

**National Review of the Republic of Tajikistan
on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration
and Platform for Action (1995) within the scope of
implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General
Assembly (2000) in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary
in 2020 of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the
adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

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List of acronyms

SA	Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IUD	intrauterine device
GBAR	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region
LC	Land Code
CWF	Committee on Women and the Family
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MHSPP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population
SRI OGP	Scientific Research Institute of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Pediatrics
WFCL	worst forms of child labour
NDS	National Development Strategy
UN	United Nations
SLST	Survey of Living Standards in Tajikistan
GR RT	Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
MtDP	Mid-Term Development Programme
VTET	vocational technical education of teachers
DRS	districts of republican subordination
SCR	Security Council resolution
RTSU	Russian-Tajik Slavonic University
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
CLMS	Child Labour Monitoring System
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
TSU	Tajik State University
TSMU	Tajik State Medical University
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

Section 1. Overview of achievements and challenges since 2015

I Achievements

Since 2015, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has made the following significant achievements in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:

1. Improvement of the legal framework for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Tajikistan;
2. Inclusion of issues related to reduction of gender inequality as a cross-cutting theme in the 2030 National Development Strategy (NDS 2030) and in the Mid-Term Development Programme 2016–2020 (MtDP 2016–2020) and the adoption of new gender-sensitive programmes;
3. Capacity-building of the main institutional mechanism for the advancement of women, the coordination of actions for the implementation of gender policies, and the implementation of interim measures;
4. Creation of mechanisms for the implementation of policies to prevent domestic violence.

1. Improvement of the legal framework for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Tajikistan and the adoption of new programmes

Since 1995, the Government of Tajikistan has devoted much effort to develop and adopt a legal framework on gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. During this lengthy period, many social relations have transformed acquiring a different meaning. In addition, Tajikistan, due to its important geopolitical position, cannot remain unaffected by global migration processes and those related to security, combating terrorism and extremism. Those processes have impacted the status of women. In this regard, Tajikistan has been given various recommendations of the United Nations treaty and Charter bodies on improvement of the legislation to protect the women's rights, criminalize gender-based violence and more.

In this regard, the Republic of Tajikistan attaches paramount importance to the improvement of legislation on gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. In accordance with paragraph 1 of the Action Plan of the State Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023 and paragraph 6 of the National Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations Provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council as part of the Universal Periodic Review (second cycle) for 2017–2020 approved by Order No. 901 of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, dated 7 June 2017, in order to improve legislation to strengthen gender policies and protect women's rights, pursuant to the Instruction of the Head of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, dated 29 June 2017, a Working Group on Improvement of Legal Acts on Elimination of Gender Stereotypes, Protection of Women's Rights and Prevention of Domestic Violence was established.

This Working Group has been divided into three Subgroups:

Subgroup 1: Issues related to the improvement of legal acts on the elimination gender stereotypes (under the Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in cooperation with the Project on Prevention of Domestic Violence (PDV)),

Subgroup 2: Issues related to the improvement of legal acts on the protection of women's rights (under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan in cooperation with the UNDP's Rule of Law and Access to Justice Programme),

Subgroup 3: Issues related to the improvement of legal acts on the prevention of domestic violence (under the General Prosecutor's Office in collaboration with the PDV Project).

All subgroups worked in close collaboration with the civil society, gender non-governmental organizations that are part of the Coalition for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Women's Rights "From Equality *de jure* to Equality *de facto*." Currently, all recommendations of the subgroups of the Working Group are under consideration of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In 2014, Tajikistan ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In October 2017, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan submitted a report on the implementation of the Convention.

2. Inclusion of issues of reducing gender inequality as a cross-cutting theme in the 2030 National Development Strategy and in the Mid-Term Development Programme 2016–2020 and the adoption of new gender-sensitive programmes

Tajikistan approved and adopted for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2016, Tajikistan developed and adopted the 2030 National Development Strategy (NDS 2030), which defines the main action lines for achieving SDGs in Tajikistan.

The main goal of the country's long-term development set in the NDS 2030 is raising the standard of living and welfare of the population through implementation of the 4+1 Conceptual Framework in the structure of its strategic goals and priorities. This Conceptual Framework implies the achievement of four national strategic development goals of the country until 2030: 1) ensuring energy security and efficient use of electricity; 2) breaking the communication deadlock and turning the country into a transit country; 3) ensuring food security and public access to quality nutrition; and 4) expanding productive employment. In NDS 2030, the issue of ensuring equal opportunities and reducing social inequalities through reducing gender inequalities—as a result of the improvement of policies ensuring *de facto* gender equality and preventing all forms of violence against women and girls—takes a special place.

Further enhancement of the human capital development is seen in the NDS 2030 as a complex intersectoral priority related to education, health, social protection and gender equality.

The cross-sectoral priorities of the MtDP 2016–2020 are:

- to ensure human rights and the rule of law;
- to reduce gender inequality;
- to increase social inclusion of the vulnerable groups of population;
- to manage disaster risks;
- to implement preventive measures for mitigation of the effects of climate change.

NDS 2030 and MtDP envisage new approaches to solving gender issues with a focus on *de facto* equality. The priorities in reducing gender inequality are to do so by improving policies ensuring *de facto* gender equality and preventing all forms of violence against women and girls.

Main NDS action lines aimed at enhancement of the policy ensuring *de facto* gender equality are:

- improvement of legislation in order to implement State guarantees for the introduction of equal opportunities to women and men;
- development of institutional mechanisms for the implementation of sectoral policies following national and international commitments to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- enhancement of mechanisms to ensure legal literacy and social inclusion of women, including rural women;
- increasing gender capacity and gender sensitivity of the employees of all branches of government;
- introduction of gender budgeting in the budget processes, etc.

Main action lines aimed at prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls are:

- development of legislative and regulatory framework for the prevention of violence against women and provision of assistance to victims of violence;
- creation of institutions to coordinate and promote activities of public entities aimed at violence prevention and assistance to victims of violence;
- increasing the scale of activities to ensure access and quality of services for abused women and girls;
- improvement of gender statistics and creation of a consolidated database of all types of violence;
- development and implementation of programmes to change perceptions and behaviours that justify violence against women and girls.

Implementation of all the above priorities and respective action lines set in the strategic instruments of Tajikistan is becoming an important way of achieving SDG 5 at the national level.

The Action Plan of the National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2015–2020 was adopted. The implementation of the National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011–2020 has been under way. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has taken a number of positive measures to promote gender equality. To this end, the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the State Programme on the Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023 and the Action Plan for its implementation were adopted.

In November 2018, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women submitted its concluding observations to Tajikistan. After a wide discussion of the recommendations provided by CEDAW with civil society, the Government developed and adopted a National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan on Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for 2019–2022. After a broad discussion, the National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Implementation of resolutions No. 1325 and No. 2122 of the UN Security Council for 2019–2022 has been developed. This plan has been submitted for approval to the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Government has also approved the Action Plan on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Mothers, Newborns, Children and Adolescents as a part of the National Population Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020. All pregnant women have access to primary healthcare services during the day and in the evenings to out-patient primary healthcare (central

district hospitals). In addition, a procedure has been developed for the transfer of pregnant women to the second- and third-level healthcare.

3. Strengthening the capacity of the main institutional mechanism for the advancement of women, the coordination of actions for the implementation of gender policies and the implementation of interim measures

The Government has undertaken structural and financial measures to strengthen the capacity of the main institutional mechanism for the advancement of women and to coordinate the implementation of the gender policy, and has increased the staffing and funding of the Committee for Women and the Family. A Legal Department has been established and an Expert Council on Gender Analysis of Legislation has been created. The Council aims at carrying out a gender analysis of draft laws prior to their submission to the Government and the Parliament. A Gender Network has been created in order to introduce gender approaches into the activities of ministries and other entities.

On 1 November 2014, the Government adopted a Resolution increasing the number of work positions in the headquarters by 7 and in its local offices by 105. The Committee's budget is increasing annually, totalling 892,910 somonis in 2015, 939,355 somonis in 2016, 996,110 in 2017, 1,048,244 in 2018 and 1,132,500 in 2019, which is 27 per cent more than in 2013. The number of full-time staff of divisions, departments and sections engaged in work with women and families in provinces, towns and districts of Tajikistan is from 3 to 7 people (nationwide, 247 people), and their work is funded from local budget. District information and counselling centres, the staff of which numbers over 200 people nationwide, operate under those departments and sections. The training centre's budget for 2017 was 1,336,355 somonis, for 2018 it was 1,611,729 somonis, and for 2019 it is 1,760,024 somonis.

In the last three years, in order to implement women's rights, a number of laws and Government resolutions were adopted in addition to the existing, in particular, the State Programme for the Education, Selection and Placement of Gifted Women and Girls in Leadership Positions in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2022. For the implementation of this State programme, 76 thousand somonis were budgeted in 2017, 78 thousand somonis in 2018, 80 thousand somonis in 2019, and 82 thousand somonis in 2020.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, in the 2015/2016 academic year, a total of 2,408 people were admitted to the universities of the Republic of Tajikistan under quotas, including 1,178 girls and 1,230 boys. An early implementation of the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to increase the age of marriage from 17 years to 18 years played an important role in increasing the access of girls to education.

On 19 April 2017, the Presidential Order No. 647 of 10 March 2016 amending the Presidential Order of the Republic of Tajikistan was adopted to attract women to the public service. In accordance with paragraph 14 of the Guideline on the Procedure for Competitive Admissions for Public Service Openings, privileges for women shall be provided and upon their initial appointment to the civil service they shall be given three additional points.

4. Creation of mechanisms for the implementation of policies to prevent domestic violence

With a view to effectively implementing the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Prevention of Violence in the Family and the State Programme on the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014–2023, national mechanisms are being created to implement this legal framework.

a) For this work several Working Groups have been established:

- Inter-Agency Working Group on the Prevention of Domestic Violence under the Committee on Women and the Family of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- Working Group under the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan on improving legal framework aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes, protecting women’s rights and preventing domestic violence;
- Working Group under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population on improving the management of mechanisms for victims of domestic violence;
- Working Group under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan on strengthening the role of educational institutions in the upbringing and promotion of non-violent behaviour;
- Working Group under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan on the introduction of gender-sensitive aspects in the Police Reform Programme.

b) Laws and regulations have been developed and improved to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence according to the mandate of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and certain standards have been developed to assist victims of domestic violence.

c) Laws and regulations have been developed and improved to enhance the role of educational institutions in promoting non-violent behaviour according to the mandate of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, and new subjects were introduced for grades 8–11 to promote non-violent behaviour among students.

d) Communication Strategy to Prevent Domestic Violence was developed and adopted by the Committee on Women and the Family in its resolution of 22 September 2017.

e) Guideline on the Organization of the Work of the Staff of Internal Affairs Bodies in Preventing, Eliminating and Responding to Cases of Domestic Violence was developed and adopted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

f) Guideline on the Activities of the Staff of the Committee for Women and the Family Departments on the Implementation of Gender Equality and the Prevention of Domestic Violence was approved by Order No. 159 of 8 November 2018.

g) In 2016–2018, during phase 9 of the PDV Project, the capacity-building activities have been implemented in cooperation with the GOPA office for medical and social workers, teachers, municipal police inspectors, representatives of departments and sectors for women and the family, representatives of the Committee for Religious Affairs and Regulation of National Traditions, Ceremonies and Rituals, lawyers of public bureaux of legal affairs, employees of civil registration entities and civil servants of local authorities.

The strategic development instruments of the country provide specific measures for monitoring and evaluating policies on gender equality using quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Currently, together with the PDV Project, funded by the Swiss office, the State Programme on the Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023 is being monitored.

In order to increase public awareness and legal literacy on the adverse effect of domestic violence against women, children and other family members, various information activities and educational events have been held in all regions of Tajikistan with various demographic groups.

II Issues and factors that led to success or failure

Legislative, institutional, conceptual frameworks to promote *de facto* equality of women and men have been established in Tajikistan, which is one of the success factors. It should also be noted that Tajikistan, being a part of the world community, actively adheres to global initiatives implemented through the United Nations and other global platforms that promote gender equality. Close cooperation with development partners in the country has also brought positive results.

However, there are problems and challenges that the country faces in accelerating gender equality. Implementation of the declared tasks in all strategies, laws and programmes that have been adopted requires the selection of the most effective mechanisms and differentiated approach taking into account the characteristics of particular industries and target groups of women, the development of a new conceptual vision of solving the issues of empowering women and girls, considering new approaches of the 2030 Global Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Among the obstacles to the implementation of gender policy and overcoming gender inequality, the following should be highlighted:

- ✓ Weaknesses of the legal framework for the promotion of gender equality and poor integration of gender approaches into sectoral legislation;
- ✓ Lack of compulsory gender expertise of draft new laws and regulations;
- ✓ Limited and weak institutional mechanisms for gender policy;
- ✓ Lack of continuous monitoring and limited system of indicators on the implementation of the Law on State Guarantees of Equality, promotion of women and change of gender relations;
- ✓ Limited financial resources to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
- ✓ Underuse of the principle of priority for planned purposes and ongoing activities, in the context of shortage of material and human resources;
- ✓ Gender stereotypes that impede the education and empowerment of women in employment, as well as women's burden of domestic work;
- ✓ Migration processes.

III Five priorities set in legislation, policies and/or programmes in the past five years in Tajikistan

All of the above achievements form part of Tajikistan's priorities set in legislation, policies and/or programmes. Based on the 2030 National Development Strategy and the Mid-Term Development Programme for 2016–2020, Tajikistan has identified the following priorities:

- Equality and non-discrimination provided by law and access to justice;
- Sound academic background, vocational training and lifelong learning for women and girls;
- Access to healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health, as well as reproductive health rights;
- Ending violence against women and girls, and changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes;
- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises.

Gender equality is impossible if law and policies are not applied in practice and there is indirect discrimination. Therefore, in order to identify indirect discrimination, it is necessary to improve the legislation of the country in this regard. Improvement of legislation is the first priority. The Working Group on Improvement of Legal Acts on Elimination of Gender Stereotypes, Protection of Women's Rights and Prevention of Domestic Violence was proposed to introduce the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination, interim measures, and to carry out mandatory gender expertise of laws. These changes should be aimed at achieving *de facto* gender equality. In addition, in 2017 in Tajikistan Working Groups formed by the representatives of national ministries and other entities were established in order to develop the draft 2025 National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Human Rights Protection and to consider the development of a specific law on comprehensive combat against discrimination and enhancement of corresponding laws, which in collaboration with the Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for Central Asia, other international organizations and civil society conduct national consultations with government officials, civil society and international organizations.

Work is also under way on women's access to justice. By the Government Resolution of 2 July 2015, a Conceptual Framework on the Provision of Free Legal Aid was adopted. The Framework provides for pilot testing of a new system of free legal aid in specific areas, and also covers issues associated with financing the provision of legal aid. Under this Framework, all citizens who apply to public bureaux of legal affairs are entitled to receive free initial legal aid (oral consultations). In accordance with paragraph 25 of the Framework, the list of persons who are eligible for secondary legal aid (assignment of counsel before the courts and other State authorities) includes victims of domestic violence and torture, and their close relatives and family members.

In order to implement the Framework, the Legal Aid Centre, a State institution, was established to test models for the provision of free legal aid to vulnerable groups of the population. In 2016 and 2017, 16 State legal aid bureaux were established in 12 cities and districts of Tajikistan.

During the period of operation, the bureaux received requests for free legal aid from 3,985 individuals. Of these 1,626 were men, 2,020 were women and 340 were persons with disabilities.¹

¹ Sixth periodic report submitted by Tajikistan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017 (2 October 2017), para. 49–52. See:

At present, a draft Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid has been developed. The Expert Council under the Committee on Women and the Family conducted a gender analysis of this draft law and presented recommendations for its improvement in terms of women's rights to free legal aid.

Education, being a human right, is also one of the prerequisites for achieving sustainable development and an essential tool for efficient governance, sound decision-making and the development of democracy.

Therefore, Tajikistan has charted the course for accelerating gender equality through education. Tajikistan is making a lot of efforts on achieving the second priority. Thus, Tajikistan has adopted a National Programme for Education in the field of Human Rights. Quotas continue to be provided for girls from rural areas for admission to higher education institutions. It should be noted that the training and education of women in the country is one of the priority objectives of the Government. As of 1 October 2018, 21,197 students are enrolled in primary vocational education institutions of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, of which 4,875 (23 per cent) are girls. Also, as part of the implementation of the State Employment Assistance Programme, 16,097 unemployed individuals were involved in short-term training, 13,253 (82 per cent) of which were girls and women housewives. In addition, during this period, 20,497 persons, 9984 (49 per cent) of whom were women, attended those short-term courses at their own expense.

The right to sexual and reproductive health is a right on which the safety and lives of girls and women depend. Providing girls and women with full-fledged reproductive health services, and education, the State thus deals with the problem of early marriage, prevention of domestic violence and preparing young people for responsible motherhood and fatherhood, as well as the birth of a healthy next generation of the country.

The Government has also approved the Action Plan on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Mothers, Newborns, Children and Adolescents as a part of the National Population Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020. All pregnant women have access to primary healthcare services during the day and in the evenings to out-patient primary healthcare (central district hospitals). In addition, a procedure has been developed for the transfer of pregnant women to the second and third levels of healthcare services.

As a result of the improvement of access to services, the number of home births has decreased from 12 per cent to 4.9 per cent. The procedure for providing medical counselling on reproductive health to minors, including members of at-risk groups, was approved under a Government Resolution of 28 November 2015. On the basis of reproductive health centres, 21 medical counselling units, where medical and psychological assistance is provided to young people from at-risk groups, have been established and are in operation. As of today, in total there are 1,640 obstetrician-gynaecologists and 5,008 midwives working in the healthcare system.²

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fTJK%2f6&Lang=en

² Sixth periodic report submitted by Tajikistan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017 (2 October 2017), para. 25–28, available at:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fTJK%2f6&Lang=en

Violence against women is still an issue in Tajikistan. It negates all the achievements of Tajikistan over the years of independence in protecting and enhancing the rights of women and girls. Violence against women is a form of their discrimination based on sex and violation of their rights and freedoms. The elimination of violence against women is one of the priorities for Tajikistan stated in the 2030 National Development Strategy. Combating violence against women, the Government continues to work actively on changing the existing social norms and gender stereotypes within the framework of the State Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023.

