

THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

**NATIONAL REVIEW
OF THE 30-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND
PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN VIET NAM
(2019-2023)**

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted by 189 member states at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China (1995). It embodies the commitment towards fulfilling the interests and rights of women around the world in the late 20th century. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which has been widely implemented in Viet Nam over the past 30 years, plays an essential role in bringing about positive changes in the pursuit of gender equality (GE), thus contributing to the nation's construction and development. Economic growth and social progress, to which women have made substantial contributions over the past 30 years, have laid a solid foundation for Viet Nam's development and integration progress. The most important measure to promote GE in Viet Nam, which is also Viet Nam's most outstanding achievement in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action over the past 5 years, was the adoption and extensive implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the 2021-2030 period, encompassing specific goals and targets on GE across various fields. In addition, Viet Nam always considers changing awareness a strategic solution to achieving substantive GE. Therefore, Viet Nam has adopted and implemented the Communication Program on Gender Equality to 2030, as well as hosts the Action Month for Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response every year. The Action Month is dedicated to national communication and awareness-changing with the vast participation of many agencies, organizations and individuals in organizing related events and helping millions of people gain better access to diverse policies, information and data on GE. Moreover, during the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, it is learned that a thorough assessment of certain issues is needed so that women are properly recognized and supported by an accommodating environment to live, thrive, fulfil their potential, and sustain their momentum heading to the future.

As a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2023-2025 term, Viet Nam has identified eight priority areas and introduced specific initiatives corresponding to each area, which have gained widespread support from other countries. Viet Nam is considered one of the fastest countries to eliminate gender gaps over the past 20 years, and one of the first and early achievers of the Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG 3) on gender equality. It is also actively working towards reaching all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goals 5 and 10 that focus on eliminating inequality, promoting GE, and empowering women and girls. On 09 April 2024, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) elected Viet Nam as a member of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) for the 2025-2027 term. From January 2025 till the end of 2027, Viet Nam will take part in coordinating the development

and realization of UN Women's major directions, ensuring that the entity's strategies and activities align with its overarching goals and policies. As a member of the Executive Board, Viet Nam will also be involved in approving plans, operational programs, and decisions related to UN Women's administration, finance, and budget.

In 2025, the global community will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), as well as the 10th anniversary of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, Viet Nam makes this national report to evaluate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from 2019 to 2023.¹ The evaluation will guide Viet Nam in identifying directions and solutions to further promote GE and protect the rights of women and girls in the years ahead.

¹ Information on relevant policies and legislation will be updated until the end of August 2024.

PART II

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION, FROM 2019 TO NOW

1. CONTEXT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION, FROM 2019 TO NOW

1.1. Advantages

During the 2019-2023 period, Viet Nam has made great efforts to overcome challenges and implement the established goals, tasks, and solutions in a well-coordinated and effective manner, achieving significant and comprehensive outcomes across most sectors. The strategic breakthroughs have been paid due attention by the country's leaders, leading to important achievements that have significantly contributed to advancing the national socio-economic development.

Macroeconomic stability has been maintained, inflation has been kept under control², economic growth has shown positive results³ in both of its rate and quality, and the major balances of the economy have been ensured. The development of regional economy, maritime economy, urban areas, and new-format rural areas have seen notable strides as the potential and advantages of each locality and region have been well harnessed.

Vietnamese cultural and human development have seen positive outcomes; social security has been ensured; both the material and spiritual well-being of the people have constantly improved. Significant attention has been given to areas such as ethnic affairs, religious affairs, elderly care, women and children affairs, sports, and information-communication. Essential infrastructure, particularly in impoverished communes and ethnic minority regions, has been enhanced. Viet Nam's Human Development Index (HDI) has consistently improved, positioning the country among those with above-average human development performance worldwide.⁴

In the era of globalization, Viet Nam has increasingly fostered its international integration both in depth and width. Viet Nam has now established diplomatic and economic relations with nearly 200 countries and territories

² Inflation rates have remained within the targets set by the National Assembly while being kept low and stable over recent years. In 2023, Viet Nam's average inflation rate increased by 3.25%, well under the National Assembly's target of 4.5%. Source: General Statistics Office (02 January 2024).

