIS-21 Consortium* (Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century), the government provided trainings in *ADAPT* (Advanced Data Planning Tool) to ministries and agencies. *ADAPT* allows national statistical authorities and other organizations producing official statistics to plan statistical data production for monitoring progress of the *Sustainable Development Goals*, national strategies and sectoral development programmes.

36. Out of the following which are your country's top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?

- ✓ Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects
- ✓ Conduct of new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- ✓ Statistical capacity building of users to increase statistical appreciation on and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)

Use of more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects

Having joined the *Beijing Platform for Action*, the Kyrgyz Republic committed to improve national statistics for policy formulation and evaluation of progress on gender equality.

NSC continues to play an important role in the implementation of gender policy and national action plans by collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated indicators of country's development. NSC coordinates and provides guidance in statistical data collection at the national level using decades-long experience of mainstreaming international standards into statistical practices.

National statistical bodies build their gender statistics database based on information from businesses, organizations, ministries and agencies (agency-level statistics) and also data from population and housing censuses and sample surveys. Gender statistics is widely used to identify current trends in society, design national strategic programmes and projects, and monitor and evaluate their progress. Over the past few years, NSC has significantly contributed to the improvement of statistical reporting on gender-based discrimination, violence and human trafficking.¹⁵²

Standardization of national gender statistics and harmonization of national indicators with international commitments are part of the *National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Gender Equality until 2020* and *National Action Plans on Gender Equality for 2015-2017 and 2018-2020*.

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2018-2020, Goal: *Standardize National Gender Statistics and Harmonize National Indicators with International Commitments* has two targets:

1. Identify and integrate gender-sensitive indicators in planning, monitoring and evaluation of national development programmes and strategies; and
2. Improve the collection of statistical data on gender-based discrimination and violence.

Target One activities include: monitoring the integration of gender indicators in the design and implementation of national and sectoral development strategies, including gender-specific SDG

¹⁵² See the sections above.

indicators; and monitoring the integration of gender approaches in the design and implementation of socioeconomic development programmes by local self-government bodies (LSGs).

Gender statistics development is also one of the top priority statistical activities in the *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS). In recent years, the CIS Statistics Committee has increased focus on analysis of gender equality indicators in CIS countries as a result of joint projects with the *UN Population Fund* (UNFPA) and *UN Economic Commission for Europe* (UNECE). An important component of these projects is statistical data collected by national statistical organizations of CIS countries, as well as their collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-specific data as part of regular statistical monitoring and point-in-time sample surveys.

With support from UNFPA, NSC identified indicators for a new section of its *Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic* yearbook. The new section covers gender-related SDG indicators that define the status of women and men in Kyrgyzstan and was included in the latest issue of the yearbook (2018). In the nearest future, NSC will be updating gender indicators for effective SDG monitoring in Kyrgyzstan. NSC is currently designing a new *Programme for Statistics Development in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2020-2023*. The implementation plan of this programme will also aim to expand the database of gender-disaggregated SDG-related indicators.

In this context, the role of national statistics in the CIS region and across the world is hard to underestimate, as both Kyrgyzstan and other countries have committed to improve their gender statistics. NSC, as one of the key agencies in charge of mainstreaming the SDG monitoring and evaluation system, is currently developing and adapting a methodology for collection, processing and dissemination of SDG indicators. In planning gender statistics development, NSC relies on both international standards and country-specific priorities that underlie national action plans on SDG-2030 and gender equality policies.

To collect and summarize data on SDG indicator monitoring progress, the CIS Interstate Statistics Committee developed a list of SDG indicators for the CIS region and conducted a survey to measure the progress achieved by CIS countries in SDG implementation and monitoring in accordance with the *2019 Work Programme*.

After adoption of the *National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040* and the *Government Programme "Unity, Trust, Creation,"* the country faced the need to identify indicators for monitoring and linking these national strategic documents with the global programmes. To achieve this, the national statistics, research institutes and the expert community are planning to work together to adapt SDG indicators to the national development indicators to further build an integrated gender-sensitive monitoring system.

New surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time-use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)

The assessment of the current situation in the country based on high-quality and reliable statistical data from regular statistical monitoring, population censuses and thematic sample surveys is important to identify trends in society, develop national strategic programmes and projects, and monitor and evaluate their progress. Gender issues in Kyrgyzstan require comprehensive surveys and effective instruments of gender equality monitoring and evaluation.