At present, under the Government gender policy, women’s activism in the public sphere is encouraged. The market economy stimulates private initiative among women. The emergence and increase in the number of women entrepreneurs is leading to the formation of economically independent women’s groups. There is a growing interest in new forms of activity, such as private enterprise, individual creativity and public sector. A steadily developing system of female entrepreneurship has been established. In accordance with a Government Resolution of 2 April 2011 on the Establishment and Allocation of Presidential Grants to Support and Develop Women’s Entrepreneurial Activities in 2011–2015, 40 grants have been awarded every year for a total of 1 million somonis. Since 2013, by Government Resolution of 5 December 2013, the number of grants increased from 40 to 80 and the amount allocated totalled 2 million somonis. In accordance with the Government Resolution of 2 November 2015 on the Establishment and Allocation of Presidential Grants to Support and Develop Women’s Entrepreneurial Activities in 2016–2020, the policy of State support for women’s entrepreneurial activities up to 2020 has continued as follows:

- 20 grants of 40,000 (forty thousand) somonis;
- 20 grants of 30,000 (thirty thousand) somonis;
- 20 grants of 20,000 (twenty thousand) somonis;
- 20 grants of 10, 000 (ten thousand) somonis.

IV Specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination

For several years, the Government of Tajikistan has been carrying out preparatory work for the ratification of the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006 and entered into force on 3 May 2008**. A lot has been done in this direction, including the creation of a Working Group to prepare for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to perform comprehensive analysis on disability issues.

With its political will in 2016 in the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan received numerous international recommendations on acceding to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2017, Tajikistan endorsed the Action Plan for UPR, which included measures related to the CRPD and its Optional Protocol. In 2016, Tajikistan adopted the cross-sectoral National Programme on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities for 2017–2020, largely in line with the CRPD. The National Programme has become the first regulatory instrument on disability issues since the country gained independence in 1991. It addresses the rights of persons with disabilities in the areas of health,

rehabilitation, education, life support, social protection, culture, accessible environment, justice, etc. In March 2018, the President signed the CRPD at the UN Headquarters.

Under the National Programme for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities for 2017–2020, attention is paid to women and girls with disabilities. Since 2011, the education of children with disabilities in general education schools has been promoted through the adoption of the National Conceptual Framework of the Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities (see Government Resolution No. 228 of 30 April 2011). This Conceptual Framework emphasizes the standing obligations of educational institutions to ensure the accessibility and participate in education of children with disabilities without discrimination.

The overwhelming majority of existing services for children with disabilities, including those at in-patient and out-patient facilities and day care centres, is funded by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan from the national budget. According to the available data, in 2014 the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan spent 14.0 million somonis from the national budget at providing care to people with disabilities, including 24.8 thousand somonis at day care services. In 2014, 1,371 persons with disabilities received assistive technology devices (prostheses, orthoses, wheelchairs and other assistive mobility devices and assistive technology devices) for a total of 37.9 thousand somonis. In 2014, the public expenditures on these types of services totaled 41.9 million somonis, including disability benefits, virtually increasing by 14 per cent since 2013. As of January 2015, 153,248 persons (including 25,086 children) received social benefits and disability pensions, including children with congenital disabilities, those who acquired disabilities later in life and those who were injured at the workplace.³

In addition, under the umbrella of the UNDP Rule of Law and Access to Justice Programme, the legislation of Tajikistan was analyzed for compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and recommendations were proposed on introduction of amendments and additions to seven legislative acts, including the Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of Tajikistan. As part of this work, technical support was also provided for a working group on the development and adoption of the National Action Plan to prepare the Republic of Tajikistan for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The issues of the rights of women and girls with disabilities are also highlighted in these documents. These documents are now under consideration of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

As of 31 March 2019, there are 3,252 women with HIV living in Tajikistan.⁴ Much work is also being done on women living with HIV in Tajikistan. The National Programme on Countering the Epidemic of Human Immunodeficiency Virus in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2020 has been approved. The programme includes activities related to mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Thus, over 90 per cent of pregnant women in the country are covered with HIV testing, and the programme for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV covers more than 98 per cent of HIV-positive pregnant women.

However, there are challenges. The National Programme on Countering the Epidemic of HIV in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2020 does not sufficiently reflect gender-oriented Sustainable Development Goals. There are cases of limited access of HIV-positive women, compared with HIV-positive men, to reproductive and sexual healthcare, social welfare, as well as employment

³ National Programme on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities 2017–2020 approved by the Government Resolution No. 455 of 28 October 2016, para. 17–18.

⁴ <http://www.nc-aids.tj/statistika.html>

and educational services. The high level of gender-based violence against women, both in the community and in families, makes them vulnerable to HIV infection and at the same time violates the rights of women with HIV.

In order to provide support and resolve existing problems related to prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan in collaboration and with the support of international partners organized a national conference on HIV/AIDS-related issues, with international participants present at the event. The conference was held on 25–26 June 2018 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The initiative to hold this conference is supported at the highest State level.

Over 150 representatives of the Government and the Parliament, several ministries and entities of the Republic of Tajikistan, clergy of the country, specialists from governmental and non-governmental HIV-related services, representatives of a number of international organizations with which Tajikistan actively cooperates in combating HIV, as well as specialists and experts from a various countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, etc. participated in the conference. Following the conference, a resolution was adopted. As a follow-up of this initiative and in accordance with the strategic goal 6 of the National Programme on Countering the Epidemic of HIV in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2020, a gender-sensitive National Plan on Counteracting Stigma and Discrimination against HIV-Positive People for 2019–2021 was developed. This plan is also under consideration of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan for approval.

With regards to the priorities specified by Tajikistan, it will continue the effort that has already been put into their achievement, since much remains to be done.

Section 2. Progress in 12 critical areas of concern

I Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Women and poverty

Food security is crucial for providing people with adequate and healthy food to ensure a long, healthy and decent life and physical activity. These issues are prioritized in NDS 2030 and MtDP 2016–2020, and are key to nationalizing SDGs and integrating the 2030 Agenda into the strategic instruments related to national development. The national Government considers food security as a core element in solving economic and social problems of the country, its regions and families.

The WFP Food Security Monitoring System (2017) showed that, only 12 per cent of Tajikistan's rural population is food secure, 54 per cent marginally food secure, 28 per cent moderately insecure, with the remaining 5 per cent not having access to food in quantities necessary to meet their needs.

Performing assessment of the food security levels in Tajikistan, it should be noted that national production fully satisfies domestic needs only in milk and dairy products. Self-sufficiency in wheat, meat and meat products, and eggs is about 80 per cent. For all other products, the share of national production is relatively low. The most important imported food products are grain and

flour. At the beginning of 2018, grain was imported to the country by 13.3 per cent more, while flour by 54 per cent less compared to the beginning of the previous year.

The medical and demographic research conducted in the country in 2017 showed that children's stunting growth decreased from 26 per cent in 2012 to 17 per cent in 2017, while the share of underweight children decreased from 12 per cent in 2012 to 8 per cent in 2017. 24.2 per cent of women of childbearing age and 28.8 per cent of children aged from 6 weeks to 5 years suffer from anemia, while 52.9 per cent suffer from iodine deficiency. Malnutrition is an indirect cause of 35 per cent of deaths among children under five. The burden of malnutrition in Tajikistan is economically significant and is estimated at USD 41 million annually due to loss of efficiency and productivity. Taking into account the current situation, the National Multisectoral Strategy and Action Plan on Nutrition and Physical Activity for 2015–2024 were approved by a Government Resolution and started to be implemented. Also, in September 2013, the country joined the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN).⁵ Difficulties in enhancing food security as well as ensuring adequate food and food safety in Tajikistan are mainly observed in four major areas: 1) health sector; 2) poverty reduction strategies and economic development; 3) agricultural sector; and 4) social protection.

In order to achieve the goal of NDS 2030 related to food security and access to quality nutrition and the goal of MtDP 2016–2020 to overcome the low level of food self-sufficiency in the Republic of Tajikistan, the Programme of Agriculture Reform of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2012–2020 is implemented with its 22 specific goals, achievement of which will contribute to the achievement of SDG 1 and SDG 2.

In addition, the country has adopted a Food Security Programme (2016–2030) aimed at stimulating domestic production and reducing dependence of the national economy on imports. The main objective of this programme is to support domestic production during the next ten years and to meet the needs of the population with domestic production: by 90 per cent in bread and bread products, potatoes, eggs and rice, by 80–90 per cent in vegetables, by 70–80 per cent in fruit and berries, by 80 per cent in vegetable oil, by 40 per cent in poultry, by 50 per cent in milk and dairy products (in terms of milk).

The country adopted the Conceptual Framework of Innovative Development of Agroindustry of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2030 aimed at creating conditions for the successful development of innovative activities and ensuring the acceleration of scientific and technological progress in all sectors of the agroindustry. Meanwhile, the adopted Programme for Organizing and Restoring Refrigerators and Storage Facilities for Storing Agricultural Products for 2015–2019 is aimed at reducing crop losses and ensuring a more stable supply of food to internal, local markets throughout the year.⁶

Women and the economy

The country attaches great importance to women's entrepreneurship and employment. In July 2016, a new Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan entered into force. Article 7 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan prohibits any discrimination, non-admission or preference, refusal to hire—which lead to violation of equality of labour opportunities—regardless of nationality, race, gender, language, religion, political beliefs, social status, education or property.

⁵ For more on the SUN Global Strategy, see: <http://scalingupnutrition.org/about-sun/>

⁶ National Report on the Implementation of the NDS 2030 and MtDP 2016–2020 Strategic Goals in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Dushanbe, 2018. Pp. 20–25.

The Labour Code ensures that when hiring, promoting, providing training, setting work schedule and dismissing employees, including civil servants, the regulations related to the rights of and guarantees for individuals of both sexes must be taken into account. Remuneration, i.e. salary payment, is the main provision of the employment contract. Salary is remuneration for the performed work. Discrimination in salary is prohibited. The employer is obliged to pay employees the same remuneration for the performance of equivalent work.

For the first time in the Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan (chapters 21 and 22), the particularities of the domestic and home-based labour have been regulated. The national policy of Tajikistan considers conflicts related to service and family responsibilities. The National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women until 2020 provides measures to resolve the conflict between work and family responsibilities, and reviews the participation of men in childcare. The State Strategy for the Labour Market Development until 2020 provides the possibilities for workers to achieve work–family balance. Though it should be noted that the strategy is based on the traditional view of women as those who have the majority of care and household responsibilities.

Also, in chapter 16 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, the particularities of the labour of women and other persons with family responsibilities have been regulated. Article 159 of the Labour Code prohibits employers from refusing to hire pregnant women and women with children or from reducing their earnings due to their pregnancy and childcare responsibilities. The employer must provide in writing the reasons for refusing to hire a pregnant woman, a woman with children under the age of 3 years, an unmarried woman who has a child under the age of 14 years (or a child with disabilities under the age of 16 years).

In addition, the Labour Code establishes special standards and requirements regarding the work of women with family responsibilities. In the Labour Code, men are not yet considered workers with family responsibilities. Similarly, the Labour Code contains provisions aimed at granting certain privileges and rights to women with family responsibilities, which are: 1) restrictions related to the overnight work of women (article 161); 2) limitations regarding overtime work shall be granted to fathers, grandparents and other relatives who effectively take care of the child. The position shall be held for the period of parental leave. In addition, leave period shall be included in the work experience. The Labour Code provides for the same rules regarding maternity and childcare leave for persons who have adopted children or have custody of a child or children (article 166).

In accordance with article 173 of the Code, all guarantees and benefits that are granted to women in connection with the childbirth (nightwork or overtime work, etc.) shall also be provided to fathers engaged in raising children in the absence of the child's mother (in the event of death, deprivation of parental rights, long stay in hospitals and other cases of absence of maternal care).

Following the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Implementation, responsive actions are taken on a step-by-step basis within the framework of State Employment Policy. According to this Law and in order to promote the achievement of gender equality in labour relations, the employer (the head of a State body, organization, any form of ownership) shall provide:

- Equal opportunities for men and women at the time of entering an employment contract;
- Equal access of men and women to vacant positions (posts);

- Equal salary (remuneration) for men and women when both do the same work or work of equal value;
- Equal opportunities for advance training, retraining and promotion; and
- Safe working conditions, preserving of lives and health of both men and women.

According to this document, in the event of the massive dismissal of employees, the number of dismissed individuals of one sex shall be proportional to the actual number of personnel of the entity.

As for employment type distribution, men and women have significant differences. There is a predominance of women in certain jobs (most often—low-wage jobs) and men in others. The highest women employment rate is registered in the service and agriculture sectors. The number of women employed in healthcare in 2016 totalled 66.6 per cent and in 2017 it was 67 per cent; in agriculture the share of women in 2016 was 42.23 per cent, while in 2017 it was 37.4 per cent; in educational sector in 2016 it was 61.4 per cent and in 2017 it was 57.8 per cent.⁷

According to the data provided by the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, the median monthly nominal accrued salary of men and women by economic activity in 2017 was 1,446.3 somonis for men and 866.5 somonis for women, with the ratio of women's salary to men's salary being 59.9 per cent.

Distribution of the employed population and wage earners
by type of economic activity in 2016–2017
(Source: Data from annual reports, in thousand people)

	Average annual number of wage earners						Women wage earners, per cent of the total number of wage earners	
	Total		Men		Women		2016	2017
Year	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
All sectors	1102.4	1147.7	617.8	674.2	484.6	473.4	43.9	41.2
Real sector	599.8	636.5	374.5	418.3	225.5	218.2	37.5	34.8
including:								
– agriculture, hunting and forestry	483.8	520.8	279.7	325.9	204.2	194.8	42.2	37.4
– fisheries	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.02	0.02	10	20
– mining and quarrying	11.4	11.4	10.2	9.8	1.2	1.6	10.5	14
– processing industry	55.4	56.0	40.1	40.0	15.3	16.1	27.6	28.75
– electricity, gas and water supply	17.8	16.8	15.5	14.5	2.4	2.3	13.4	13.6
– construction	31.2	31.4	28.8	28.0	2.4	3.4	7.7	10.8
Service sector	502.6	511.1	243.4	255.9	259.3	255.3	51.6	49.9
including:								
– wholesale and retail trade, repair of cars, motorcycles, household items and personal items	26.1	23.5	20.4	17.9	5.8	5.6	22.2	23.8
– hotels and restaurants	5.6	4.9	3.1	2.6	2.5	2.3	44.6	46.9

⁷ Statistical Yearbook: Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. 2018. Pp. 60, 62, 64.

	Average annual number of wage earners						Women wage earners, per cent of the total number of wage earners	
	Total		Men		Women			
Year	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
– transport, warehousing and communications	23.5	23.6	17.9	17.4	5.5	6.2	23.4	26.2
– financial services	22.9	19.4	16.4	13.8	6.5	5.6	28.3	28.8
– real estate transactions, lease and commercial operations	19.4	27.7	14.7	20.8	5.3	6.9	27.3	24.9
– public administration and defense, compulsory social insurance	36.6	44.7	25.7	31.2	10.9	13.5	29.7	30.2
– education	220.1	223.4	84.9	94.3	135.2	129.1	61.4	57.8
– healthcare and social services	104.5	108.8	34.9	36.0	69.6	72.9	66.6	67
– other utility, social and personal services	43.0	34.6	25.3	21.5	17.7	13.1	41.6	37.8
– extraterritorial organizations and agencies	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.1	33.3	20

To ensure compliance with the labour legislation, the activities of 1,741 economic entities of the Republic of Tajikistan were reviewed in 2018: there were 1,280 routine checks, 394 *ad hoc* checks, 32 repeated checks and 35 additional checks.

These checks revealed 6,178 cases of law violations, including 4,919 cases related to labour issues, 847 cases related to occupational safety and compliance with the standards, 129 cases related to migration, and 283 cases related to employment. Of the total number, 2,722 violations were committed by organizations. In addition to that, 22 cases of child labour were identified.⁸

The key provisions of the Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities (C156) are introduced into the legislation of Tajikistan. If necessary, Tajikistan will consider a proposal to begin work on the ratification of Convention 156 concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities.

Tajikistan has adopted the 2030 National Development Strategy. It was created on the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals and sets the objective to reduce poverty in the country by half and increase the number of citizens with income no lower than average. The strategy will contribute to the efficient implementation of targets 8.7 and 4.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Women's entrepreneurship

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, implementing the economic policy aimed at the promotion of investment and development of the private sector, attaches great importance to supporting women's entrepreneurship. For this purpose, women entrepreneurs receive Presidential grants, which allows creating new jobs for women annually. The amounts and number of these

⁸ Item 28 of the progress report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second cycle). P. 8.

grants gradually increases. The number of women who take out microcredits and their financial portfolio grow every year.

To support the State policy on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women, the State programmes to promote employment provide for the following measures intended to encourage more women to seek employment:

- Facilitation of the assignment of permanent jobs to women from the pool of existing unfilled jobs (vacancies);
- Career guidance for women;
- Professional training, skills development and retraining for the occupations that meet the demand in the labour market;
- Support of women’s initiatives in entrepreneurship and self-employment;
- Involvement of women in paid community service work;
- Employment and legal education of women and girls who were subjected to violence and human trafficking;
- Involvement of women in various types of home-based work.

In the first nine months of 2018, pursuant to the State Programme to Promote Employment for 2018–2019, preferential loans to a total value of 8,463,722 somonis were granted to 2,900 citizens, including 4,841,249 somonis to 1,659 women and girls, and used for entrepreneurial purposes.

Due to job fairs, 12,951 citizens, including 2,540 women, secured permanent jobs.

Small business grants for women from vulnerable groups of the population are also provided by the Committee on Women and the Family, as mentioned in the first section of this report.

In addition to that, the Inter-Agency Working Group to Support Women’s Entrepreneurship was created in 2015 under the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Secretariat of the Investment Council under the President of Tajikistan provides support to the activities of the Secretariat of this Working Group.