³ In 2023, economic growth rate was estimated at 5.05%, with quarterly increases of 3.41% for Q1, 4.25% for Q2, 5.47% for Q3, and 6.72% in Q4. Source: General Statistics Office (05 January 2024).

⁴ Viet Nam's HDI was constantly improved, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Viet Nam's HDI for 2022 was 0.726, ranked 107 out of 193 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2022, Viet Nam's HDI value changed from 0.492 to 0.726, an improvement of nearly 50%. Source: UNDP, Human Development Report (HDR) 2023-24: "Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world" (March 2024).

worldwide, as well as become members of numerous prestigious international and regional organizations. Thanks to such integration endeavours, Viet Nam has expanded its trade market of goods and services, attracted impressive foreign direct investment, and scored various scientific and technological advancements. The achievements in international integration have contributed to promoting economic development, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of state governance, and maintaining political stability and security. This foundation is conducive to the national efforts towards achieving GE in general and implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in particular.

Viet Nam has consistently and proactively improved its legal system. In that process, human is placed at the heart of policies, considered the goal and the driving force of development, which is foundational to the country's socio-economic development and political, social, and diplomatic activities in its international relations. The responsible localization of laws and commitments based on the international conventions to protect human's rights, to which Viet Nam is a party, is conducive to the development of local laws and policies for GE by competent authorities.

The gender equality commitments made within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) represent a significant evolution from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The specific targets on gender equality are mainstreamed in the existing international commitments and standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. With these commitments, the international community is dedicating financial resources and demonstrating strong political will to achieve GE and ensure that “no one is left behind.”

1.2. Challenges

Since 2019, a number of crises and pandemics have significantly impacted the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Viet Nam is one of the fastest ageing countries in the world. Viet Nam entered the aging phase in 2011 when the elderly population reached 7 percent of the total population.⁵ Between 2019 and 2021, the number of elderly people increased by 1.17 million (from 11.41 million to 12.58 million, equivalent to an increase from 11.86% to 12.80% of the total population). Viet Nam is still in the aging phase,⁶ and by 2036, Viet Nam will become an “aged” society after passing the “aging” period. Elderly women account for 57.82% of the elderly population, outnumbering men across all elderly sub-groups. The older the sub-group, the higher the percentage of women.⁷ Consequently, elderly women are more likely to live alone and suffer from chronic illnesses than men. Population aging also increases the responsibility of caring for elderly family members with acute or

⁵ Viet Nam Population Authority (August 2023)

⁶ General Statistics Office, Population Change and Family Planning Survey 2021.

⁷ General Statistics Office, Population Change and Family Planning Survey 2021.

complex diseases, such as Alzheimer, and in Viet Nam, this caregiving role largely falls to women. In addition to loneliness and illness, older people are also at risk of discrimination, particularly those without pensions and financially dependent.

Climate change has become a global emergency and exacerbated gender gaps. Viet Nam is among the five Asia-Pacific countries that are most heavily impacted by climate change, as approximately 74% of the country's land is dedicated to agricultural purposes and 80% of rural livelihood is dependent on agriculture. Natural disasters have increased in both frequency and intensity, with droughts, rising sea levels, soil salinity, etc. leading to water shortages for domestic use, animal husbandry, and agricultural production in many localities. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by these climate-related challenges (for example impacts on health, less access to natural resources, particularly for vulnerable groups including women).⁸

*Notably, during the 2020-2021 period, the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected all socio-economic sectors, yet exerted differing impacts on men and women.*⁹ It has aggregated gender gaps in various areas, hindering efforts to promote GE, the advancement of women, and the implementation of the goals set forth in the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030.

In the economic sector, including labour and employment, the Report on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Vietnamese Businesses¹⁰ reveals that up to 87.2% of businesses were negatively affected by COVID-19. The pandemic disproportionately impacted small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) owned by women, which suffered greater losses compared to those owned by men. The number of female-owned SMEs that had to partially or fully suspend business doubled that of male-owned SMEs. The COVID-19 Pandemic also affected employment, causing disparities in unemployment rates with women suffering more than men. The proportion of self-employed women and women working for household businesses increased and was twice as high as that of men (19.6% compared to 8.6% for men). This group largely lacks social insurance coverage.