NSC is currently looking for ways to integrate new data sources into the national statistics system to meet the need for new data under the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. In production of gender statistics, it is important to ensure that different government agencies and NSC coordinate their action in developing indicators of regular statistical reporting and planning specialized sample surveys on different aspects of gender. Given the increasingly growing user needs, statistics producers were instructed to improve their registration and reporting practices in this area. For example, administrative (agency-level) statistics on gender-based violence reflects only reported and registered

cases. Besides, duplicate statistics is produced when the victims of violence are registered in all government organizations where they receive help, and available information on victims is very scarce.

National statistics lacks gender indicators in such problematic areas as: participation of women and men in decision-making processes, production and social life; equality and non-discrimination in the law and access to justice; access of women and men to resources, education and healthcare; protection of women's and girls' rights; prevention of violence, including family violence; etc.

A major persistent problem is that there is little data on women's unpaid care work, income of women and men in informal economy, and social status of labour migrants in receiving countries (employment, access to healthcare, education and social services). There are also gaps in available data on the most vulnerable groups of women: older women, women with HIV/AIDS and women with disabilities.

One of the promising trends in the field of poverty statistics is to study multidimensional poverty in the gender context, which is not limited to income and consumption at the household level, but covers such aspects as access to healthcare, education and basic utilities, such as clean water and adequate sanitation, and some others. To collect real-time data on multidimensional poverty from the gender perspective, it is necessary to conduct specialized surveys to measure individual household members as opposed to the household as a whole.

Time-use surveys conducted by NSC every five years are a rich source of information for gender statistics and analysis. In 2020, NSC plans to carry out another survey among households participating in the integrated household budget and labour force surveys to collect data on the use of daily labour time. Time-use statistics is particularly important in studying the links between paid and unpaid work and rest, and for understanding of these links in the gender context. To identify better disaggregated or new indicators of gender statistics, it is important to reprocess available data.

With support from partners, NSC regularly conducts various sample surveys, such as the *Medical and Demographic Survey*, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of Children and Women in the Kyrgyz Republic*, *Time-Use Survey*, *Gender in Society Perception Study*, and others. These surveys provide NSC with information on a wide range of indicators defining the social status of women and men and individual aspects of gender-based violence and other factors. However, despite obvious achievements in the development of gender statistics, NSC does not have sufficient financial and human resources to conduct comprehensive surveys on gender issues at the national level.

As recommended by experts, one of the key steps in building a SDG monitoring and reporting system in Kyrgyzstan is to identify potential sources of financing for specialized surveys through consultations with the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic and development partners. To ensure high quality and independent monitoring of gender inequality issues in Kyrgyzstan, NSC needs support from international partners and nongovernmental organizations. In its turn, NSC will be able to timely respond to the changing needs of gender statistics users, build capacity of national statistical organizations and increase gender sensitivity of mandate holders at the republican and regional levels.

The forthcoming *2020 Population and Housing Census* will be the largest and most significant source of statistical information in the country, which is also important in production of gender statistics. The census data can be also used to examine differences in the lives of women and men and study certain sub-populations from the gender perspective at the local community level, such as older women and men, rural population, persons with disabilities, etc.

Statistical capacity development of users to increase statistical evaluation on and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)

To ensure a more active use of gender statistics and users' understanding of its value, special events are required to raise the awareness of users and improve the use of gender statistics in general. Gender statistics users are not only government agencies, but also a wider range of stakeholders whose needs should be taken into account when developing a strategy on dissemination and use of statistical data.

To facilitate the use of gender statistics that helps better understand gender differences in society and increase gender sensitivity of official statistics, national statistics should be developed in the following directions: collection of new data (e.g., through time-use surveys or surveys of violence against women); refinement of some concepts and definitions; improvement of data collection (question formulation, sample selection, interview techniques); better presentation and dissemination of survey results and capacity building of both producers and users of statistical data.

The country has developed the *Communication Strategy for 2019-2030*¹⁵³ to achieve strategic and communication goals under NSC's main strategic document, *National Statistics Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2015-2019*. The Communication Strategy aims to improve statistics dissemination practices, increase understanding of official statistics and official statistical methodology, ensure user feedback, and identify user needs in statistical information.

An increased focus on new social phenomena in the modern society poses more challenges to NSC and impacts methods of statistics production and dissemination. Today, to make progress in the communications area, NSC should not only disseminate statistical data, but also explain to users what all these numbers mean through comparison and analysis. The Communication Strategy prioritizes such aspects of statistics as readability and comprehensibility, availability of methodological comments, graphic representation of information, and ease of use.