The Working Group has its own Regulations and Action Plan, which its members develop for two-year periods. In 2015–2018, the Group’s activities were aimed at raising awareness and improving the access of women to the necessary skills and knowledge, skill development initiatives, and training in business administration and management, developing handicrafts, ensuring women’s access to financing, strengthening women’s role in agriculture, and developing the regional network of women’s business associations in Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

The activities of the Working Group started with the review of the programmes and projects on the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship, studies and reforms in the country. This review helped us identify positive practices, as well as gaps in this area and draw some lessons from the implemented initiatives. The matrices that were developed based on the review results facilitate coordination of efforts and ensure that different initiatives to support women’s entrepreneurship do not overlap.

Now, each member of the Working Group submits initial proposals to the Group’s Secretariat regarding his or her activities in the next two years. The Secretariat, based on the proposals received, develops an action plan of the Working Group, which is reviewed and approved, and then distributed among all members to coordinate efforts in its implementation. In 2015–2018,

such coordination and combination of efforts made by members of the Working Group allowed supporting and promoting the development of women's entrepreneurship in the country in a more concerted and efficient manner.

To date, the Working Group has held more than 30 national and international events in close cooperation with State authorities, private sector, business associations and development partners. Due to the coordination and combination of resources and efforts, traditional features of these events have been exhibitions of products of women entrepreneurs and workshops on improving the competitiveness of products, on business planning, taxation, access to markets, networking and business communications. Successful women entrepreneurs of Tajikistan and other countries share their experience in problem solving, and in business management and expansion. Each event is devoted to specific new areas and topics. This allows discussing and considering various sectors in which women's entrepreneurship can form and develop.

For example, in 2018, the Working Group, as part of its activities in this field, held a number of regular handicraft exhibitions, the regional business forum on the development of tourism in the Central Asian region through expansion of women's potential in handicrafts, the EXPO exhibition and workshops for women entrepreneurs on the second day of the event. Another national women entrepreneur of the year competition Farah 2018 took place as well. Finally, the Gender-Responsive Investment Climate Reform Project was launched in cooperation with the EBRD. Under the project, the gender aspects of the investment climate in the country were analyzed, which led to the development of comprehensive recommendations on supporting women entrepreneurs and the elaboration of the Women in Business Programme, for which over 10 million euros has been allocated to facilitate women's entrepreneurship.

It should be noted that participating in these events helps women entrepreneurs develop professionally. The quality and variety of products exhibited at each event are constantly growing.

Looking at the development of the private sector from the gender perspective, one could see that the share of entities created by women in the total number of small and medium businesses of the country has almost tripled: from 11.7 per cent in 2010 to 31.5 per cent in 2018.

In particular, the share of women individual entrepreneurs has gone up 95 per cent from 12.1 per cent in 2010 to 23.6 per cent in 2018, and the share of women who lead farms has increased by 81 per cent from 10.6 per cent in 2010 to 19.2 per cent in 2018. In fact, the number of women who lead farms has grown almost six-fold—from 5,450 in 2010 to 31,615 in 2018.

Despite the fact that the number of women who head private enterprises has increased by 84 per cent from 1,110 in 2010 to 2,020 in 2018, the share of women-led businesses in the total number of private enterprises has dropped from 9.2 per cent to 6.5 per cent.

Another trend in the development of women's entrepreneurship is the exploration of new unconventional business areas. According to our analysis, women-led enterprises traditionally exist in low productivity sectors such as sales (45 per cent), services (25 per cent) and agriculture (19 per cent). However, in recent years, women's entrepreneurship started developing in such areas as construction, transport and logistics, information technologies, healthcare, tourism, finance and manufacturing industry.

From July 2017 to March 2018, the Working Group, with the support of the EBRD, conducted an overview of the gender aspects of the investment climate. This was the first time that such

overview was held in Tajikistan. It revealed the key problems and factors related to the development of women's entrepreneurship. In addition to that, the international experience of successful problem-solving was studied, the priorities for reforms in this area were identified, and recommendations were developed. Further activities of the Working Group will be devoted to implementing measures in line with the priorities proposed for the gender-responsive investment climate reform. In particular, the priorities for the reform of the women's entrepreneurship support policy in the next three years will include:

1. Reforming the policy aspects with a view to improve the climate for all micro, small and medium businesses in Tajikistan, with a special emphasis on micro and small businesses, as these types of enterprises, which operate under patents or certificates, are usually led by women. In particular, measures may include simplification of taxation and audits, access to credit and land, etc.;
2. Giving priority to reforming the sectors that currently have a big number of women-led enterprises, or the sectors that might offer good prospects for such enterprises. Such sectors include textiles, handicrafts, tourism and childcare;
3. Promoting reforms aimed at resolving problems that are typical for women-led businesses, such as the considerable amounts of time that women have to devote to domestic work or childcare, or the limited level of property ownership among women;
4. Improving the policy development process in Tajikistan to ensure that policies are more gender-sensitive and increasing the potential of the key participants of that process to guarantee the efficient implementation of the developed policies.

Migrant and refugee women

Migration status is described by the following categories:

- Gender;
- Age;
- Marital status;
- Education level;
- Duration of stay in the destination country.

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), out of a total 553,868 labour migrants who are citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan, 526,787 are men (95.1 per cent) and 27,081 women (4.9 per cent).

Most labour migrants from Tajikistan are employed in construction industry and work in an arduous work environment. Therefore, the main gender factor is not the use of female labour in harsh conditions as stated both in the labour legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan and in the laws of the hosting countries.

According to articles 10 and 12 of Law on Refugees of the Republic of Tajikistan, asylum seekers and members of their families as well as persons recognized as refugees have the work permit, right to employment or entrepreneurship. In order to assist refugees and asylum seekers on the territory of Tajikistan in gaining access to the labour market and facilitating their employment, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan together with the UNHCR Office in Tajikistan have prepared an information booklet titled ***Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Republic of Tajikistan***. The booklet is based on Tajikistan's regulatory framework and outlines the rights of refugees and asylum seekers to work in Tajikistan and the

exercise of such rights, and explains certain administrative issues, such as those related to labour agreements and opening of bank accounts.

Refugees are employed in trade, business, construction and sewing industries, they work as unskilled workers, teachers, mechanics, cooks and bakers, are engaged in repairing shoes as well as in other areas. According to articles 10 and 12 of the Law on Refugees, asylum seekers and members of their families as well as persons recognized as refugees have the work permit, right to employment or entrepreneurship and education.

In the period from 2016 to the first half of 2017, in the central office and at the branch of the State Adult Education Centre in the city of Vahdat 63 and 206 Afghan refugees respectively attended short-term courses to learn the following professions: seamstress, baker, hairdresser, plumber, electric welder or car service technician.

In the period from 2018 to March 2019, 226 refugees from Afghanistan were trained in these centers to get employed in accordance with the qualification obtained. As instructed by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, in 2015, 28 citizens of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan were trained at the State educational institution Dushanbe Professional Technical School of Railway Transport to get a qualification of train conductor. The training fees were paid from the State budget of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Women with disabilities

Short-term (up to 6 months) professional trainings with certificate of completion are run by Tajikistan's Centers for Adult Education under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population. Education in the training centers is licensed by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. The number of graduates of short-term professional courses grew from 19,971 in 2011 to 33,609 in 2017. The number of graduates reached 58.5 thousand in 2013 and 50 thousand in 2014. The proportion of women among course graduates is constantly increasing: in 2011, the share of women was 47.4 per cent while in 2017 it was already 62.5 per cent.⁹ The branches of the training center operate in all regional centers of the country and focus on people residing in rural areas and women who do not have an opportunity to get a profession due to the fact that vocational education institutions are remote. Until 2017, the training center did not focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Since 2017, in three pilot districts (Dushanbe, Panjakent and Rasht), persons with disabilities were admitted with the support of the German Association for International Education and German Caritas Association. In 2017, the projects enabled 82 persons with disabilities to get professions in the training center; 58.5 per cent of them were women.¹⁰

Girls

In Tajikistan, persons under the age of 18 are entitled to special protection from the State. Minors, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity or social status, have the right to vocational training and employment, education, healthcare, recreation, access to cultural activities, physical culture and sports. The State provides the necessary financial and other material support for non-

⁹ Reply by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 1/500 of 19 April 2018 to inquiry submitted by OO Ishtirok. Information is taken from the report on basic research results. Overview of the inclusive education of persons with disabilities. April–June 2018.

¹⁰ Ibid.

governmental and other organizations involved in community work for the social development of minors, and ensures a preferential regime for their activities.

Under article 26 of the Law on Education, in educational institutions, regardless of their organizational and legal form and ownership, diversion of teaching staff from their core responsibilities and involvement of pupils, students and graduate students in agricultural or other work unrelated to their studies is prohibited.

In the new edition of the Labour Code, a separate chapter is dedicated to regulations governing the employment of workforce under the age of 18. In accordance with article 208 of the Labour Code, the employment of workers under the age of 18 in heavy work, underground work, work in hazardous or dangerous conditions, or work that might be harmful to their health and moral development, is prohibited. A list of the types of work with hazardous or dangerous working conditions in which the employment of persons under the age of 18 is prohibited, and limits for the manual lifting and movement of loads, were approved by Government Resolution of 4 March 2014. Under the Government Resolution of 31 October 2014, a National Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Republic Tajikistan for 2015–2020 has been adopted. As a result, measures are expected to be taken to facilitate children’s access to high-quality compulsory general education and develop non-formal education programmes and vocational training programmes, as well as measures to prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of labour.

The Government will continue to work for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and trafficking of children. State entities as well as non-governmental and international organizations have always focused their attention on forced labour. These entities are conducting research and carrying out various programmes and projects aimed at prevention and removal of children from the labour market through education (specifically inclusive education, vocational and technical training, vocational guidance, development of entrepreneurial skills among youth from 15–17 years of age, and informing young people about labour law).

At present, in order to address the above-mentioned issues through education and to ensure a smooth transition from school to work and facilitate access of young people to decent work, the following strategic instruments are being implemented:

– On 2 June 2011, the Government adopted a Resolution on the 2020 State Strategy for the Development of the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. In accordance with the strategy, stipulating the secondary school curriculum should include topics designed to get the pupils ready for entering the labour market, familiarize them with business principles, enhance functional literacy and develop logical thinking. Furthermore, it is envisaged that vocational guidance and career training for young people will be available at secondary schools. Paragraph 2.5.1 of the strategy, with a view to social integration, provides for the establishment of additional training services for young people, unemployed, and job seekers in academic subjects required to continue studies and occupational readiness (elimination of gaps in previous knowledge). Opportunities will also be created for training illiterate persons over the age of 15 and their integration into the labour market. The problem of child labour was reflected in paragraph 3.3.3 of the strategy, which provides for “intensified efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour through the development of a national action plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labour”;

– The National Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour for 2015–2020. The Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour is designed to

coordinate the actions taken to implement the National Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour;

– The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2018 was approved by the Government Resolution of 27 July 2016; the fifth goal of the plan is to prevent trafficking of children, while the sixth goal provides for an extension of social partnership to combat human trafficking, and for each of these goals, three measures are planned. Overall, the Action Plan includes 50 specific measures;

– The issue of child labour was included in the work plan for the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Tajikistan for 2016–2020, as a part of focus area 3 “Social development, inclusion and empowerment” and focus area 5 “Gender, child workers and vulnerability.”

In order to ensure access to high-quality education and facilitate the transition from school to professional life, a 2020 National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Tajikistan was approved and has been implemented;

The Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) is the main mechanism approved by the Government and social partners to link education and employment for youth engaged in the worst forms of child labour. The aim of the system is to remove children from labour relations, implement measures to prevent the involvement of children in the worst forms of child labour and assist in creating conditions to enable them to receive social services, schooling and employment. It also facilitates the transition from vocational and technical training of working children to decent work.

From 2012 until present, the Child Labour Monitoring System model has been introduced in 11 towns and districts—in Dushanbe, Isfara, Kulob, Khorugh, Shugnan, Rudaki, Ayni, Istaravshan, Roshtqal’a, Danghara and Vose. The Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment with technical and financial assistance from the ILO–IPEC and with its own resources has been engaged in strengthening the system and extending it throughout the territory of Tajikistan.¹¹

The Child Labour Monitoring System established in Tajikistan operates on two levels: national and local (province, district, city, jamoat). Over 900 working children aged 15–17 years were covered by the programme to get them removed from child labour, to provide protection and employment. The committees for monitoring child labour operate in 12 cities and districts under departments of children’s rights at local executive bodies. The committees control, monitor and address the issues of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour. The work is conducted in different directions including through raising awareness about child labour and its negative consequences, providing first aid, necessary services, counseling for parents and children, access to vocational training, and further transition from vocational technical education of working children to decent work.

Based on the results achieved and positive feedback obtained, the task was set to create a system for monitoring child labour throughout the country and expand the works in this field to other regions of the country.

¹¹ Information is provided from the Sixth periodic report submitted by Tajikistan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017 (2 October 2017), para. 31, available at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fTJK%2f6&Lang=en

II Eradication of poverty, social protection and social services

Women and poverty

In the first chapter of the second section, we described the food security issues and provision of access to affordable and high-quality nutrition for the population. Extensive attention in this context is also given to women.

Women's economic empowerment and access to various types of economic resources are prioritized in the promotion of gender equality under long- and medium-term development programmes of the Republic of Tajikistan. As rural population prevails, particular emphasis in recent years has been on ensuring women's equal access to land.

As part of the efforts to improve the land law, gender-sensitive land management provisions have been included in the Land Code of the Republic of Tajikistan.¹² The Statistical Agency under the President of Tajikistan develops gender indicators for the production activities of dekhkan (private) farms, which allows to perform a consistent gender-sensitive evaluation of the operation of such farms.

Since the Law on Microcredit Organizations has been adopted,¹³ the Republic of Tajikistan has created more favourable conditions for ensuring better access to credit for women. The key result of the projects implemented by such organizations is the meaningful improvement of access to financial resources for women, especially those who live in rural areas, and low-income populations for microbusiness purposes. Women who have taken out microcredits not only provide work for their family members, but also create additional jobs, thus increasing family incomes and significantly contributing to the reduction of poverty in the country.

A rather complex strategic challenge in terms of ensuring gender equality is the problem of unpaid work of women caring for their family members and combination of work and family responsibilities. The 2012 Demographic and Health Survey revealed that not all women received payment for the work that they performed, and not all women who did receive wages received them in cash. Women aged under 30 were more likely to work for free than older women.¹⁴

The situation is further complicated by the inadequate infrastructure of pre-school institutions for children. In 2015, the number of such institutions across the country went down to 578, compared to 944 in 1991. Only 195 institutions operate in rural areas. As a result, the total pre-school enrolment rates among children aged from 1 to 6 across Tajikistan are only 6.9 per cent, with 23.3 per cent enrolment in cities and 1.8 per cent in rural areas.¹⁵

A long-term strategic document on the improvement of living standards and well-being of the population of Tajikistan is the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for

¹² Land is State property in Tajikistan.

¹³ 16 April 2012, No. 816.

¹⁴ <http://www.stat.tj/ru/publication/e-version/>. See: Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Tajikistan, ICF International. Demographic and Health Survey. Tajikistan. 2012. Dushanbe, 2013. P. 17. P. 246.

¹⁵ See: Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. Dushanbe, 2016. Pp. 18, 25.

the period until 2030. Short-term development programmes are prepared and approved depending on the phase of the strategy implementation. The first phase of the strategy is currently implemented in accordance with the Mid-Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020, which was approved by decision of the Majlisi Namoyandagon (lower chamber) of the Majlisi Oli (parliament) of the Republic of Tajikistan on 28 December 2016.

Indicative planning, which formed the basis for the creation of the Mid-Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020, seeks to introduce systemic and conceptual changes to the national legal framework aimed at ensuring national security and improving the quality of life of the population by implementing a strategic planning system for social and economic development.

This programme also provides for a number of interconnected measures to improve the quality of life and well-being of the population of Tajikistan, such as:

1) In strengthening the institutional capacity:

- Enhancing the protection of property rights, establishing the entrepreneurs’ rights Ombudsman institution, improving the legal remedies for entrepreneurs;
- Improving the activities of institutions that support entrepreneurship, such as the Business Support Foundation, agencies for the promotion of investments and export, and the Centre for Public-Private Partnership Projects, as well as creating efficient local development mechanisms;
- Consistently implementing the policy to reduce the administrative burden on businesses and to create a system for the administrative support of medium- and large-scale investment projects of the private sector based on the one-window approach;
- Implementing the policy to encourage foreign direct investments as one of the key conditions for industrial and innovative economic development;
- Integrating cross-border and national transport corridors and developing telecommunication networks,

2) In improving the efficiency and variety of the real economy:

- Improving the taxation policy to stimulate the investment activities of private entrepreneurs;
- Expanding the agrarian reform to create and develop high-margin agricultural production;
- Increasing the level of food self-sufficiency and improving food security and quality of nutrition;
- Reducing the vulnerability of the financial (banking) sector and ensuring its sustainability,

3) In increasing the productivity of human capital:

- Linking professional knowledge and practical skills by setting the education and qualification standards for various types of specializations with the involvement of enterprises and organizations, introducing training at large enterprises, creating training platforms in the industry;
- Supporting the development of the primary and secondary vocational education system in coordination with the country’s top priority areas for economic development (strengthening the infrastructure and relations with enterprises and organizations, future employers of the graduates, developing a career guidance system for the youth and making it more efficient, creating a system of regional competitions in vocational skills *World Skills Tajikistan*);
- Ensuring sustainable and equal access to social services;
- Increasing the level of food self-sufficiency and implementing a system of adequate nutrition;
- Comprehensively supporting human rights and the rule of law, and reducing social inequality.

Achievement of the goal also requires completing a number of other objectives. They include

maintaining stable and high rates of economic growth and a new quality of that growth based on the accelerated development of professional skills, knowledge and technologies, modernizing and diversifying economic activities, creating a dynamic national and local development system, and reducing vulnerability to external factors.