In the healthcare sector, COVID-19 disrupted access to essential health services. Social distancing measures and lockdowns during the pandemic hindered access to medical support, particularly for women and children, with pregnant women, new mothers, and those with young children being the most severely affected. This situation negatively impacts the progress Viet Nam has

⁸ The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Official Letter No. 5559/BTNMT-HTQT dated 15 August 2024.

⁹ Government, *Report No. 315/BC-CP dated 01 September 2021 on the implementation of Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP dated March 3, 2021, of the Government promulgating the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the 2021-2030 period; implementation outcomes of the Strategy's objectives in the first 6 months of 2021 and assessment of impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the Strategy*, Hanoi, p.12-16.

¹⁰ Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the World Bank (WB) Report: https://trungtamwto.vn/file/20758/wb-vcci_bao-cao-covid-19.pdf.

made in reducing maternal mortality over the past decade.¹¹ The lack of access to healthcare and nutrition services posed significant health risks for women and newborns, especially among poor women and migrant workers. The surge in demand for healthcare services during the outbreaks of COVID-19 caused significant challenges for frontline female healthcare workers.

In the education and training sector, social distancing measures significantly impacted the learning of over 21 million children in Viet Nam¹² and approximately 26 percent of households with school-aged children.¹³ Within households, mothers were more likely than fathers to reduce working hours or give up employment to take care of children who were not going to school.¹⁴ Online learning exacerbated educational inequalities, especially between lowland areas and ethnic minority, mountainous regions, due to the increased costs associated with the need for devices and Internet access. School closures directly affected the employment and income of contract teachers in the education system, particularly preschool teachers, most of whom are women.

With regard to family dynamics and gender-based violence, social distancing measures, combined with psychological pressures, health concerns, and economic burdens due to unpaid leave or reduced monthly income, placed significant strain on families. The rising unemployment rate, increased anxiety, financial stress, and scarcity of community resources all contributed to an increase in domestic violence and violence against children. Following the nationwide social distancing in May 2020, the number of calls to helplines and the number of women and children seeking refuge at the Peace House Shelter under the Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU) doubled compared to the same period in 2019.¹⁵

Due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid and large-scale shift from working on site to working from home led to more challenges for women compared to men. The implementation of the “stay-at-home” measure to contain COVID-19 significantly increased the already heavy burden of unpaid care work for women, including overseeing children's study at home, caring for the elderly and sick family members, cooking, and house cleaning. In 2020, Vietnamese women spent on average over 12 more hours per week on household chores than

¹¹ UNFPA, *Technical Document: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Maternal Health and Family Planning in Vietnam*, Hanoi, 2020.

¹² Nhan Dan Online, <https://nhandan.vn/dua-tre-em-vao-vi-tri-trong-tam-trong-ung-pho-voi-dich-covid-19-tai-viet-nam-post456899.html>, 2020 April 2020

¹³ WB, 2020. The sharpest drop in household income was recorded in April 2020. The average income of surveyed households in April 2020 was only about 29.7 percent of the income in December 2019. By May 2020, this figure had increased to 51.1 percent. Compared to December 2019, the average income of surveyed households had decreased by more than 70 percent in April 2020 and 49 percent in May 2020.

¹⁴ WB, WB, *Monitoring COVID-19 Impacts on Households in Vietnam: Results snapshot from a High-Frequency Phone Survey of Households*, 2020.

¹⁵ UNICEF, *Rapid assessment on the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on children and families in Viet Nam*, Hanoi, August 2020.

men.¹⁶ During school closures, women had to devote even more time to childcare and unpaid domestic work, which adversely affected their income-generating activities.¹⁷

2. NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 2019 TO NOW

Since 2019, in Viet Nam many efforts have been made to advance gender equality and the rights of women and girls, and significant achievements have been gained. During the 2019-2020 period, Viet Nam continued to implement the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2011-2020 with specific priorities of promoting GE in the areas of politics, economic development, labor, employment, and gender-based violence. In 2021, after the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2021-2030 was adopted, Viet Nam concentrated resources on implementing various measures to promote GE in those above-mentioned priority areas.