Strategy implementation will help create a modern and open system of interaction with representatives of government agencies, mass media, business community, educational and research institutions, nongovernmental organizations and civil society to satisfy their needs in official statistical data, including gender indicators.

Actions to be taken to achieve the above goals include:

1. *Increase credibility of official statistical information in eyes of the users.*

This task will require enhancing the credibility of official statistics through the following actions: improve cooperation with the media; create and promote innovative products (multimedia technologies, computer-readable data formats (Open Data)); improve direct communication methods; introduce a single visual standard for information content; and modernize digital communication channels. One of the key factors in solving this task is to ensure full access to official statistics for all groups of users by providing statistical data on all social, economic, demographic and environmental processes and phenomena in the country. In addition, statistical authorities should ensure timely response to user needs by providing systematic feedback and engaging with the key users, such as the media to assist in the correct representation of official statistical data, especially in the press and on television.

2. *Better understand user needs in official statistics by creating a system of citizen engagement in decision-making on statistical data dissemination.*

The most important indicator of NSC's progress at this stage will be the assessment of user needs in statistical data. In its efforts to determine user needs, NSC should focus on identifying the priorities of end users, increasing relevance and reliability of information, and ensuring timely release and dissemination of official statistical data.

Key activities in the implementation of these directions should be the use of interactive survey tools and the Google Analytics tools that will allow NSC to better study the opinion and satisfaction of end

¹⁵³ <http://www.stat.kg/media/files/66a4a40f-6462-4a81-8f70-3420fd9e31ea.pdf>.

users with official statistical information. NSC plans to use interactive and expert communication platforms, as well as social media and internet forums for dialogue with the general public and experts.

3. Improve user feedback to increase quality of official statistical information

A set of measures is needed to improve user feedback and guarantee high quality of official statistical data. Achieving this will require to implement such key activities as: create a specialized section on NSC's official website to ensure timely response to user needs; enhance interaction and cooperation with the media and the public through press conferences, open days, briefings and roundtables, as well as various communication events and trainings for media staff; formalize job responsibilities of employees working with user inquiries in internal regulatory documents; and ensure access to information through social media networks. These activities will allow NSC to expand the audience, build dialogue with the users and disseminate additional information, including videos and infographics.

4. Ensure transparency in dissemination of official statistical data

To ensure transparency in dissemination and presentation of official statistical data to users and increase their reliance on statistical information and methodology, NSC should guarantee all users equal and simultaneous access not only to official statistics, but also to metadata with explanatory comments. To achieve this, NSC will need to inform the public in advance of scheduled releases of official statistical data on its official website and by publishing related information in official journals.

5. Enhance marketing capacity

One of the key aspects in implementing this Strategy should become marketing capacity building of NSC through planning and conducting surveys to identify target audience, needs and channels for delivery of statistical products, developing marketing products, building an effective sales system, and introducing performance indicators for the marketing department.

At this stage, it is necessary to raise public awareness about the goals and targets of the 2020 population and housing census in the Kyrgyz Republic. The information campaign should aim to create positive attitude among population to government events and activities related to population and housing census and increase awareness about census goals and targets.

So, these activities will allow NSC to identify opportunities for gender statistics marketing, as the communication strategy on gender statistics is not included in a separate programme due to the lack of resources. Such activities as workshops to increase gender sensitivity of the national statistical system, consultative meetings with ministries and agencies to discuss gender statistics issues and problems of gender statistics use, etc. can be implemented as part of NSC's statistical data dissemination policy. The implementation of the Communication Strategy will allow NSC to timely respond to the changing needs of gender statistics users, enhance the capacity of national statistical organizations, and increase gender sensitivity of mandate holders at the republican and regional levels.

An important aspect in gender statistics development is training of NSC employees and other government officials in charge of gender statistics production. It is important to increase their knowledge of gender-responsive legislation and improve practical skills in collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics and also to enhance their gender sensitivity to effectively mainstream gender aspects into official statistical data production. To develop capacity of increased gender sensitivity of the statistical system, the country plans to conduct trainings/workshops for employees of territorial statistical organizations and other government agencies in collection and processing of SDG indicators with a focus on gender-based approach.

37. Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDG's?

✓ Yes

Please provide the indicators in an annex

In September 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic, along with the other countries, committed to contribute to the implementation of global SDGs and monitoring of SDG indicators. As the first phase of building a SDG monitoring and reporting system, the Kyrgyz Republic has been making an inventory of SDG indicators since early 2017 by identifying global indicators and defining equivalent and additional national indicators for subsequent integration of (global) SDG targets and indicators in national and sectoral strategic programmes.