Fulfilment of all these objectives requires comprehensive and coordinated efforts under the Mid-Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020. The programme forecasts that if these tasks are completed, the level of poverty in the country will decrease to 21.7 per cent in 2019 and to 20 per cent in 2020.¹⁶

Sixty-seven investment projects for a total value of 2.5 billion US dollars are currently being implemented in cooperation with international financial institutions, and gender equality is strictly ensured in the course of that implementation.

The Centre for the Implementation of the Project on Access to Green Financing and Financing for the Development of Rural Areas—a public entity under the Ministry of Finance—is implementing the project on the commercialization of agriculture for a total value of USD 25 million; of that amount, USD 8 million is earmarked for a credit line. In addition to that, the Centre is implementing the Project on Access to Green Financing for a total value of USD 10 million, of which USD 8.8 million is for credit lines, and a component of the Project on Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Panj River Basin for a total value of USD 2.8 million, also provided under a credit line. A basic requirement under these projects is that at least 30 per cent of the beneficiaries (recipients of credit) should be women. To date, under the Project on Access to Green Financing, USD 8.8 million has been granted to the beneficiaries, of whom 41 per cent are women, and under the Project on Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Panj River Basin, USD 2.1 million has been granted to the beneficiaries, of whom 23 per cent are women.

Education and vocational training of women

The existing legal framework of Tajikistan excludes gender segregation in the sphere of education. Pursuant to article 16 of the Law on Education, basic general education (nine grades) is compulsory for citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In the 2016/2017 academic year, 1,837,762 students were enrolled in general education institutions, including 877,952 girls representing 47.7 per cent of the total number of students. 1,580,685 students were enrolled in grades from 1 to 9 of general education institutions, and 760,740, or 48.2 per cent, of them were girls.

The trend of recent years shows that the number of girls who continue their education in grades 10 and 11 is increasing every year. In the 2015/2016 academic year, 58,817 girls were enrolled in grade 10, and 52,592 girls in grade 11. In the 2016/2017 academic year, this figure was 60,233 girls (46.3 per cent) in grade 10 and 55,606 girls (44.8 per cent) in grade 11. In the 2017/2018 academic year, 58,263 girls (46.7 per cent) were enrolled in grade 10 and 56,905 girls (45.2 per cent) in grade 11. These figures clearly demonstrate the increase in the number of girls wishing to continue their education in grades 10 and 11.

It should be noted that the creation of new jobs is one of the key priorities of the Government of

¹⁶ Item 57 of the progress report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second cycle). P. 23.

Tajikistan: according to the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030 and the Mid-Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020, at least 100,000 new permanent and productive jobs should be created annually.

According to the Statistical Agency under the President of Tajikistan, in January–September 2018, entities and individuals created 124,342 new jobs.

Nevertheless, the number of officially unemployed people in the country was 52.7 thousand at the end of September 2018, having increased by 4.6 per cent since September 2017. Various measures have been introduced to provide social support to the citizens registered as unemployed and to enhance their competitiveness in the labour market, such as vocational training, retraining, skills development, etc.¹⁷

For this reason the governmental policy aims at ensuring that girls continue their studies after completing the basic secondary education. Many girls go on to enroll in primary and secondary vocational institutions. In 2017, 5,005 girls, or 22 per cent of the total number of students (22,779), were studying in primary vocational institutions of Tajikistan. In 2016, 9,883 women, or 70.5 per cent, graduated from secondary vocational institutions, and in 2017, the number of women who graduated from secondary vocational institutions was 11,439, or 64.1 per cent. In 2016, 65,916 girls, representing 35.2 per cent of the total number of students (186,914), continued their studies in higher education institutions of the country after graduating from general education institutions, and in 2017, 70,401 girls, representing 35.9 per cent of the total number of students (195,657), enrolled in higher education institutions; these are mostly girls from remote districts of Tajikistan.¹⁸

To attract more girls from remote districts of the country to study and pursue an occupation, there is an annual Presidential quota for girls entering higher education institutions of Tajikistan. To date, 3,218 girls from remote districts of the country are enrolled in higher education institutions of Tajikistan as part of that quota.

At present, 264 girls who, for one reason or another, could not receive general secondary education are enrolled in the extramural general education institution under the Ministry of Education and Science.

In the first half of 2016, 61 State institutions of the primary vocational education system were operating in Tajikistan. These institutions train specialists in 14 fields and 96 areas of specialization for the domestic and foreign labour markets. In the 2016/2017 academic year, 23,143 students graduated from these institutions, of whom 4,805, or 20.7 per cent, were girls. In the first half of 2017, 64,957 people were receiving vocational training in the education centres and institutions of the primary vocational education system of the ministry. In the first half of 2017, under the State Programme to Promote Employment in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2017, 12,259 students took vocational training, of whom 9,265, or 75.6 per cent, were women. In addition to that, 11,537 women received training in national handicrafts.

¹⁷ Item 58 of the progress report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second cycle). P. 24.

¹⁸ Statistical publication. Education in Tajikistan. Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. 2018. P. 62.

To attract the population, including girls who have dropped out of school, to vocational education, special training programmes are being developed. With a view to enlisting the educational system in the efforts to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices and all other practices based on stereotyped roles of men and women, the Ministry of Education and Science, in partnership with UNICEF and civil society organizations, for the first time conducted a gender analysis of textbooks. Recommendations on overcoming gender stereotypes in school textbooks were formulated based on the results of this analysis.

According to statistical data, in the 2014/2015 academic year, 11,097 girls entered higher vocational education institutions, representing 31.3 per cent of the total enrolment. In the 2015/2016 academic year, this figure was 12,751 girls (32.9 per cent), and in the 2016/2017 academic year, the amount of girls who enrolled in higher vocational education institutions reached 33.5 per cent (16,120 girls), reflecting the dynamic growth in the involvement of girls in higher vocational education. At present, there are 221 girls (25.6 per cent) studying mathematics, 56 girls (22.5 per cent) studying computer science, 673 girls (60.8 per cent) studying natural sciences, and 2,731 girls (11.5 per cent) studying engineering and technology in higher vocational education institutions. The overview of these figures demonstrates an increase in the number of girls who receive training in these fields and areas of specialization.

At present, 363 girls are studying in secondary vocational education institutions to become teachers of mathematics and computer science. It should be noted that girls also specialize in the fields that are commonly considered male: metallurgy, power engineering, transport, telecommunications, radio electronics. The statistics are provided in the table below:

Specialization	2016	2017
Radio electronics	106	149
Metallurgy	52	86
Power engineering	158	170
Transport	18	40
Telecommunications	151	199

However, there are also difficulties. Pursuant to Government Resolution No. 599 of 29 December 2017, an inter-agency steering group was established to implement the Project of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on Strengthening Vocational Education and Training.

The problem with primary vocational education of teachers is related to both quality and numbers. In 2014, 21,593 students in total were enrolled in 63 institutions, and 18 per cent (on average, 343 students per one institution) of them were girls. Such a low number of students results in a disproportion between the number of students and teachers (9.1), high cost of education per student and low share of internally mobilized funds in the total amount of expenses (22 per cent).

As attention to the development of teaching staff has been weak, the quality of teacher training is inadequate. Salaries of the educators and experts working in the system of vocational education for teachers remain very low in comparison to other civil servants or to industrial and service sector employees. Investments are required to make the salaries adequate and train the educators working in the system of vocational education for teachers with a view to strengthen their potential, to improve the knowledge that they have in their areas of specialization in line with the demand in the emerging markets, and to retain skilled educators and experts in the system of vocational education for teachers.

The governance and management structures in institutions of the system of primary vocational education for teachers should be better coordinated with the labour market demand. Supply-oriented funding system and inefficient management approach limit the flexibility of institutions for vocational education of teachers.

With a view to reform the system of primary vocational education and training of adults and to modernize the infrastructure of educational institutions, the Project on Strengthening Vocational Education and Training is being implemented jointly with the Asian Development Bank. Under this project, the curricula of the system of primary vocational education and training of adults will be revised from the gender perspective. The project involves implementation of the Market-Oriented Inclusive Training Programme that will cover more than 27,000 citizens of Tajikistan, with 40 per cent of the beneficiaries being women and girls from vulnerable groups of population, including women and girls from families of migrant workers and single women who also receive scholarships. In addition to that, the project includes implementation of the Model Programme for Gender Equality, which will ensure training and employment of 2,300 women and girls from vulnerable populations in non-traditional fields. To interest girls in receiving primary vocational education, the project also provides for repair of dormitories in 21 pilot institutions based on the girls' requirements.

Despite the implemented measures, dropouts after grade 9 remain a serious problem among girls. To understand the causes behind this phenomenon, specialized research has been conducted on the coverage of girls from rural areas by secondary basic and secondary general education and on the identification of reasons that make them stop pursuing studies.

In the cities of Bokhtar and Rogun, girl students of grades 7 to 9 were interviewed. Several meetings with their parents took place as well. The meetings involved discussions on the necessity of further education and training of the girls.

The girls themselves complained that their villages did not offer sewing classes and that not all of the teachers were able to support them in their education. Some of them, on the condition of anonymity, spoke about flawed traditions that set being at home, doing domestic work and raising children as their main duties in the future.

After the interviews with the girls and their parents, the article titled "Continued Education of Girls after Grade 9: the Challenge of our Times" was published in the collection of academic articles "Psychological and Pedagogical Basis for the Cooperation between Schools, Families and Society in the Prevention of Crime among Children and Youth", Dushanbe: Siphath, 2017, pp. 11–19.

Observations and meetings with students of general education institutions, including in rural areas, where girls are the most likely to stop pursuing training and education, revealed a need for more robust work in such areas as ensuring meaningful and tolerant cooperation between schools, families and community at the current stage of scientific and technological development. A monitoring of the situation across the regions of Tajikistan should be implemented to prevent girls from abandoning their training and education. Media resources should be used more actively to reflect the experience of model families and the opinions of experts in pedagogy, psychology and sociology. Local public authorities should strengthen their activities in the prevention of dropouts among girls, up to punishments for parents who obstruct the education of their children, including girls.

The Institute for the Development of Education under the Academy of Education of Tajikistan (IDE), in accordance with the requirements of the Law on Education, article 16, clause 6, and the Law on the Responsibility of Parents for Nurturing and Education of Children, articles 12 and 13, of the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations Provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council as part of the Universal Periodic Review (second cycle), implemented a number of measures in the 2018 academic year in cooperation with local executive public authorities, children's rights authorities, employees of district education offices, mahallah activists and parent-teacher associations to improve the coverage of girls by secondary- and tertiary-level education and to prevent children from leaving schools.

The research conducted under the plan of action encompassed the issues related to the enrolment of girls in secondary- and tertiary-level education institutions and prevention of their dropouts, and revealed causes of the incomplete coverage of children by education (the research was held in the districts of republican subordination, Sughd province and Gorno-Badakhshan region).

The results of the research were reviewed at the meetings of the relevant IDE departments and its Academic Board and published in the periodicals for information, further discussion and implementation of measures to eliminate the causes.

It was also suggested that local executive public authorities and education offices and boards find financial resources to ensure transportation for children who live far from general education institutions or, to the extent possible, provide financial support to poor families.

To implement the provisions of the Law on Education, article 16, clause 6, and the Law on the Responsibility of Parents for Nurturing and Education of Children, articles 12 and 13, of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan took a number of measures in the 2017/2018 academic year in cooperation with local executive public authorities, children's rights authorities and mahallah activists to ensure that children pursue secondary-level education in general education institutions.

In particular, pursuant to the requirements of the above articles, parents were interviewed, especially to discuss the enrolment of girls in general education institutions. In addition to that, educational institutions were instructed to provide financial support to poor families, to the extent possible.

To comply with article 9 of the Law on the Responsibility of Parents for Nurturing and Education of Children of the Republic of Tajikistan, which prohibits obstruction of attendance of general education institutions by children, group and individual meetings were held with parents to provide explanations, with particular emphasis on the tertiary-level education for girls. Instructions were also given to bring children from newly created villages and settlements that do not yet have any general education institutions to stay in school boarding houses.

Despite the efforts, in the 2018/2019 academic year, 9 school-age children (6 girls) from the Sughd province remained unenrolled in educational institutions due to the labour migration of their parents.

The measures implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with municipal and district education offices and boards, local executive public authorities, children's rights authorities, parents and civil society bring the desired results. For example, while

367 children (206 girls) did not attend general education institutions in the 2013/2014 academic year, in the 2018/2019 academic year this figure was only 35 (25 girls).

To involve girls from remote regions of Tajikistan in higher vocational education and training, the Ministry of Education and Science holds an annual competition for the Presidential quota. In the last four years (2015–2019) only, 2,658 girls from all regions of the country entered higher vocational education institutions of Tajikistan. Upon graduation, these girls will return to their home regions and will be provided with jobs there.

Large distance between home and education institution is one of the reasons why children do not pursue general education at higher levels. To resolve this problem, the Ministry of Education and Science issued an order on changing the status of education institutions in remote mountain villages of the country. As a result, 40 primary education institutions were transformed into basic education institutions and 37 basic education institutions were transformed into general education institutions. Over time, the number of general education institutions increased by 96. Support of this initiative allowed to drastically reduce the number of children who do not continue their education at higher levels.¹⁹

Women's human rights

In November 2018, Tajikistan submitted a report to the 71st session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Government of Tajikistan is committed to the idea of gender equality and promotion of women's rights in its national programmes and strategies. In January 2019, the work started on discussing and developing the National Action Plan to Implement the Final Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women provided to Tajikistan at its 71st session. The plan has been comprehensively discussed with gender equality NGOs. It reflects all aspects related to the rights and activities of women, including groups of underprivileged women (women with disabilities, refugee women, women living with HIV, female sex workers and others). The plan is currently undergoing the process of approval by the Government.

In 2017, working groups were created to develop the draft National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Protection of Human Rights for the period up to 2025, and to consider formulating a specific law on combating discrimination in a comprehensive manner and improving certain laws. The groups consist of representatives of State ministries and agencies, which, in cooperation with the Regional Office for Central Asia of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, other international organizations and civil society, holds national consultations with representatives of public authorities, civil society institutions and international organizations.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, by its Resolution dated 2 July 2015, adopted the Conceptual Framework on the Provision of Free Legal Aid. The framework provides for pilot testing of a new system of free legal aid in certain areas, and covers the issues related to the financing of legal consultations. Under the framework, all citizens who apply to public bureaux of legal affairs are entitled to receive free initial legal aid (oral consultations). In accordance with clause 25 of the framework, the list of persons who are eligible for secondary legal aid (assignment

¹⁹ Item 68 of the progress report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second cycle). Pp. 32–34.

of counsel before courts and other public authorities) includes victims of domestic violence and torture, and their close relatives and family members.

As part of implementing the framework, the Legal Aid Centre, a State institution, was established to test models for the provision of free legal aid to vulnerable groups of population. In 2016–2018, 18 public bureaux of legal affairs were created in 12 cities and districts of Tajikistan.

Women and health

The services provided by the network of primary healthcare facilities aim to ensure high-quality care and to improve the primary healthcare infrastructure in rural areas through supplies of basic medical equipment. This, in turn, helps to enhance the coverage of the basic primary healthcare services, especially for women and girls.

There are currently 48 health centres, 856 rural medical centres and 1,706 medical homes that provide primary healthcare services to the population, including women and girls living in remote areas. Every year, more than 20 medical homes and more than 10 rural medical centres are built with the funding from the local executive authorities budget, donors and local entrepreneurs. Over the last five years, improvements were made to the infrastructure and equipment of birth centres in the city of Khorugh, the municipal and regional maternity homes in the Sugd region, and maternity wards in the Yovon, Khuroson, Hamadoni, Dzhami, Farkhor, Dusti, Lyakhsh and Nurobod districts. In 2016, the construction and commissioning of the Istiqlol medical centre in Dushanbe were completed; 490 of its 650 beds are designated for the provision of medical services to children and mothers. The centre has been supplied with modern equipment, so that high-quality medical care can be ensured for women and children. In addition to that, the maternity ward in the Sarikhosor jamoat (Baljuvon district of the Khatlon province) was commissioned and supplied with modern equipment during the last month.

Medical services are provided by family doctors, delivery nurses and obstetrician-gynaecologists. All municipal and district health centres have reproductive health units, which provide skilled care to pregnant women and women of childbearing age (15 to 49). To date, standards and clinical protocols on the assistance to pregnant women suffering from physiological and pathological problems have been developed and put into practice.

The Action Plan on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Mothers, Newborns, Children and Adolescents has been approved within the framework of the National Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020.

Maternal and child health is a top priority healthcare area for the country. To date, the key documents on the protection of maternal and child health have been developed.

According to the official statistics, infant and child mortality rates are going down. While in 2008, the infant mortality rate was 23.4 per 1,000 live births, in 2017, the figure decreased to 16.3 per 1,000 live births. Mortality rates among children aged 0 to 5 were 21.3 and 20.1 per 1,000 live births in 2008 and 2017, respectively.

Maternal mortality rates, according to the official statistics, have also dropped in the past decades, reaching 45.0 and 25.0 per 100,000 live births in 2010 and 2017, respectively. One of the key factors driving the decrease of maternal and child mortality rates is the facilitation of the population's access to medical services by improving the infrastructure, constructing new centres

and providing the necessary medical equipment.

Maternal health

Medical care that women receive during pregnancy and childbirth plays an important role in the health of both mother and child. In the course of the 2017 Demographic and Health Survey, women who had given birth in the last five years before the survey answered a number of questions on the medical assistance to mothers and children. Mothers were asked whether they had received pre-delivery care during pregnancy leading up to their most recent live birth in the last five years before the survey, and what kind of care they had received during the delivery of each of their live births in the same period. Women who had delivered live births in the last two years before the survey were also asked whether they had been given a postnatal examination within two days after giving birth.

Antenatal care

Provision of antenatal care by trained medical personnel is very important for managing pregnancy and reducing the risk of disease and death for mother and child during pregnancy, delivery and postnatal period (42 days after birth). In Tajikistan, trained medical professionals trained to provide assistance during delivery include doctors, nurses and obstetricians.