2.1. Strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of policy and legal framework implementation to promote gender equality and enhance the empowerment of women and girls

Viet Nam has been paying extensive efforts to improve its legal framework for GE, develop and promulgate legal documents that embody GE principles, ensure the protection of human rights, prevent discrimination, prevent and combat violence against women and girls. Specifically, legislation ensures equal participation of men and women in state management (2014 Law on Organization of the National Assembly, amended in 2020); provides a more comprehensive approach to GE in the labour sector and guarantees equal rights for men and women in the labour market (2019 Labour Code, 2024 Law on Social Insurance, 2015 Law on Occupational Safety and Health); ensures equal educational opportunities for both genders and supports both genders in completing universal education and choosing fields of study and training; ensures equal business opportunities for both men and women, prioritizes support for women-owned small and medium enterprises and those employing a higher proportion of female workers (2017 Law on Support for Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises), all with the support of sub-law documents guiding the implementation of these laws. Moreover, a number of mechanisms and policies on economic development, labour, employment, and social welfare related to women have been promulgated, contributing to economic development and social protection.

The 2015 Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (amended and supplemented in 2020) marks a remarkable improvement in legislative techniques through the separation of the policy proposal process and the policy legalization process, while also placing higher, more complex, and stricter demands on the subjects of legal initiatives, requiring a wide range of issues to be considered and clarified at different stages throughout the legislative process, with "mainstreaming

¹⁶ ILO, COVID-19 and the labour market in Viet Nam, 2020.

¹⁷ UN Women Asia and the Pacific's Report (2020), The First 100 Days of COVID-19.

gender equality in law-making" being one such requirement. The Law has 18 articles regulating the mainstreaming of gender equality in the drafting and promulgation of legal documents. In particular: (i) Regarding the scope and subjects of gender equality mainstreaming in law-making, the Law stipulates that all documents under the authority of state agencies from central to local levels must ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality in the drafting and promulgation process; (ii) Regarding the contents and forms of gender equality mainstreaming in law-making, it is regulated that such efforts need to be implemented through different subjects participating in various stages of the law-making process; (iii) Regarding the process of gender equality mainstreaming in law-making, it is stipulated that gender equality mainstreaming in the drafting of legal documents must be conducted evenly throughout most stages of the law-making process, both in terms of the policy development process and the policy standardization process and drafting of legal documents; (iv) Regarding the sufficient allocation of resources for the drafting and promulgation of legal documents and gender equality mainstreaming in law-making, it is stipulated that in principle, the State shall ensure necessary fundings for policy planning, and for the drafting, appraisal, inspection, revision, completion and promulgation of legal documents.”

Decree No. 34/2016/ND-CP dated 14 May 2016 detailing a number of articles and measures to implement the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (amended and supplemented by a number of articles under Decree no. 154/2020/ND-CP dated 31 December 2020 and Decree no. 59/2024/ND-CP dated 25 May 2024 of the Government) stipulates the contents and requirements of gender impact assessment in the drafting of legal documents. At the same time, training materials are also developed to guide the preparation of Reports on gender equality mainstreaming in the drafting of legal documents.

Ensuring gender mainstreaming in the development and implementation of socio-economic development plans at different agencies, regions, and localities has been given due attention by the Government, Ministries, and local authorities, and yielded notable results. The Ministry of Planning and Investment has issued a document guiding the development of five-year and annual plans for other Ministries, agencies, and localities, including on gender equality mainstreaming.

The 2015 State Budget Law (amended in 2020) identifies “the tasks of promoting socio-economic development and ensuring national defense, security, external affairs, and gender equality” as one of the criteria for the development of annual state budget estimations.

The 2017 Law on Legal Aid, effective from 01 January 2018, stipulates that all children are eligible for legal aid. In addition, women from poor households, near-poor households, ethnic minorities residing in areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions, victims of domestic violence with financial difficulties, and victims of human trafficking as prescribed by the Law on Prevention and Combat of Human Trafficking with financial difficulties, among others, are also eligible for legal aid.