The inventory process showed that the country defined 150 equivalent and 163 additional national indicators for 232 global SDG indicators (as of 1 January 2019).

The *First Review Mission* to Kyrgyzstan in September 2017 evaluated the national statistical system in terms of implementation progress, starting from the development of the National Action Plan, and assessed in detail the country's statistical capacity for monitoring progress on SDGs. The statistical capacity of the Kyrgyz Republic for monitoring progress on global SDG indicators was assessed as being equal to 96 indicators or 48% of global applicable indicators.

In 2018, NSC prepared statistical series on global and national indicators in the national statistical system (about 80 indicators in total) for the period from 2007 to 2017 and revised forms of national statistical reports to introduce new indicators for monitoring progress on SDGs. To disaggregate SDG indicators, NSC included a block of questions concerning functional disabilities into the 2020 population and housing census questionnaires and conducted the MISC-2018 survey that will provide data on SDG indicators.

The MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) Review Mission was conducted in June 2018 to support comprehensive and sustainable growth in Kyrgyzstan. The mission activities included assessment of national programmes for compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets.

In the context of cooperation with the *PARIS-21 Consortium* (Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century), the government provided trainings in *ADAPT* (Advanced Data Planning Tool) to ministries and agencies. ADAPT allows national statistical authorities and other organizations producing official statistics to plan statistical data production for monitoring progress on the *Sustainable Development Goals*, national strategies and sectoral development programmes.

Plans for 2019-2020 include the development of a *SDG Monitoring Strategy* (including an action plan for building a SDG progress monitoring system). The "roadmap" is intended to provide guidance to NSC in statistical data production for SDG implementation. The development of the communication strategy on engagement of statistics users in SDG monitoring will allow NSC to design a detailed step-by-step plan for cooperation with the producers and users of statistical data. As part of SDG indicator development and adaptation, the country plans to prepare a metadata handbook on global and national indicators.

Other plans include creating a National Data Dissemination Platform, an online platform for sharing all SDG indicators, both global and national. The platform will provide access to not only SDG indicators produced in the national statistical system, but also data from other sources.

The country also plans to build a centralized reporting system on SDG indicators, where NSC will play the key role and will be in charge of data compilation for national reporting on SDGs. The developed SDG indicators and related metadata will be posted on the National Reporting Platform, where they will be available to international and regional organizations for inclusion in the UN Statistical Commission's database.

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

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No

If YES, please describe which indicators have been prioritized

If NO, explain the main challenges for collecting and compiling data on these indicators

Kyrgyzstan collects and compiles data on SDG 5 indicators and gender-specific indicators under a number of other SDGs. NSC has prepared statistical series on global and national indicators in the national statistical system (about 80 indicators in total) for the period from 2007 to 2017.

The *Open Data*¹⁵⁴ section on NSC's website contains information on SDG indicators. For ease of use, data is provided in a number of formats: JSON, XML and also as Excel spreadsheets. SDG 5 indicators are the *Proportion of Seats Held by Women in the National Parliament (% of Population)* and *Proportion of Women in Managerial Positions (% of Population)* for the period from 2007 to 2017.

Proportion of seats held by women in the National Parliament (% of population)											
Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Proportion of seats held by women in the National Parliament	25.6	25.6	25.6	23.5	20.8	20.8	22.5	21.7	21.7	15.8	16.7

Proportion of women in managerial positions (% of population)											
Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Proportion of women in managerial positions	31.5	31.9	30.6	32.3	28.9	32.3	27.5	33.4	36.1	34.9	36.2

The latest issue of the *Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic* yearbook has been updated to include a new section on gender-specific indicators under the Sustainable Development Goals with data for 2010-2017. The section provides information on 48 SDG indicators (11 global and 37 national) defining the status of women and men in Kyrgyzstan. The indicator under SDG 5: *Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls* is the proportion of women who own a mobile telephone (number of phones per 100 households).

39. Which of the following disaggregations¹⁵⁵ is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

- ✓ Geographic location
- ✓ Income
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Marital status
- ✓ Race/ethnicity

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/opendata/category/145/>.

¹⁵⁵ As specified in A/RES/70/1, with the addition of education and marital status.

- ✓ Migratory status
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Other characteristics relevant in national contexts

Major surveys in Kyrgyzstan use all of the disaggregations listed above as well as additional characteristics, such as the native language.