Ninety-two per cent of mothers said that they had visited a trained medical professional to receive antenatal care leading up to their most recent live birth at least once in the last five years before the survey, which signifies a considerable increase from the 79 per cent cited in the 2012 Health and Demographic Survey. This indicator is consistently high among almost all mothers, regardless of their key characteristics. However, older women, women of the Khatlon province, poorly educated and underprivileged women are less likely to have received antenatal care from a trained medical professional than other women. Overall, 64 per cent of women made four or more visits to receive antenatal care, which is a significant increase from the 53 per cent cited in the 2012 Health and Demographic Survey. Women living in cities are more likely to make four or more visits for antenatal care than women from rural areas (79 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively). Looking at the distribution by regions, 92 per cent of women from the Sughd province made four or more antenatal care visits, compared to 40 per cent in the Khatlon province. The likelihood of four or more antenatal care visits increases depending on the mother's education and well-being. The share of women who made four or more antenatal care visits is the smallest in the lowest quintile (44 per cent), going up to 83 per cent among women in the uppermost quintile.

Postnatal examination of mothers

Safe motherhood programmes recommend that all women undergo postnatal examination within the first two days after delivery.

According to the 2017 Health and Demographic Survey, 92 per cent of women said that they had been given a timely postnatal examination within the first two days after giving birth. Overall, 8 per cent of women said that they had not been examined within the recommended period (two days after delivery).

There are only minor variations across groups of women, except for the variations depending on the region and living standards. There are region-related differences in the share of women who

underwent a timely postnatal examination: from 84 per cent in the districts of republican subordination to 97 per cent in the Sughd province. The number of women who were examined in the first two days after giving birth increases with the quality of life: from 87 per cent in the lowest quintile to 94 per cent in the fourth and the highest quintiles.

The figures in the 2017 Health and Demographic Survey have changed significantly compared to the 2012 Survey. The per centage of women who receive antenatal care from trained medical personnel has gone up from 79 per cent in 2012 to 92 per cent in 2017. The share of women whose children were born in a medical institution has increased from 77 per cent in 2012 to 88 per cent in 2017. Similarly, the per centage of women whose delivery was managed by a trained medical professional has gone up from 86 per cent to 95 per cent in the same period.²⁰

The procedure for providing medical counselling on reproductive health to minors, including members of at-risk groups, was approved by the Government Resolution dated 28 November 2015.

Twenty-one medical counselling units, where medical and psychological assistance is provided to young people from at-risk groups, have been established and are in operation at reproductive health centres. In total, there are currently 1,640 obstetrician-gynaecologists and 5,008 delivery nurses working in the healthcare system.

In the first six months of 2017, 84 obstetrician-gynaecologists and 56 delivery nurses took skill development courses and primary specialization training at the Institute of Postgraduate Education in Healthcare of the Republic of Tajikistan, a State education institution. At the centre for postgraduate education of the Avicenna Tajik State Medical University, a State education institution, 62 healthcare specialists upgraded their skills during the first six months of 2017. Besides that, in 2017, the ministry sent 140 specialists for clinical residency programme after they completed their studies at the Avicenna Tajik State Medical University.

As part of the effort to upgrade the skills of obstetrician-gynaecologists from remote and mountainous areas, more than 20 specialists took a month-long course in emergency obstetric care in 2017 pursuant to order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of Tajikistan. More than 120 obstetrics specialists were trained in emergency obstetric care for pregnant women suffering from haemorrhage and eclampsia. All birth centres of the country were provided with the basic medical equipment for emergency care for pregnant women and newborns. In addition to that, simulation rooms were opened in all birth centres and equipped with visual aids (dummies) for training of medical personnel. To improve healthcare for mothers and children, the Guides on Supervisory Control in Maternal and Child Health, and the clinical recommendations on healthy nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and on safe abortions and their monitoring were approved by order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population on 26 December 2016.

Incorporation of gender issues in the efforts being carried out in the Republic of Tajikistan to counteract the HIV epidemic is one of the priorities in the work of the country's public healthcare system. Gender issues are at the heart of many strategic initiatives, such as the National Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2010–2020 and the National Programme on Countering the Epidemic of HIV in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2020. Strategic areas of the national

²⁰ 2017 Health and Demographic Survey. Report on the Key Indicators. Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan. The DHS Program. ICF Rockville, Maryland, USA. March 2018. Pp. 25–28.

programme in the gender context include HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care, as well as the legal aspects of countering stigma and discrimination against people affected by the HIV epidemic. HIV prevention through the harm reduction programmes, which are being implemented in Tajikistan, is taking place among members of the key high-risk groups of population, regardless of their gender, free of charge.

In 2016–2017, the clinical protocols on the antenatal care for pregnant women were reviewed and amended. HIV testing is provided in Tajikistan free of charge to members of the key populations and to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and children under the programme to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, which is currently being implemented.

In 2016, the Government of Tajikistan adopted a new comprehensive conceptual framework—the National Programme on the Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities for 2017–2020. The programme aims to strengthen the social protection of people with disabilities to ensure and guarantee their comprehensive coverage by the healthcare and rehabilitation system.

It should be noted that special rooms for pregnant women with disabilities were opened in Dushanbe and in regional and district central maternity clinics (at the ground floors) as part of the efforts to implement the programme.

In 2016, a consultation unit for women with disabilities has been opened in the clinic of the Research Institute for the Evaluation and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities. Special attention is given to the employment of women with disabilities and inclusive education of girls with disabilities. There are no restrictions or obstacles in Tajikistan regarding the access of women with disabilities to healthcare and social services, including in the sphere of reproductive health, or to participation in social and political events.

HIV treatment (antiretroviral therapy) is provided in Tajikistan to HIV-positive people regardless of their gender or age, including pregnant women and children, free of charge. Laboratory tests related to this infection (HIV), which are conducted in the course of patient treatment, are also free of charge. In addition to that, HIV-positive people receive free services for the prevention of secondary diseases, including opportunistic infections.

The issues related to countering stigma and discrimination against all HIV-positive people are reflected in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Programme on Countering the Epidemic of Human Immunodeficiency Virus in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2020. Implementation of the Programme will include various activities to reduce stigma and discrimination, especially against women living with HIV.

The necessary conditions for HIV screening of pregnant women, as well as for antiretroviral treatment, have been ensured in all regions of the Republic.

Social protection

The basis for the social protection of women was created at the time of the Soviet regime in Tajikistan, and after gaining independence, the country has continued to follow this policy. For example, the Law on State Social Insurance of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted in 1997 has been amended several times. This law provides for various benefit payments: pregnancy and maternity benefits, unemployment benefits, family benefits upon birth of the first, second and third child, as well as subsequent children, funeral grants, and temporary disability benefits. The Law on

Pensions of the Republic of Tajikistan provides for several types of pension—old age pension, disability pension, and pension upon loss of family provider.

There are mechanisms of targeted social assistance to vulnerable and poor populations in the social protection sector of Tajikistan. The Law on Targeted Social Assistance of the Republic of Tajikistan was adopted in 2017 and entered into force on 1 January 2018. This law provides for financial assistance to poor citizens (families) whose minimum income is below the means criterion (article 6). Pursuant to the Law on State Social Services of the Republic of Tajikistan, public agencies provide various social support services, social services of domestic, medical, psychological, educational or legal nature, other types of services and financial assistance, and services for social adaptation and rehabilitation of citizens in difficult circumstances. Such circumstances may include disability, old age, disease, consequences of work injury or occupational illness, loss of family provider, singlehood, orphanhood, neglect, homelessness, strong psychological dependency, consequences of violence and risk-to-life situations, and other difficult circumstances. One of the principles of social assistance is that the provision of services to children and youth, pregnant women, older populations and disabled persons in difficult life circumstances takes priority.

To implement the State policy in the area of State social guarantees, promotion of employment and regulation of the domestic labour market, the State Programme to Promote Employment in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2017 was approved by Government Resolution of 28 November 2015.

The purpose of the new Targeted Social Assistance Programme is to improve the living standards of the poorest population by providing benefit payments and enhancement of the targeting mechanism. In 2018, about 108,104 poor families applied for targeted social assistance, and in 58,579 of them the head of the household is a woman. In total, 23,431,600 somonis was paid out as compensations.

Girls

As part of implementing the Strategy for Sustainable Development of School Feeding in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2027 approved by the Government Resolution No. 456 of 29 September 2017, the inter-agency Action Plan was signed on the implementation of pilot projects for the development of school feeding in Tajikistan by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population, the Ministry of Education and Science and the World Food Programme, which covers 50 schools in the Khatlon province and districts of the Rasht zone. The plan aims at improvement of the organization, quality, balance and safety of school feeding and at preparation of a practical framework for the fulfilment of the School Feeding Development Programme. The plan includes such initiatives as improving the infrastructure and equipment of school canteens, testing the most efficient school feeding organization models to be further introduced in other schools across the country, enhancing the knowledge of the personnel involved in the organization of school feeding, and increasing the role of parents in the organization of school feeding. Quality and safety of school feeding and the infrastructure and equipment of schools shall be improved, basic canteens, inter-school bakeries and school gardens shall be created under the pilot projects, and the personnel of the pilot schools shall be trained in the key aspects and requirements regarding the organization of school feeding.

To date, 80 per cent of the repair activities at the pilot schools have been completed, supplies of tables and chairs to the canteens have started, training workshops have been held for the

headmasters, cooks and warehouse supervisors of these schools, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization has built 22 school greenhouses.

Specialized assistance to children with disabilities is one of the top priorities in healthcare and social protection of the country's population. As of 1 January 2018, 25,560 children with disabilities are registered with the healthcare authorities of Tajikistan.

To provide rehabilitation support and ensure the coverage of children with disabilities by the rehabilitation activities, Tajikistan adopted the State Programme for the Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities for 2017–2010. To implement this programme, an inter-sectoral Coordination Council was created under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population, comprising representatives of public authorities and civil society organizations whose work is related to disability issues. In the first nine months of 2018, the Council held two meetings to discuss successes, as well as problems and ways to resolve them.

To ensure early detection of children with various pathological conditions and provide rehabilitation support to children with disabilities in a timely manner, the primary medical care personnel in the city of Bokhtar (Khatlon province) and in the Rasht district of republican subordination obtained training in screening of younger children. To date, over 1,000 children have been screened, and children with various identified pathological conditions have been referred to the corresponding specialists.

In addition, the medical personnel of the State Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Perinatology Institute of Tajikistan obtained training in screening newborn children to detect congenital hip pathologies. Two State institutions, the Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Perinatology Institute of Tajikistan and Dushanbe Municipal Maternity Clinic No. 1 were selected as pilot institutions and received the necessary ultrasonic equipment. In the first nine months of 2018, 6,693 newborns were screened, and congenital hip pathologies were found in 261, hip dysplasia in 15 and congenital hip dislocation in one of them.

Every year, surgeries are performed on children with congenital heart defects. In the last three years only, over 700 children suffering from this condition had their operations. Besides, specialized assistance has been provided to children with various other pathological conditions. For example, every year, children with maxillofacial and musculoskeletal pathologies and children with spinal disc herniation undergo surgery at the Shifobakhsh National Medical Centre, a State institution. In the first nine months of 2018 only, 20 children with infantile cerebral palsy, 37 children with spinal disc hernias, and 32 children with hydrocephalus were operated.

To detect children with acoustic pathologies, Dushanbe Municipal Health Centre No. 10 was equipped with an audiometer, and two doctors (an ENT specialist and a speech specialist) received training in Minsk, the Republic of Belarus. To ensure specialized rehabilitation support for children with disabilities, the State Children Rehabilitation Centre of the Vahdat district annually provides rehabilitation treatment to children with musculoskeletal, neural and heart pathologies. In the last three years, over 3,800 children suffering from these diseases were covered by the rehabilitation efforts.

To ensure timely detection, nurturing, education, social adaptation and social integration of children with various developmental disabilities, there is psychological, medical and educational counseling in Tajikistan. Counseling is provided by diagnostics and correction institutions that aim to timely identify, nurture and train children with developmental difficulties and ensure their

adaptation and integration in the society. These institutions annually cover more than 3,000 children. On 1 June 2018, one of such centres was opened in the Rasht district of republican subordination with the support of UNICEF and the district khukumat (local executive authority), to celebrate the International Children's Day. The centre has been provided with the necessary equipment to a total value of over USD 21,000. Specialists are currently being educated and trained to work in this centre.

III Freedom from violence, prejudice and stereotypes

Violence against women

In the first section, we mentioned that to ensure efficient implementation of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence of the Republic of Tajikistan and the State Domestic Violence Prevention Programme, the work is in progress to create a coordination mechanism for resolution of domestic violence issues. The following has been done as part of those activities:

- Regulatory base on the provision of assistance to victims of domestic violence has been developed and improved within the mandate of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan; in addition, certain standards on the provision of assistance to victims of domestic violence have been developed:
 - Guideline on the local offices for social protection at home have been enhanced (Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population No. 748 dated 12 September 2017) and put to practice since 1 January 2018 in the districts of Konibodom, Qabodiyon, Rudaki and Hamadoni, as well as the cities of Kulob and Khorugh;
 - Training module for medical personnel on the response to domestic violence has been developed and published in the framework of the State skills development system for civil servants (Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population No. 61 dated 24 January 2018);
 - Job description for social workers of Social Assistance Centres under local executive public authorities has been developed and published (Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population No. 222 dated 06 March 2018);
 - Guide on the response to domestic violence for employees of social protection institutions has been developed and published (Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population No. 443 dated 11 May 2018);
 - Guide on the response to domestic violence for medical personnel has been developed and published (Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population No. 443 dated 11 May 2018);
 - Model guideline on rooms of support for female victims of domestic violence in central clinical hospitals and maternity clinics of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population have been enhanced and published (approved by Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population No. 973 dated 20 October 2018);
 - Model guideline on the organization and operation of shelters for victims of domestic violence have been developed and published (approved by Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population No. 1176 dated 11 December 2018);
 - Quality standards for the provision of social services to victims of domestic violence in the Republic of Tajikistan have been developed,

- Increased role of educational institutions in the promotion of non-violent behavior:
 - Methodological guide for teachers of general education institutions on the presentation of violence prevention issues as part of the courses on family communication and household management (grade 9), family life (grade 10), fundamentals of State and law (grades 8–9) and human rights (grades 10–11) has been developed and published. This guide is a source of information for the organization of parent–teacher conferences on the prevention of domestic violence against children (Resolution No. 11 of the Research and Methodology Council under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated 21 December 2017);
 - Guide for employees of educational institutions on the prevention of and response to violence against children has been developed and published (Resolution No. 11 of the Research and Methodology Council under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated 21 December 2017),
- Stronger mechanism of ensuring gender equality and preventing domestic violence under the Committee on Women and the Family:
 - Communication Strategy on the Prevention of Domestic Violence has been developed and published (Resolution of the Committee on Women and the Family dated 22 September 2017);
 - Guidelines for employees of offices of the Committee on Women and the Family on ensuring gender equality and preventing domestic violence have been developed and published (approved by Order No. 159 of 08 November 2018),
- In the period from 2016 to 2018, with the support of the PDV project implemented by the GOPA branch in Tajikistan, efforts were applied to the capacity-building of medical personnel, social workers, personnel of civil registry offices, representatives of the Committee for Religious Affairs and Regulation of National Traditions, Ceremonies and Rituals, as well as civil servants, municipal police inspectors and teachers.

Training was provided to:

- 709 gynaecologists, family doctors and forensic medicine experts;
- 684 nurses and obstetricians;
- 832 social workers;
- 438 teachers;
- 589 municipal police inspectors;
- 103 staff members of State civil registry offices;
- 98 civil servants;
- 180 representatives of offices of the Committee on Women and the Family;
- 351 representatives of the Committee for Religious Affairs and Regulation of National Traditions, Ceremonies and Rituals;
- 36 public lawyers who provide initial legal aid free of charge.

With a view to efficiently implementing the provisions of the legislation on the prevention of domestic violence, as well as providing assistance and support to female victims, preventing and combating domestic violence, and protecting the rights, freedoms and constitutional guarantees of women in family and domestic relations, 33 crisis centres and 3 branches of these centres have been established and are in operation in Tajikistan. Rooms for counselling and medical assistance to victims of domestic violence have been created and are in operation in the maternity wards of

hospitals in a number of cities and districts of Tajikistan; these rooms are mainly visited by women and minor children.

To raise the legal awareness of citizens and prevent abusive acts, including acts of domestic violence, 110 information and counselling centres, in which lawyers and psychologists provide practical assistance to citizens, have been set up, with the support of social partners, in the departments and sectors for the women and family affairs of executive public authorities in various regions, cities and districts of the Republic. These centres operate under the Committee on Women and the Family and are funded from the budget of local executive public authorities.

To provide practical assistance to female victims of domestic violence, there are public institutions and civil society organizations in Tajikistan: the Committee on Women and the Family, the crisis centre of the civil society organization *Bovari ba Fardo* (Faith in the Future) for women, inspectors for the prevention of domestic violence in internal affairs agencies, information and counselling centres under local executive public authorities (110), and crisis centres for the rehabilitation of women who have been subjected to violence (18) run by non-governmental organizations.

In 2017, there were 55,134 applications from citizens in total; 14,636 of the applicants were women and 6,925 were men. In the first nine months of 2018, 12,841 citizens sought assistance from the district information and counselling centres, including 6,127 women and 3,442 men.

To coordinate the activities of the centres, in 2017, the Committee on Women and the Family, in cooperation with the Project on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, developed the brochure titled *Khayot be Zurovari* (Life without Violence) listing contact details of the centres, and distributed it at events among the participants and representatives of ministries and agencies.

In 2018, the Committee on Women and the Family, in cooperation with the civil society organization Eurasia Foundation Tajikistan, launched the crisis hotline 1313 for the prevention of domestic violence; the hotline takes calls from mobile phones free of charge every day except Sunday, from 0800 a.m. to 0500 p.m. on weekdays and from 0800 a.m. to 1200 p.m. on Saturday.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has developed and approved the Guidelines on the Organization of Work of Employees of Internal Affairs Agencies for the Prevention and Liquidation of and Response to Domestic Violence.

In 2010, within the framework of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan introduced a new training course on domestic violence, with the duration of 20 academic hours, with final tests; 16 academic hours were added in February 2016. At present, the academy has a separate course on the prevention of domestic violence of 36 academic hours, upon the completion of which students of the academy take examinations.