On 03 March 2021, the Government promulgated Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP approving the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period of 2021-2030. The overarching goal of the Strategy is to “continue to narrow the gender gap, create conditions and opportunities for women and men to participate in and benefit equally from all areas of their social life, and contribute to the sustainable development of the country.” The Strategy includes 6 objectives, and 20 specific targets aimed at further closing the gender gap across various areas, including politics, economic and labor matters, family life, prevention and response to gender-based violence, health, education and training, and information and communication.

In the same period, Viet Nam continues to implement a wide range of programs and projects aimed at advancing gender equality across all areas of the country’s social life, as well as at preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Notably, these include the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2021-2030, the Program on Strengthening the equal participation of women in leadership and management positions at policy-planning levels for 2021-2030; the Scheme on the Management of Sex Imbalance at Birth for 2016-2025, the Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Project for 2021-2025, the Project on Supporting Gender Equality in Ethnic Minority Areas for 2018-2025, the Communication Program on Gender Equality until 2030, the Project on “Introducing contents involving gender and gender equality into training programs for college-level preschool education and university-level teachers for 2024-2030”, the National Program on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control in the new situation until 2025, the Program on ethics and lifestyle education in the family until 2030, the National Program on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor for 2021-2025, with a vision towards 2030, the Program on “Protecting and supporting children to interact safely and creatively online for 2021-2025, the National Action Plan on prevention of child violence and abuse for 2020-2025, the Plan to implement Resolution no. 121/2020/QH14 dated 19 June 2020 on further enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of policies and laws on child abuse prevention and control, and the National Action Program on Women, Peace and Security for 2024-2030. Additionally, several National Target Programs also include GE projects, items, and activities aimed at promoting gender equality, as well as at preventing and responding to gender-based violence, such as the National Target Program on socio-economic development in ethnic minority areas for 2021-2030¹⁸, the National Target Program on poverty reduction for 2021-2025¹⁹, and the National Target Program on new rural development for 2021 -

¹⁸ The overarching goal of the Program is to achieve gender equality and address urgent issues concerning women and children. The Program includes Project 8: To realize gender equality and address urgent issues faced by women and children.

¹⁹ The objectives and content of the Program cover groups relevant to the goal of sustainable poverty reduction, providing support to poor households and labourers from poor families. This includes prioritizing assistance for children, people with disabilities, and women from poor households, near-poor households, and newly escaped poverty households.

2025.²⁰

Efforts to direct and guide the implementation of international commitments related to gender equality are prioritized. Viet Nam continues to implement the National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.²¹ This plan emphasizes the need to create equal opportunities for all individuals and communities in the broader society to thrive, and commits to fulfilling Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, with specific targets and tasks tailored to the country's situation at the time. In 2017, the Prime Minister approved the Action Plan to implement the Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee for 2017-2020²². This plan assigns responsibilities to relevant Ministries, agencies, and localities to address the CEDAW Committee's Recommendations, with specific action lines, requirements, and timelines.

Under the 2006 Gender Equality Law, related legal documents, national target programs, and gender equality activities and mechanisms have been established, implemented, and regularly assessed. Regulations against gender discrimination, measures to promote gender equality in various sectors, and policies addressing the needs of women, girls, and vulnerable groups have been concretized through support measures and guidelines. The National Strategy on Gender Equality, with its objectives and indicators, has provided a solid foundation and framework for the activities of agencies responsible for gender-related equality. These efforts and commitments have been recognized as notable achievements, as they helped establish a robust legal and policy framework that enables agencies, organizations, and entities to implement measures to enhance the role and participation of both men and women in national development. This reflects Viet Nam's ongoing commitment to advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls.

2.2. Raising awareness among leaders of agencies, families, and the society about gender equality has been prioritized and expedited, focusing on local areas and sectors with significant gender inequality

During the 2019-2023 period, the Government focused resources on the communication work on gender equality and prevention and response to gender-based violence, and considered these efforts as crucial means to change the perceptions of organizations and individuals about gender equality. A notable feature of gender equality communication during this period is the increasingly active involvement of the entire political system, agencies, organizations, and businesses on gender equality and prevention and response to gender-based

²⁰ The overarching goal of the Program is to improve the material and spiritual well-being of rural populations while promoting gender equality. Component 8 focuses on enhancing solutions to ensure gender equality and combat gender-based violence; strengthening childcare and protection; and supporting vulnerable individuals in family and social life.