The Association of Female Employees of Internal Affairs Agencies has been established in 2007 and is in operation within the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The main objectives of the association are to enhance the participation of female employees of internal affairs agencies in creating favourable conditions for carrying out operational and service tasks, to increase the role and authority of female employees of internal affairs agencies within work teams, and so forth.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has implemented a joint project with the OSCE Office in Tajikistan on gender-sensitive law-enforcement to properly investigate and prosecute domestic

violence and protect victims. Under this project, positions of inspector for the prevention of domestic violence have been added to the staffing table. Since 2010, 14 positions of inspector for the prevention of domestic violence added to the staffing table have been filled by women: 5 in the offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Dushanbe (Firdavsi-2, Firdavsi-2, Shohmansur-1, Shohmansur-2, Sino-2), 4 for Khatlon (the divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Qurghonteppa, Kulob, Jaihun (former Qumsangir) and Dusti (Jilikul)), 3 for Khujand (the divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Khujand, Panjakent and Isfara), 1 in the office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Rashtu, and 1 in the division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Khorugh; and 14 offices for the prevention of domestic violence have been opened within the framework of the project as well. All municipal police inspectors keep close contact with inspectors for the prevention of domestic violence while performing their job duties.

In 2018, to implement the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence of the Republic of Tajikistan, municipal police inspectors studied 2,648 claims, 2,237 of which were filed against men and 411 against women. Upon investigation, 119 criminal cases were opened under various articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2,455 claims were dismissed, 14 are being prosecuted, and 60 were referred to other agencies.

With respect to administrative offences, 1,146 reports were made under articles 93¹ (Failure to comply with the legal requirements of the Republic of Tajikistan on the prevention of domestic violence) and 93² (Failure to comply with the requirements of restraining order) of the Code on Administrative Offences of the Republic of Tajikistan, and 55 reports were made under other articles of the Code; restraining orders were issued against 841 people.

At the same time, inspectors for the prevention of domestic violence reviewed 380 claims, 320 of them filed against men, 59 against women and 1 against a minor. Upon investigation, 10 criminal cases were opened under various articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, 290 claims were dismissed, 16 are being prosecuted, and 64 were referred to other agencies depending on the jurisdiction. Eighty-five reports were made on the offenses under articles 93¹ (Failure to comply with the legal requirements of the Republic of Tajikistan on the prevention of domestic violence) and 93² (Failure to comply with the requirements of restraining order) of the Code on Administrative Offences of the Republic of Tajikistan, and 77 reports were made under other articles of the Code; restraining orders were issued against 243 citizens.²¹

Law-enforcement agencies of Tajikistan carry out the work required to detect and investigate domestic violence cases. For example, in 2014–2017 and the first half of 2018, internal affairs agencies opened 927 criminal cases and made 2,681 administrative offense reports related to domestic violence.

In 2017 only, prosecution authorities investigated 80 crimes related to domestic violence, including 29 premeditated murders, 27 incitements to suicide, 4 cases of mothers murdering their newborn children, and 30 cases of rape and sexual violence.

Prosecution authorities found that in 2016–2017 and the period since the beginning of 2018, 92 women died or suffered severe bodily injuries as a result of murder or attempted murder. Almost all of these murder or attempted murder cases are of family and domestic nature. In

²¹ Items 11–15 of the progress report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second cycle). Pp. 3–4.

2014–2017 and the first nine months of 2018, courts of Tajikistan heard 661 criminal cases against 702 people related to violence against women.

One of the negative consequences of domestic violence against women is the victims' subsequent attempts to take their own lives. In 2014–2017 and the first nine months of 2018, 224 criminal cases on incitement to suicide were opened under article 109 of the Criminal Code and referred to courts with criminal indictment. During the same period, over 15 crimes related to violence against women were committed by military servicepersons.

In 2014–2017 and the first half of 2018, courts heard 27 criminal cases against 34 people on human trafficking charges, with victims mostly being young women and girls, and 206 criminal cases against 250 people on rape charges.

In 2014–2017 and the first nine months of 2018, courts convicted 491 people, including 303 women, for incitement to prostitution, establishment or keeping of brothels, and procurement or living off the earnings of prostitution under articles 238 and 239 of the Criminal Code.

It should be noted that in 2014–2017 and the first half of 2018, as a result of preventive activities, internal affairs agencies of Tajikistan identified and registered more than 5,000 troubled families, which now receive the necessary assistance.²²

Prevention of early marriage

To prevent early marriages, on 21 July 2010, the Family Code was amended, increasing the marriageable age from 17 to 18. The increase aims to ensure that girls exercise their right to education and prepare for independent life, as well as to implement certain provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In practice, civil registry offices of Tajikistan mainly observe the marriageable age regulations set in the family law during registration of marriages.

However, there are still many cases of parents or other relatives arranging marriages of girls below marriageable age and many men who enter into marriages with minor girls. For example, in 2016–2017 and the first half of 2018, courts of Tajikistan heard 46 criminal cases, under which 89 people were convicted for the crimes defined in articles 168 and 169 of the Criminal Code, i.e. arranging the marriage of a girl below marriageable age and registering the marriage of a person below marriageable age.

It should be noted that the law of Tajikistan only recognizes marriages registered by civil registry offices. A marriage made following a religious ceremony is not considered legal. Polygamous marriages are prohibited under article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan. Polygamous marriages have a negative effect on the well-being of families and children and on the psychological atmosphere in the family. Article 170 of the Criminal Code provides for criminal liability in case of bigamous or polygamous marriage.

Upon accepting an application for marriage registration, the staff members of civil registry offices explain to the people who intend to marry their rights and obligations, child raising responsibilities,

²² Items 16–18 of the progress report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second cycle). P. 5.

etc. Individual consultations are held with future husbands on the elimination of violence against women and the constitutional requirements regarding monogamous relations in the family.

However, in spite of the constitutional ban and the criminal regulations, many men still choose bigamous marriages. In 2014–2017 and the first nine months of 2018, courts heard 440 criminal cases against 440 people related to bigamous or polygamous marriages, and passed judgments of conviction under them.²³

Women's human rights

Tajikistan is a party to a number of multilateral instruments on combating human trafficking, including the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, of 2 December 1949, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of December 2000, and the Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministries of Internal Affairs (police) of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in combating human trafficking.

In order to combat human trafficking in Tajikistan, the Law on Counteracting Trafficking in Persons was in effect until July 2014. On 26 July 2014, the new Law on Counteracting Trafficking in Persons and Providing Support to Victims of Trafficking in Persons entered into force. The law establishes the organizational and legal framework for combating human trafficking and sets out a system of measures to protect victims of trafficking, provide them with assistance and rehabilitation. It also governs social relations in combating human trafficking and the provision of assistance to victims. A distinctive feature of the new act is that it stipulates comprehensive measures to assist victims of human trafficking.

The National Plan for the Prevention of Human Trafficking in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2018 was approved by Government Resolution on 27 July 2016. The plan outlines comprehensive measures to combat trafficking, prescribes criminal prosecution for human trafficking and sets out measures to protect and assist victims of human trafficking.²⁴

Law-enforcement agencies are putting their best efforts to curb the criminal practice.

Overview of human trafficking offences for ten months of 2018 and ten months of 2017, data provided by the Main Information and Analysis Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs²⁵

²³ Data taken from items 34–36 of the progress report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Member States of the UN Human Rights Council in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second cycle). Pp. 9–10.

²⁴ Information is provided from the Sixth periodic report submitted by Tajikistan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017 (2 October 2017), para. 14–15, available at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fTJK%2f6&Lang=en

²⁵ The data is presented from Par. 43 of the Interim Report of the Republic of Tajikistan on the implementation of the recommendations provided by UN Human Rights Council member states adopted as part of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Tajikistan (second period). Pp. 12–15.

No.	Articles of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan	10 months 2017	10 months 2018
1	Article 130 (Abduction of persons)	1	6
2	Article 130 ¹ (Trafficking in persons)	22	27
3	Article 130 ² (Use of slave labour)		
4	Article 131 (Illegal deprivation of liberty), part 3, para. 3		
5	Article 132 (Recruitment of persons for the purpose of exploitation)	13	6
6	Article 167 (Trafficking in minors)	10	11
7	Article 241 ¹ (Production and distribution of pornographic materials or articles with images of minors)		
8	Article 241 ² (Use of minors for the production of pornographic materials or articles)		
9	Article 335 ¹ (Facilitation of the illegal entry of foreign citizens or stateless persons into Tajikistan or illegal transit through the territory)	1	5
10	Article 335 ² (Facilitation of illegal migration)	3	2
11	Article 339 (Theft or alteration of documents, stamps or seals), part 3		
12	Article 340, part 3 (Forgery, manufacture or sale of forged documents, State honours, stamps, seals, forms, committed for the purpose of human trafficking)		
	Total	50	57

Crimes detected under article 130 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan

No.	Region	2017	2018	
1.	Dushanbe		2	2 under investigation
2.	Districts of republican subordination	1	2	1 under investigation 1 submitted to court
3.	Khatlon province		1	1 submitted to court
4.	Sughd province		1	1 submitted to court
5.	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region			
	Total for Tajikistan	1	6	

Crimes detected under article 130¹ (Trafficking in persons) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan

No.	Region	2017	2018	Outcome
1.	Dushanbe	15	22	9 submitted to court 2 under investigation 11 criminal cases suspended due to search
2.	Districts of republican subordination			
3.	Khatlon province			

4.	Sughd province	7	5	3 criminal cases suspended due to search 2 under investigation
5.	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region			
	Total forTajikistan	22	27	

Overview of criminal defendants under article 130¹ (Trafficking in persons) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, by gender and age

No.		2017	2018
1	Total	17	16
2	Women	14	15
3	Under 20		
4	From 20 to 30	5	4
5	From 30 to 40	4	5
6	From 40 to 50	3	5
7	50 and older	2	1
8	Men	3	1

Age and gender of victims

№		2017	2018
1	Total	26	25
2	Women	25	25
3	From 20 to 30	15	12
4	From 30 to 40	8	12
5	From 40 to 50	2	1
6	50 and older		
7	Men	1	

Crimes detected under article 132 (Recruitment of persons for the purpose of exploitation) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan

No.	Region	2017	2018	Outcome
1.	Dushanbe	2	2	2 submitted to court
2.	Districts of Republican Subordination			
3.	Khatlon province			
4.	Sughd province	11	4	1 submitted to court 3 under investigation
5.	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region			
	Total forTajikistan	13	6	

Overview of criminal defendants under article 132 (Recruitment of persons for the purpose of exploitation) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, by gender and age

№		2017	2018
1	Total	15	4
2	Women	13	4
4	From 20 to 30	3	
5	From 30 to 40	5	3
6	From 40 to 50	2	1
7	50 and older	3	
8	Men	2	

Age and gender of victims

№		2017	2018
1	Total	14	6
2	Women	14	6
3	Under 20	10	4
4	From 20 to 30	6	2
5	From 30 to 40		
6	From 40 to 50		
7	50 and older		
8	Men		

During ten months of 2018, the Ministry of Internal Affairs brought back to Tajikistan four victims from the United Arab Emirates and eight victims of illegal immigration from the Republic of Kazakhstan. 22 victims were referred by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the International Organization for Migration assistance center for victims of trafficking.

Victims of human trafficking have access to a full range of support including housing (shelter), physical and psychological treatment and rehabilitation, and reintegration services. If necessary, identification documents are returned to victims.

Victims are assigned a lawyer who accompanies them from the stage of investigation to the stage of sentencing; after sentencing, if the accused refuses to repair pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages, the lawyer files a civil claim for compensation for moral and material harm (if the victim so wishes).

At present, rehabilitation and social reintegration assistance to victims of human trafficking is provided by the public organization Femida with financial aid from the social welfare agency of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population and the International Organization for Migration.

The Constitution and legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan grant equal rights and freedoms to men and women with no limitations or restrictions imposed by authorities. The ban on women entering mosques is religious in nature and there are no legislative restrictions on this matter. Canonically, in Hanafi madhhab, it is prohibited for women to perform Namaz in mosques and the respective fatwa is purely religious. A relevant decision relying on the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad was adopted by the Council of Ulema of Tajikistan's Islamic Centre on 17 August 2004 under number 9. The public authorities have no power to lift the fatwa since it does not fall

within their mandate. According to article 8 of the Constitution and article 5 of the Law on Freedom of Conscience, religious organizations are separated from the State and the State does not interfere in personal attitude to religion or personal religious identity, nor does the State interfere in the activities of religious associations. Thus, the non-attendance by women of mosques applies only to women adhering to the Hanafi madhhab rather than to all women of Tajikistan. Followers of Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Hare Krishnas and other religious associations can freely attend worship places and religious rites. Moreover, in Tajikistan, Ismaili women freely pray in Ismaili mosques (Jamatkhanas).

Women and media

In order to eliminate stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in families and in the community, to raise awareness of the need to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women and to eliminate gender stereotypes, various activities are carried out for various sectors of society, making broad use of the media. Over 250 programmes were created and transmitted over various national and local television channels by staff of the Committee on Women and the Family alone to promote an understanding of the importance of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

In May 2018, an opening ceremony was held for a consultation room for work with offenders in Levakant palace of culture in the Khatlon province. Opening of a consultation room was part of implementation of the State Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014–2023. The consultation room was established with the support of the PDV Project and is aimed to provide legal and psychological assistance free of charge.

Over 38 workshops, 6 public discussions and over 200 awareness-raising events for broad public were held as part of the State Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014–2023.

In 2018, 9 advocacy meetings were held in makhallas and urban schools in Dushanbe to promote elimination of gender stereotypes, prevent violence against women and girls, and remove obstacles to girls' education. The meetings were organized in conjunction with the public organization Bovari ba Fardo.

In order to eliminate stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in families and in the community, to raise awareness of the need to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women and to eliminate gender stereotypes, a number of activities are carried out with various segments of community, making broad use of the media. Over 200 programmes were designed and transmitted over various national and local television channels by staff of the Committee on Women and the Family alone to promote an understanding of the importance of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

In conjunction with the PDV Project, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, OXFAM, Helvetas and the Taekwondo Association, feature films on social issues were produced and broadcast to cover important matters of equality, respect for women in families, observance of the rights of women and children in families, prevention of domestic violence through public discussion on family values, gender equality, the priorities of education for boys and girls, zero tolerance to domestic violence, opposition to early marriages and compulsory State registration of marriages. Booklets, brochures and other material on these issues were prepared and published.

By the Government Resolution of 30 December 2015, the Conceptual Framework for the Development of the Family in the Republic of Tajikistan was adopted to define the future State policy in the area of strengthening the family as an important social institution and the foundation of community, and protecting the interests of family members and enhancing the family in line with the modern view of the family as a social institution and a place for raising children, and the economic and social foundations of strengthening the family, enhancing family education and development, and ensuring the strict implementation of the constitutional principle of the equal rights of men and women in family relations.

The Committee for Women and the Family, civil registry offices and law-enforcement bodies of Tajikistan carry out ongoing advocacy work among the population on the issues of marriage and family law, host seminars and meetings, and make TV, radio and media presentations on relevant topics. Thus, to implement resolutions of 16 September 2016 of the session of the CIS Council of Heads of Government which named 2017 the Year of Family, to promote cultural values of marriage relations and enhance understanding of the importance of parental rights and duties in raising children and healthy generation, the Committee for Women and Family Affairs organized a republican research-to-practice conference *Ensuring State Protection of the Family as the Foundation of Community*.

In 2014–2018, the Government held over 9 conferences, 125 round tables and 270 meetings for civil servants where the Convention and the concluding recommendations were circulated. The Government is also carrying out broad public outreach activities in accessible form through distribution of booklets and information materials about women’s rights in general. Capacity-building activities have been held for law-enforcement and defence personnel, judges, ministries and departments staff members, lawyers and local authorities on issues related to early marriage and family culture.

It should be noted that judges put a special emphasis on visiting court sessions regarding them as a way to increase the level of legal awareness of people and using them as a platform to explain the contents of laws and thus prevent offenses. According to statistics, in the first half of 2018, Tajikistan courts heard only 13,282 divorce cases, of which 1,347 cases were considered in visiting court sessions in the presence of the city and province community.

According to Tajikistan’s Ministry of Culture, 300 printed materials, essays and articles in the Tajik language on combating domestic violence have been published. For the same purpose, the Ministry of Culture held 30 seminars, round tables and meetings on the topic of culture and the fight against domestic violence.

From 1 to 8 June 2018, the first stage of the National Ethnic Song and Dance Festival and contest Songs of Peace and Conciliation was held in cities and districts of republican subordination. The contest featured stage productions on counteracting domestic violence.

In many theaters of the country, performances dedicated to counteracting domestic violence were shown. Tajik Academic Drama Theater named after Abuqosim Lohouti staged the play by T. Akhmadkhonov *The Curtain of Deceit*, while the State Youth Theater named after M. Vokhidov put on the play by S. Mukadamov *Forgive Me, Mom*, etc.

Girls

According to the statistics provided by the Statistical Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the Republic of Tajikistan, in the first 10 months of 2018 there were 790 cases of offences against juveniles, including offences involving violations of the rights and freedoms of minors in the spheres of education and early marriage, such as:

- article 164: Denial of access to compulsory (nine years) general education — 105 cases (129 cases in 2017);
- article 168: Giving in marriage a girl who is under the marriageable age, 12 cases (21 cases in 2017);
- article 169: Marrying a person who is under the marriageable age, 13 cases (20 cases in 2017).

In pursuance of the requirements of the Law on the Responsibility of Parents for Nurturing and Education of Children of the Republic of Tajikistan, to eliminate discriminating stereotypes and to raise awareness of negative consequences of early marriages, the units of the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs organized more than 11,842 meetings, workshops, and educational and awareness-raising seminars, in secondary, vocational and higher education institutions, as well as television and radio features at State enterprises, and in workplaces and mahallahs.

In order to prevent violence against children and to amend and supplement a number of articles of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking and Providing Assistance to its Victims, the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Tajikistan, an Interdepartmental Commission was established comprising professionals from ministries and agencies.

Raising awareness aimed at prevention of domestic violence included outreach to general public, in particular in educational institutions and other organizations. The work was carried out by province, city and district prosecutor offices, local authorities and other bodies: this year 1,574 meetings were held among personnel to prevent domestic violence including child abuse.

Moreover, 219 conferences, seminars, meetings and round tables were held in 2018 to cover the topic. The work is proceeding in accordance with the established plan.

For the issues indicated in this plan, local commissions on the rights of children prepared action plans and carried out awareness-raising activities, such as seminars, trainings, and joint and personal conversations with children, teenagers and their parents.

Despite the efforts taken, 874 instances of violence against children by parents and teachers have been identified and recorded this year.

Each year, the Commission on the Rights of Children under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan provides information on the implementation of the Government Resolution of the Republic of Tajikistan on the National Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2015–2020.

Law enforcement agencies are working to protect children from trafficking in minors.

Crimes detected under article 167 (Trafficking in minors) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan

No.	Region	2017	2018	Outcomes
1	Dushanbe	2	3	1 suspended 2 under investigation
2	Districts of republican subordination	2	3	1 submitted to court 2 under investigation
3	Khatlon province	6	5	5 submitted to court
4	Sughd province	1		
5	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region			
	Total for Tajikistan	10	11	

Overview of criminal defendants under article 167 (Trafficking in minors) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, by gender and age:

No		2017	2018
1	Total	25	29
2	Women	23	27
3	Under 20		
4	From 20 to 30	13	7
5	From 30 to 40	8	10
6	From 40 to 50		3
7	50 and older	2	7
8	Men	2	2

Age and gender of victims

No.		2017	2018
1	Total	10	10
2	Newborns	10	9
3	1–2 months		
4	6 months		1
5	2 years		

IV Engagement, responsibility and institutions dealing with gender matters

Institutional tools to enhance the role of women

At present, a legal framework has been established in Tajikistan aimed at guaranteeing the equality of all citizens regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property and occupational status, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, and membership of public associations or any other social groups. According to article 27 of the Constitution, citizens have equal rights to enter the civil service. This provision is also stipulated in article 2 of the Civil Service Act, in accordance with which, citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan have equal rights to enter the civil service irrespective of ethnicity, race, gender, language, faith, political convictions or social or

property status. Tajikistan pays particular attention to the role of women in the community and the maintenance of gender balance. A legal framework governing issues related to the equal rights of men and women has been established.

The Presidential Order on Enhancing the Role of Women in Society was signed on 3 December 1999 to ensure extensive involvement of women in public life and governance, boost the social status of women and improve the national gene pool, enhance the role of women in strengthening moral principles, peace and unity. The State programme entitled Guidelines for the State policy to Ensure Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2001–2010 was adopted by the Government Resolution of 6 August 2011 and implemented in subsequent years. As part of the programme, the Law on State Guarantees for Equality and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women was approved on 1 March 2005 which regulates action to uphold the constitutional guarantees of equal rights of men and women in the social, political, cultural and any other sphere, and establishes State guarantees of equal opportunities for persons of either gender, regardless of ethnicity.

Article 20 of the Law defines participation in trade unions and other public associations, including public associations established for the purpose of implementing the constitutional principle of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women.

The State Programme on the Education, Selection and Placement of Capable Women and Girls in Leadership Positions in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2007–2016 has been implemented. The main objectives of the programme were to formulate long-term State policy to secure rights and opportunities with regard to the training, selection and placement of capable women and girls in leadership positions; ensure that women and men had equal rights in respect of promotion and appointment to leadership positions; and ensure an enabling environment for training. As a result of the programme implementation, a mechanism was established to facilitate education, selection and placement of capable women and girls in leadership positions, as well as a mechanism for State cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Work and recreation conditions for women have improved. Further on, as a follow-up to the implemented programme, on 1 April 2017 the State Programme on the Education, Selection and Placement of Capable Women and Girls in Leadership Positions in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2022 was adopted by the Government of Tajikistan.

The programme focuses on implementation of Tajikistan's international obligations to eliminate gender inequality in accordance with the principles and directions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Sustainable Development Goals and other gender-related goals and targets.

The aim of the programme is to implement the State policy on ensuring the rights and opportunities for the education, selection and promotion of gifted women and girls in leadership positions, improving the access of women and girls to civil service, ensuring equal rights of men and women when nominating and promoting to managerial positions, and training young specialists amongst the students.

The National Strategy on Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan 2011–2020 provides for equal representation of women and men in the executive and representative bodies at all levels of governance, the possibility of introducing quotas for women as a temporary measure to ensure broader participation in the executive and representative bodies, cooperation with international organizations on achieving equal opportunities for men and women, enhancing the

role of women in society and the possibility of learning from the experience of developed countries on issues of the political advancement of women, ensuring gender equality in the workplace, and introducing modest quotas when holding competitions to fill civil service positions at all levels.

The strategy also focuses on mechanisms for the welfare state and civil society, cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental organizations with an emphasis on the initiative and self-motivation of citizens of both genders in resolving social and economic problems. To implement the strategy, the Government approved an Action Plan for 2015–2020 (Resolution of 29 August 2015), which envisages strengthening the capacity of the Committee on Women and the Family in the area of gender analysis, carrying out research and monitoring of programmes on women's issues, enhancing the capacity of the staff of ministries and departments responsible for implementing gender policy, conducting training courses and seminars to upgrade the skills to develop strategies and State programmes and to perform gender analysis of social processes, organizing courses to enhance the capacity of women activists in public authorities and civil society, introducing quotas in competitions to fill civil service positions at all levels, building the capacity and skills of women leaders, increasing women's literacy and employment levels on the basis of the principles of gender equality, and reducing unemployment. Targeted work is being carried out to implement the Action Plan.

In accordance with the requirements of State statistical form No. 1-GS on the number and grade levels of civil servants, the Civil Service Agency performs a quarterly monitoring and compiles a statistical report on the number of civil servants, including women. The deliverables are sent to the relevant public authorities and used for elaboration of appropriate steps.

As of 1 January 2019, the total staffing table for civil servants consisted of 21,124 posts; 2,005 posts were vacant, and 19,119 posts were encumbered (as of 1 January 2018 – 19,382, as of 1 January 2017 – 19,007, as of 1 January 2016 – 18,902, as of 1 January 2015 – 18,585, as of 1 January 2014 – 18,295, as of 1 January 2013 – 18,491). The number of women was 4,441 or 23.2 per cent of the total number of civil servants (as of 1 January 2018 – 4,467 or 23.0 per cent, as of 1 January 2017 – 4,171 or 22.0 per cent, as of 1 January 2016 – 4,226 or 22.3 per cent, as of 1 January 2015 – 4,374 or 23.5 per cent, as of 1 January 2014 – 4,315 or 23.5 per cent, as of 1 January 2013 – 4,343 or 23.4 per cent).

Civil servants are hired in accordance with the Guideline on the Procedure for Competitive Admissions for Public Service Openings. It should be noted that, as of 1 January 2019, out of 2,791 civil servants employed on various civil service positions, there were 645 women which accounted for 23.1 per cent.

To attract more women to the civil service, the State Service Agency developed a draft Presidential Order on introducing Changes and Amendments to Presidential Order No. 647 of 10 March 2016 which was signed on 19 April 2017 under No. 869. In accordance with the Order, the Guideline on the Procedure for Competitive Admissions for Public Service Openings envisages certain privileges to women. Based on the interview results upon the initial appointment to the civil service they are given three additional points.

Due to this action, in 2018, 74 women were admitted to various positions in the civil service. HR technologies are being implemented to make civil service more attractive for women, including appointments from the talent pool. Every year, public authorities submit to the State Service Agency lists of employees included to the talent pool where from 25 to 29 per cent are women.

To ensure disciplined implementation of gender-related programmes and regulatory acts and attract more women to the civil service, the State Service Agency is taking appropriate measures at all governmental levels. In particular, each year the Agency runs the following special courses for female leaders: *Human Resource Management*, *Woman as a Leader in the Public Administration System* and *Legal Framework of Gender Equality in the Republic of Tajikistan*. The courses are organized pursuant to the approved plan of postgraduate education, retraining and internships for civil servants and are held in conjunction with the Institute of Public Administration and the Committee for Women and the Family.

In order to implement programmes and rules and regulations in the gender sphere in an organized manner and attract women to the civil service, the Civil Service Agency together with the Institute of Public Administration, in 2018 organized 37 training courses for civil servants: 5 refresher courses, 31 skills development courses, and 1 internship. A total of 1,791 students were covered, including 98 employees who were involved in stand-alone projects. Thus, a total of 1,693 civil servants participated in courses, of whom 533, or 30.0 per cent, were women.

During 2007–2018, to increase the representation of women in public offices and to train the talent pool, the Civil Service Agency together with the Institute of Public Administration implemented certain measures to support potential candidates. From 2009 until present, potential candidates from students of the master's programme in Public Administration get invited to leadership positions in governmental bodies. During this period, the number of trained specialists amounted to 609 people, of which 177 were women (or 29.0 per cent).

The issue of attracting women to civil service is considered annually at the general meeting of the State Service Agency Board. The decisions taken following the results of the meetings (6 March 2017 and 6 April 2018) were sent to the public authorities to support relevant decision-making.

As a result of the comprehensive set of measures taken in line with the above mentioned strategies, programmes and action plans, the number of women involved in decision-making processes is growing steadily.

Women in power and decision-making

A total of 5,736, or 30.0 per cent of the total number of civil servants, hold managerial positions (as of 1 January 2018 – 5,822 or 30.0 per cent, as of 1 January 2017 – 5,770 or 29.8 per cent, as of 1 January 2016 – 5,659 or 29.9 per cent, as of 1 January 2015 – 5,548 or 29.8 per cent, as of 1 January 2014 – 5,521 or 30.1 per cent, as of 1 January 2013 – 5,734 or 31.0 per cent). Out of them, 1,041 or 18.1 per cent are women holding managerial positions (as of 1 January 2018 – 1,105 or 18.9 per cent; as of 1 January 2017 – 1,018 or 17.9 per cent; as of 1 January 2016 – 1,039 or 18.3 per cent; as of 1 January 2015 – 1,082 or 19.5 per cent, as of 1 January 2014 – 1,052 or 19.0 per cent, as of 1 January 2013 – 1,114 or 19.5).

After the latest parliamentary elections that took place in 2015, 7 women became members of the Majlisi Milli (upper chamber) of the Majlisi Oli and 12 were elected to the Majlisi Namoyandagon (lower chamber) of the Majlisi Oli; one of them is the vice-chairperson and two are chairpersons of committees. 542 women were elected to representative authorities (Majlisi) of provinces, cities and districts.

Out of a total of 369 judges, 56, or 15 per cent, are women. Of those women, one is the chairperson of the Supreme Economic Court, and five are chairpersons and six are deputy chairpersons of

province, city and district courts. In the Supreme Court, out of a total of 39 judges, 10, or 25.6 per cent, are women. Overall, 90 women work in the Constitutional Court and in the judiciary, and 745 women work in leadership positions in the internal affairs bodies.

At present, a woman holds the post of Minister of Labour, Migration and Employment. In addition, the heads of the Committee on Women and the Family, the Committee on Language, and Terminology and the Statistical Agency are women.

In other Government structures, ministries, and local government authorities, one of the deputy directors is usually a woman.

Of the total number of female civil servants, 1,041 hold managerial posts, 3 are chairpersons of districts, 68 are deputy chairpersons of districts, and one woman is the Head of the Executive Office of the President.

In the educational system, 4,353 women hold leadership posts, of whom one works in the central administration of the Ministry of Education and Science, seven are employed in the structural units of the ministry, three are rectors, 34 are directors and deputy directors of secondary vocational training institutions, 14 are heads of the education departments of districts and towns, 3,691 are directors and deputy directors of general education institutions, and 603 are heads of preschool educational institutions. In order to promote the advancement of young and gifted specialists to leadership positions, a special pool has been set up in the ministry, which includes 82 people, of whom 27 people, or 33 per cent, are women. In State institutions for elementary vocational training, 12 women serve as directors, or 19 per cent of the total. One woman in the ministry has a post-doctoral degree and four hold a doctoral degree.

In the Ministry of Finance and its subordinate institutions, the core staff consists of 1,453 employees, including 1,318 office personnel, of whom 986 are men and 332 are women; in total, women account for about 25.2 per cent of staff. In the central administration of the Ministry of Finance, the total number of personnel is 292 office staff members, of whom 228 are in active service, 85 are women, while 18, or 21.2 per cent of the total number of women, work as heads and deputy heads of divisions and departments. One woman is a deputy minister, two women hold the posts of heads of financial divisions in cities and districts, and in addition, the director of the State Treasury under the Ministry of Finance is a woman.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic service there are 314 civil servants, of whom 53, or 16.8 per cent, are women.

Pursuing the fundamental goals of the strategic instruments, ministries and departments carry out the following activities: identifying long-term State policy to guarantee the rights and opportunities for the education, selecting and placing capable women and girls in leadership positions, ensuring equal rights for women and men in promotion and appointment to leadership positions, ensuring comprehensive training opportunities, encouraging girls to take training courses and providing accommodation and grants for female students at higher educational institutions. As a result of the adoption of measures envisaged under the above-mentioned strategies, programmes and plans of action, the number of women involved in decision-making processes, is increasing steadily.²⁶

²⁶ Information is provided from the Sixth periodic report submitted by Tajikistan under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017 (2 October 2017), para. 21–23, available at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fTJK%2f6&Lang=en

Women's human rights

Women's status is determined by the scope of their civil rights. Under current legislation, women and men have equal legal personality, in other words, the ability to own, use and dispose of property, to conclude contracts and to exercise other civil rights. The legal personality of both women and men is enshrined in the Civil Code, and may only be restricted by law and under court verdict. Women are accorded equal rights with men in respect of travel and the freedom to choose their place of residence and domicile. Article 19 of the Civil Code provides that citizens may travel freely in the territory of Tajikistan, choose a place of residence and freely travel outside the country and return to it. The Civil Code also accords women the right to compensation for harm caused by unlawful actions; they are therefore entitled to apply to the courts for compensation for property damage and reparation of moral damage.

The Criminal Code (article 143, part 1) provides for criminal responsibility for violating the equal rights of citizens, including on the grounds of gender, which is punishable by a fine of between 200 and 500 units of calculation or by up to two years' imprisonment.

The Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities in the Exercise of Such Rights defines the concept of discrimination and prohibits discrimination of the rights of men and women (article 1 and article 3) The Committee on Women and the Family, as the State authority on ensuring gender development in the Republic of Tajikistan, monitors compliance with this law within the limits of its mandate (article 19).

In recent years, the authorized State body for religious affairs in conjunction with the offices of the UN entities and other international organizations have organized special training courses for imam khatibs and religious leaders. At the same time, the authorized State body for religious affairs together with the Islamic Centre of the Republic of Tajikistan, organized refresher and advanced training courses for imam khatibs of congregational mosques and imams of five-prayer mosques. The training programmes included topics on protecting the rights of women and enhancing their role in communities.

Moreover, on 15 March 2018, Tajikistan's State Committee for Religious Affairs and Regulation of Traditions, Ceremonies and Rituals together with the Committee on Youth and Sports held a round table *Attracting Youth to Creativity and Development* attended by representatives of certain ministries and agencies, scientific organizations, religious associations and industry specialists. The meeting was focused on vital issues for millennials, including empowerment of women and children.

The Committee for Religious Affairs and Regulation of Traditions, Ceremonies and Rituals of the Government of Tajikistan together with the Presidential Islamic Studies Centre held workshops for imam khatibs of congregational mosques and imams of five-prayer mosques that took place on 27 September 2018 in Rashta and on 16 October 2018 in Darvoz. The meetings were focused on prevention of violence and extremism in social media as well as prevention of gender-related discrimination and offences.

Moreover, in 2018 alone, professionals of the Committee for Religious Affairs and Regulation of Traditions, Ceremonies and Rituals in conjunction with Tajikistan Islamic Centre elaborated over 15 non-binding sermons for Friday prayers delivered by imam khatibs that covered such issues as right to freedom of conscience, and religion, strengthening and protecting family values, family

planning, protecting the rights of women and children, preventing domestic violence against women and children, side effects of early marriage, etc.

Girls

In 2014, a council of female students was established under the Committee on Women and Family. It runs a School for Female Leaders where training is delivered by experienced and reputable teachers. Every year the Committee awards grants of 100 somonis per month for 20 top female students in Tajikistan: 15 grants go to top students of higher educational institutions and 5 to secondary school pupils (Government Resolution No. 158 of 1 April 2017).

Since 2001, the Sarvar State training centre for women under the Ministry of Education and Science has been operating to train girls entering higher educational institutions under the Presidential quota, and gifted girls in general, to prepare them as women leaders. Training is provided free of charge. All students at the training centre receive an additional grant, and students from remote regions of the country are provided with accommodation in hostels. The centre is funded from the State budget every year in an amount of 1,124,013 somonis. Over the past five years, 378 girls from all regions of Tajikistan studied at the centre and 233 successfully completed the leadership courses. In 2016, a new curriculum was introduced. In addition to studying subjects such as psychology of leadership, technology and methodology of leadership, management, introduction to public law, office work in the State language and information technology, all the girls study foreign languages. After completing their studies at the centre, the graduates are awarded a certificate of attendance.

Support for active and gifted girls is one of the priority areas. For gifted women and girls employed by the Ministry of Education and Science system, the State Centre for Advanced Training and Retraining in the Labour, Migration and Employment offers skill development courses, including on the topic of women leadership. In 2015, 2016 and the first six months of 2017, 86 courses were held that were attended by over 1,500 students, of whom 532, or 35 per cent, were women.

In order to eliminate traditional stereotypes, outreach groups composed of faculty members and leading specialists of the institution are established every year in higher vocational institutions. During meetings with graduates of general education schools and their parents, a range of issues are discussed, including the issues of encouraging girls to pursue higher education, their study and living conditions, and additional services available for girls. Such discussions not only contribute to encouraging girls to get higher education, but also ensure the overall accessibility of education.