²¹ Issued with Decision no. 622/QĐ-TTg dated 10 May 2017 of the Prime Minister.

²² Issued with Decision no. 668/QĐ-TTg dated 16 May 2017 of the Prime Minister.

violence. This is conducted through a variety of information channels linked to the national digital transformation process, and has brought about positive impacts. Additionally, communication activities have been diversified in terms of formats, with more attention given to the vulnerable groups, increased gender equality education within families, schools, and communities, and efforts to promote the participation of children, men, and boys in achieving gender equality. The annual action month for gender equality and prevention and response to gender-based violence has been effectively and creatively organized, with resources allocated in line with the situation on the ground.

Through scanning, from 03 March 2021 to 04 July 2024, there were a total of 12,250 articles in newspapers and electronic magazines disseminating information about gender equality. At the same time, Viet Nam has encouraged the production of quality media pieces on gender equality, gender equality among people with disabilities and the LGBT community, and women's rights in various fields including those traditionally considered to belong solely to men, such as science, technology, and engineering, to name a few.

2.3. Enhancing women's political participation

Promoting women's participation in leadership and management positions and ensuring gender equality in the political sphere at all levels is a central component of gender equality policies. This includes improved policies and legal frameworks and robust oversight from central and local leadership during their implementation. More and more women are taking on significant roles within the political system and across various socio-economic sectors of economic, establishing their role and stature, and making contributions to the development of their locality and the entire nation.

As of August 2024, Viet Nam has one female Vice President, one female Vice President of the National Assembly, three female Chairwomen out of twelve Chairs of National Assembly committees or equivalent agencies, four female Ministers out of thirty Ministers and holders of equivalent positions. Fourteen out of thirty Ministries, ministerial-level agencies, and government agencies currently have women assuming key leadership positions (*refer to Section IV - Part 3 of the Report*).

2.4. Ensuring gender equality in economic, labor, and employment matters

Viet Nam recognizes that women's participation in economic activities, labor, and employment enhances their status and contributions to the economy and social values of the country. Therefore, when relevant policies and laws are developed and implemented, it is essential to ensure equal opportunities for both men and women in establishing businesses, conducting production and business activities, managing enterprises, accessing information, capital, markets, and labor resources. This also includes reducing gender gaps in employment as well as in retirement age, and ensuring equal rights for female workers in accessing

insurance and healthcare benefits. Gender equality is not an issue solely for female workers.

The labor force participation rate for Vietnamese women in 2023 is 62.9%, which is relatively high compared to the global average (that for Vietnamese men is 75.2%)²³. The proportion of women of working age who have received vocational training has gradually increased from 20.1% to 26.8% between 2015 and 2023²⁴. Additionally, approximately 98% of all enterprises in Viet Nam are small and medium-sized, with 20% being women-owned, that have contributed to vocational training and job creation for millions of female workers²⁵. By 2021, the percentage of female directors/owners of enterprises and cooperatives reached 28.2%²⁶. From 2012 to 2022, the number of women-owned enterprises consistently increased at a rate of at least 2% per year, outpacing the average growth rate of the business sector²⁷. The government has enacted numerous policies and programs to promote women's access to funding and investment, thereby enhancing women's economic empowerment and improving their status within families and the society, contributing to the realization of gender equality (*refer to Section I - Part 3 of the Report*).

2.5. Support models for promoting gender equality and preventing gender-based violence have been gradually enhanced in terms of the quantity and the quality of services for beneficiaries

Alongside the implementation of the gender-based violence prevention and response program for the period 2021-2025, Viet Nam has been developing and maintaining service models that support gender equality and prevent and respond to gender-based violence, which have increasingly enabled citizens to access assistance services. By 2024, Viet Nam has over 6,000 models and facilities providing services for the prevention and response to gender-based violence and domestic violence, with practical support forms that can gradually meet the needs of survivors. Numerous pilot models have been implemented at the local level, such as: Social work centers providing gender equality support services, one-stop service centers for women and girls affected by violence, facilities assisting survivors of gender-based violence, clubs for women at risk of being forced into marriage with foreigners, safe and friendly cities for women and girls, trustworthy addresses - community shelters, and "child-friendly interview rooms"²⁸, among

²³ General Statistics Office, December 2023 and March 2024.