V Peaceful and inclusive communities

Women and armed conflicts

Being a full member of the United Nations, Tajikistan adopted its first Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 for 2014–2018 which was signed on 23 July 2014 by the Chairperson of the Government Commission for Fulfillment of International Human Rights Obligations. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan established a Technical Working Group to develop and implement the National Action Plan and monitor the implementation of the related documents. All these measures acknowledge Tajikistan's commitment to the implementation of UN documents and other international standards that ensure gender equality and equal opportunities for men and women and emphasize the importance of

women's engagement in other processes, including peace-building and security issues, in order to achieve the goals set.

Tajikistan's National Action Plan for 2019–2022 for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security is a State mechanism for consolidated and coordinated actions to implement the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The National Action Plan recognizes the lessons learned from the previous document and should be regarded as commitments of the Government of Tajikistan in such areas as human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building.

The National Action Plan is harmonized and brought in line with the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2030 and the Mid-term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020. Moreover, it is aligned with the relevant goals, targets and indicators of the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): goal 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions,” 16.1 “Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere,” 16.3 “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all,” 16.7 “Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels,” resolution 2242 of the UN Security Council which focuses on new threats, particularly, on the fight against violent extremism, and recommends putting an end to impunity, speaks of women as peacekeepers, outlines the need for monitoring and evaluation, and the need to allocate resources for the implementation of the resolution; CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 on ensuring that National Action Plans and strategies for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions are consistent with the Convention, and that sufficient budgets are allocated for their implementation; and with the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, developed after the 6th periodic report, as well as with other documents relating to the protection of human rights and gender equality, and the results of the UN Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325, etc.

The National Action Plan is a nation-wide approach to integrating gender equality principles into the set priorities as well as the State's commitment follow UN standards and international Women, Peace and Security standards and implement the planned activities in a holistic and comprehensive manner with the assistance of civil society representatives and development partners.

At present, the National Action Plan of Tajikistan for 2019–2022 to implement the UN Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security is being approved by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. At the end of 2018, in order to prepare an effective plan with the support of UN Women, a three-day training was held with the assistance of an international expert on international documents in the field of Women, Peace and Security. Representatives of government agencies responsible for the implementation of the plan and representatives of gender NGOs took part in the trainings. Based on the knowledge gained at the training session, the participants with the assistance of the international coach drafted the National Action Plan of Tajikistan for 2019–2022 to implement the UN Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security.

Following ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two of its supplementary Protocols, i.e. the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air which took place in May 2002, the Law No. 456 of the Republic of Tajikistan on Amendments and Additions to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan was adopted on

30 June 2003. Based on it, the following amendments were made to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan: article 130, note 1 "Trafficking in Persons" was introduced, article 167 "Trafficking in minors" was stated in a new version, article 339 "Stealing or damaging documents, stamps or seals" and article 340 "Forgery, manufacture or sale of forged documents, State awards, stamps, seals or forms" was complemented with an aggravated characteristic "committed for the purpose of trafficking."

On 15 July 2004, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted the Law on Combating Human Trafficking. The Law is based on the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan and sets out the legal and organizational framework for counteracting human trafficking in the Republic of Tajikistan and defines the legal status of victims of human trafficking. In addition, the Law specifies preventive measures aimed at preventing trafficking in persons, stipulates measures for the protection of victims and defines the State guarantees. A separate article focuses on measures to assist underage victims of trafficking in persons. Moreover, the Law outlines the responsibility of legal entities and interaction with non-governmental and public organizations. With the adoption of the law, a mechanism was launched to implement measures to counteract trafficking in persons, and its implementation by the State makes possible practical counteraction against such a dangerous practice as human trafficking.

VI *Environment protection and recovery*

In accordance with the priorities and objectives of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2019–2030, both at the national and at the local levels, women are increasingly involved in decision-making for disaster risk management. For instance, in the last three years, 29 women have been hired by the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense. The share of women among civil servants in the Committee is 40 per cent, among military personnel – 20 per cent. At the local level, women can be found among the chiefs of staff of towns and regions, being heads and senior officers.

In order to expand women's leadership in the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense, the Committee on Women and the Family in conjunction with international organizations is taking efforts to increase the potential of women through educational programmes and trainings, especially at the local level. In particular, in October 2016, two-day trainings *Implementing gender approaches in disaster risk management* were held in Devashtich and Rasht districts that are most prone to natural disasters. The trainings were organized with the support of UN Women for representatives of local khukumats, jamoats, public associations, women's groups and female leaders.

To strengthen the evidence base and to raise awareness of the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls in the event of environmental degradation and natural disasters, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2019–2030 among the problems of reducing risk of natural disasters highlights the problem of "low attention paid to gender factor and disregard of the fact that disasters affect men and women in a different way and, therefore, women and men have specific needs and vulnerabilities. At the same time, women are not only a vulnerable group, but also a valuable resource for disaster risk reduction."

In 2016–2017, when developing the methodology and a toolkit for conducting a quick assessment of the needs of the affected population, gender aspects were taken into account with a focus on vulnerable groups, including women, pregnant women, people with disabilities, etc. When forming

quick assessment teams, the focus is made on gender balance and team members' knowledge of gender and age aspects as well as protection issues. To assess the needs of the affected population, not only men but also women are necessarily involved as key informants.

Attention is also paid to expanding the access of women in distress to such services as payments, insurance covering natural hazards and compensation.

When providing humanitarian assistance to the population affected by natural disasters, the gender composition of beneficiaries is regularly monitored, and gender-based indicators are included in the reporting.

Government Resolution No. 632 on the Procedure and Amount of Lump-Sum Material Assistance to the Population Affected by Natural Disasters in the Republic of Tajikistan dated 3 December 2010 envisages a lump-sum financial aid and a subsidized loan in the following amounts:

- 1000 somonis for each family of a deceased;
- 100 somonis to the head of the family and 50 somonis to each family member;
- 600 somonis to each family for the repair of a partially destroyed housing;
- 1,500 somonis to each family for the construction of a completely destroyed residential building in the same place;
- a subsidized loan of 3000 somonis to each family with a maturity of 5 years for the construction of a fully destroyed building when settling in a safe place taking into account the impossibility of construction in the same place, except when the construction of a fully destroyed residential building is performed by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, enterprises, organizations and individuals in full.

In recent years, the Republic of Tajikistan has been increasingly focusing on the introduction of gender approaches in disaster risk management policies reflecting the fact that women and children are the most vulnerable groups in the event of a natural disaster. The National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2019–2030 adopted by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on 29 December 2018 highlights gender issues and stipulates that “the gender approach should be introduced at all stages of disaster risk reduction, taking into account the following two aspects:

- Considering special needs and requirements of men and women, and other social groups most at risk, including persons with disabilities, elderly people, etc., in connection with various types of vulnerability and realistic opportunities;
- Involving women and other social groups as participants and decision-makers in all key areas.”

In particular, to achieve the established priorities, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy envisages the following actions:

- Establish a national mechanism to collect, analyze and disseminate information on losses from natural disasters, by gender, age and disability;
- Perform regular risk assessment of natural disasters, including assessment of vulnerability and potential of the population, taking into account gender and age factors, disability, threat characteristics and possible consequences;
- Develop and implement a gender-sensitive information support and a training system to inform the population in a proactive way about protective and restoring actions on natural disasters, etc.

At present, to implement the strategy, a Mid-Term State Programme for Protection of the Population and Territories from Emergency Situations for 2019–2022 is under development. For all key priorities and activities of the State programme, a whole set of measures is envisaged to reduce the vulnerability of women and children as well as to enhance women’s leadership and involvement in decision-making processes on disaster risk reduction.

The interaction between government agencies working in the field of promoting gender equality and disaster risk reduction is being strengthened; the same is also true for non-governmental organizations. For example, in Dushanbe, on 31 October 2018, at the round table *Gender Assessment of Environmental Sustainable Development Goals*, environmental non-governmental associations and organizations working in the field of gender equality promotion jointly identified key problems and actions to natural disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation using the gender approach.

With the support of international organizations, including UNDP, UN Women and other partners at the local and national levels, a number of trainings were held to train coaches to work with local communities and all actors in disaster risk management through a gender perspective.

Section 3. State institutions and processes

In accordance with the Guideline on the Committee on Women and the Family as approved by the Government Resolution No. 608 of 28 December 2006, the Committee is the central executive body in exercising the State policy in respect of protecting and safeguarding the rights and interests of women and the family, creating equal conditions for exercising their rights and interests, achieving gender equality, expanding their engagement in solving social and economic problems, State management and public life, as well as legal framework, the provision of public services and management of State property in this field.

The scope of its authorities includes, in particular:

- Coordinating the work of government agencies, non-governmental organizations and international partners on promotion of gender equality and addressing the problems of women and the family;
 - Cooperating with legislative bodies and executive authorities, political parties, movements and non-governmental organizations operating within the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan;
 - Monitoring the implementation of international obligations undertaken by the Republic of Tajikistan in terms of promoting gender equality;
 - Inviting other stakeholders to their meetings, such as heads of ministries, departments and local executive bodies in provinces, cities and districts of Tajikistan, and others, where necessary.
- Representatives of the Committee on Women and the Family are members of all working groups developing laws, programmes and strategies.

Coordination regarding the National Development Strategy 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals

Development and implementation of programmes and development strategies are the key instruments for the implementation of the State policies. At present, the Republic of Tajikistan has in place a legislative framework for the development of strategic instruments that is carried out on

the basis of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Constitutional Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Forecasts, Concepts, Strategies and Programmes of Social Economic Development of the Republic of Tajikistan—they determine the achievement of strategic goals and set the priority tasks of the State policy in the field of social and economic development. The SDGs can also be usefully embedded in government strategies and development programmes of the Republic of Tajikistan. The strategic instruments are developed to achieve the priorities and goals of the country's social, economic and environmental development.

At the level of relevant ministries and departments of the Republic of Tajikistan, legal instruments were adopted to regulate their work in elaboration and implementation of industry strategies and departmental development programmes. Based on the provisions thereof, the ministries and departments participate in drafting, development and implementation of relevant development strategies and programmes aimed at increasing the public welfare. It may be advisable to complement strategic planning instruments with the SDGs and link them at industry and territorial levels. This will contribute to the implementation of NDS 2030, MtDP 2016–2020 and the development programmes of cities and districts as stipulated in the Law mentioned earlier.

Thus, to ensure that the national goals and priorities are fully taken into account in the implementation of 2030 Agenda as well as to factor in the SDGs and ensure the balance of economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development in Tajikistan, a national coordination mechanism has been established.

To this end, in order to ensure the coordinated cooperation of all stakeholders in respect of Tajikistan's national development, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan signed an Order to establish the National Development Council (NDC). The Council defines the overall reform strategy and ensures a liaison between government agencies, the private sector and the civil society in the implementation of strategic instruments. Its work facilitated harmonization of several integrated elements, such as progress measurement and implementation of the proposed actions in respect of SDGs achievement, a mechanism for progress monitoring, collection of all necessary data as well as preparation of interim and final reports.

Clearer coordination has been achieved between donors providing technical and financial support to the country as well as contributing to strategy development and reforms, which was facilitated by the creation of the Development Coordinating Council.

Establishment of clear institutional links between the NDS/MtDP and the SDGs and their connection with other development programmes at the national and regional levels has contributed to vertical coherence and integration of government actions. Monitoring and evaluation processes are an important mechanism for organizing a streamlined policy for the implementation of the SDGs within the country and integration along vertical links at all government levels. Monitoring provides enormous opportunities for localizing the SDGs by integrating indicator systems at the local, regional and national levels.

Monitoring and evaluation for the NDS 2030 and the SDGs is carried out under the guidance of and in coordination with the Secretariat of the NDC, represented by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. The Secretariat also monitors the process of achieving the SDGs at the national level and coordinates the efforts of all parties involved.

The Secretariat of the NDC reports to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the President on the progress in the implementation of the NDS/MtDP and the SDGs and makes recommendations on improvement. Implementation and monitoring of the NDS/MtDP and the SDGs achievements also involves parliamentary hearings, national consultations and development forums engaging a wide range of development partners, including civil society. For example, at the latest meeting of the NDC, which was held on 21 June 2016, the draft NDS 2030 and MtDP 2016–2020 were considered and approved, taking into account the harmonization with SDGs. The Chairman of the Council, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan instructed all ministries and departments as well as local executive authorities of provinces, cities and districts to further develop new industry and regional development programmes based on the structure, goals and priorities of the new strategic instruments of the country and bring the existing development programmes in line with the goals and objectives set in the documents (from the minutes of the meeting No. 1c/22–2 of the NDC of 21 June 2016).

The voluntary national review prepared in 2017 recommended to focus on coordination issues in the implementation of NDS 2030, MtDP 2020 and SDGs.

It was proposed to study this issue in more detail and to give recommendations on strengthening the existing Development Council under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan with the expansion of functions and powers in coordination issues for the Secretariat and working groups.

The working body of the Council is the Secretariat, whose functions are assigned to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. The previous experience has shown that the work of the Secretariat should be carried out on an ongoing basis. At the same time, it is necessary to raise the status of the Secretariat in terms of reporting on the implementation of the country's strategic instruments and SDGs. In this respect, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade together with its partners is planning to develop new Guideline of the Council that would expand the functions of the Secretariat. Within the Council, permanent working groups will be established to be in charge of collecting and submitting data on the implementation of NDS 2030, MtDP 2020 and SDGs. The working groups will hold meetings to identify the existing gaps and challenges in the implementation of NDS 2030 and SDGs, to support decision-making on possible improvement of the situation. The Secretariat will meet more often and sum up the interim results throughout the year in order to promptly identify emerging challenges.

It is expected that not only ministries and departments will be invited to the working groups, but also development partners, representatives of civil society, academia and the private sector. Such an approach would strengthen the existing mechanism for implementing the NDS 2030 and SDGs. The working groups will be subject-based, and subject matters related to the strategic objectives of NDS 2030 and the SDGs will be discussed as part of their work.²⁷

Section 4. Information and statistics

In 2010, the Law No. 996 of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Statistics was approved (amended on 22 July 2013). The Law defines the legal framework and regulatory mechanisms for the implementation of a unified State policy in the field of official statistics and dissemination of State statistics that meets the needs of the State and society for complete, reliable, scientifically based

²⁷ See National Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Goals of NDS 2030 and MtDP 2016–2020 in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Dushanbe, 2018. Pp. 66–68.

and timely statistical information on social, economic, demographic, environmental and other public processes in the Republic of Tajikistan.

From 2014 to 2015, the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan was implementing the Gender Statistics Programme for 2014–2015. At the same time, a new draft 2030 Strategy for the Development of Gender Statistics was developed.

At present, the 2030 National Strategy for Statistics Development is pending approval. One of the major sections of the strategy is dedicated to improving gender statistics, moreover, gender indicators are included in all sectors.

The Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan has a working group on gender statistics. Establishment of the working group was approved by the Decree of the Director of the Statistical Agency to revise statistical reporting forms to determine the gender sensitivity of statistical indicators. Development and improvement of the database on gender statistics is also envisaged.

An Inter-Agency Working Group is operating under the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan to support women's entrepreneurship. The Statistical Agency is a member thereof and implements the improvement of gender entrepreneurship statistics.

The Statistical Agency of the Republic of Tajikistan prepares on a quarterly basis a State statistical report on the number and grade levels of civil servants under form No. 1-ГC.

The NDS 2030 envisages a Timewise Evaluation. Moreover, the National Action Plan for the implementation of the CEDAW recommendations for 2019–2022 provides for a survey on gender aspects.

In order to expand administrative or alternative data sources to eliminate missing gender data, creation of an information database on crime victims is planned, with the Statistical Agency being its holder as per the plan.

The Statistical Agency publishes a database on gender statistics which is updated annually. It also provides monthly data on the number of women entrepreneurs registered in the Statistics Agency's Gender Database.²⁸

Statistics Agency's specialists participate on a regular basis in international and regional workshops and trainings on gender statistics.

Defining a national set of indicators to monitor progress in the implementation of SDGs

As of today, the national set of indicators to monitor progress in the implementation of SDGs has not been defined. Out of global indicators, the Republic of Tajikistan has adopted all SDG indicators related to gender equality.

²⁸ <https://www.stat.tj/en/gender-database>

The Republic of Tajikistan has initiated collection and compilation of data for some Group 1 indicators for the SDG 5 as well as for gender indicators of other SDGs.

The following breakdown of statistical data is regularly used for large researches:

- Geographic location
- Income
- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Marital status
- Race/ethnicity (CEDAW registers victims of domestic violence)
- Migration status.

Support is required to use information on disability.

Appendix 1. List of policies, strategies, action plans and publications

- Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Implementation
- Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Prevention of Domestic Violence, 2013.
- Law No. 1396 of the Republic of Tajikistan on Targeted Social Assistance, dated 24 February 2017.
- Conceptual Framework on the Provision of Free Legal Aid in the Republic of Tajikistan, approved by Resolution No. 425 of 02 July 2015 of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.
- State Programme on Prevention of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023, 2014.
- Rules on the procedure for allocating grants of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to support the development of small and medium enterprises, attract women and girls to career guidance, increase legal awareness and acquire new jobs for 2006–2010, approved by Government Resolution No. 307 of 4 July 2006.
- National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2011–2020, 2011.
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for enhancing the role of women in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period for 2015–2020, 2014.
- State programme on the education, selection and placement of talented girls and women in leadership posts in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2022, approved by the Resolution No. 158 of 1 April 2017 of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.
- Presidential Order of 19 April 2017 amending Presidential Order No. 647 of 10 March 2016.
- Rules for the allocation of grants of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan for the support and development of entrepreneurial activity among women for 2011–2015, approved by Government Resolution No. 185 of 2 April 2011.
- Health Code of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted in March 2017.
- National Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2010–2020 approved by Government Resolution No. 368 of 2 August 2010.
- National Programme on Counteracting the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan 2017–2020.
- National Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations Provided by UN Human Rights Council Member States during the second universal periodic review (second period) for 2017–2020, approved by Presidential Order No. 901 of 7 June 2017.
- Programme for the Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes for 2006–2012, approved by Government Resolution No. 130 of 3 April 2006, Dushanbe.
- Action Plan on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Mothers, Newborns, Children and Adolescents within the Framework of the National Health Strategy for 2010–2020.
- National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2019–2030, approved by Government Resolution on 29 December 2018.