²⁴ General Statistics Office, Viet Nam's labor market situation in 2023, 02 January 2024.

²⁵ Ministry of Planning and Investment, Promoting Business Growth by Removing Barriers: White Paper on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Owned by Women, January 2024.

²⁶ Government, *Report no. 237/BC-CP dated 16 May 2023 on the Results of Implementing National Gender Equality Goals in 2023*, Appendix 01.

²⁷ Ministry of Planning and Investment, Promoting Business Growth by Removing Barriers: White Paper on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Owned by Women, January 2024.

²⁸ This model was established to serve the investigation process and take testimonies from survivors under 18 years old who have been abused or cases involving minors participating in legal proceedings as witnesses, persons with rights and obligations related to the case, and women and children under

others. The operation of these models has raised public awareness on gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence. Notably, the development and operation of support services related to law enforcement, justice, healthcare, and social assistance for women and girls affected by violence have been improved significantly, leading many localities to take greater responsibility in developing and implementing laws and policies, as well as committing to allocating funding for these initiatives (*refer to Section III - Part 3 of the Report*).

2.6. Comprehensive measures to address the impacts of crises and pandemics on the implementation of gender equality

In response to the severe impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government implemented various policies and measures to support affected citizens and businesses. During this process, the Government amended, supplemented, and expanded the beneficiaries of support policies for workers who had to temporarily suspend their labor contracts or take unpaid leave in private and public educational institutions at all levels, from pre-school to high school. The Government also adjusted the conditions for loan policies to pay wages for workers on leave. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government adopted Resolution no. 11/NQ-CP dated 30 January 2022 on the socio-economic recovery and development program, and implemented Resolution no. 43/2022/QH15 of the National Assembly on fiscal and monetary policies to support the Program. On 05 April 2023, the Prime Minister approved the Project on "Improving the quality and effectiveness of legal support for businesses for the period 2021-2030" to provide legal support for small and medium enterprises and vulnerable businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, to address the impacts of climate change, Viet Nam has taken actions and made pledges to integrate gender equality and ensure women's full participation in all steps and actions related to climate change of the country's most prioritized agenda. Transitioning to renewable energy will create opportunities to prevent undesirable climate change and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. This can help mitigate the negative impacts of the global energy crisis on gender equality efforts in Viet Nam.

2.7. International cooperation on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment with practical results

In recent years, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has been one of the most important priorities in Viet Nam's foreign affairs. At regional and international multilateral forums, Viet Nam has made a strong impression as an active, proactive, and leading country on issues related to gender equality, women's rights, and the role of women, which has earned the recognition and appreciation by the international community.

At the United Nations Security Council, Viet Nam consistently promoted the priority of women, peace, and security by chairing the adoption of Resolution

18 years old who have experienced violence and abuse... By 2024, this model has been established in 100% of provinces and centrally-run cities.

1889 on the role of women in post-conflict peacebuilding (in 2009) and organizing the only global-scale international conference on women, peace, and security in 2020 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of this agenda. Viet Nam has also deployed female officers to participate in UN peacekeeping forces (accounting for about 15% of Viet Nam's forces). In bilateral cooperation, promoting gender equality and empowering women have been integrated into foreign affairs activities at all levels, from exchanges and meetings of high-level leaders to networking, experience sharing, and signing and implementation of specific and practical cooperation agreements with partners.

Within the framework of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), issues related to women and gender equality advancement are discussed at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Viet Nam has actively participated in the meetings of the CSW, highlighting its achievements in advancing gender equality and emphasizing the importance of implementing effective measures to fulfil international commitments on gender equality.²⁹

Through international cooperation activities, Viet Nam not only introduces its policies and efforts regarding gender equality and human rights to the global community, but also manages to make the most of additional resources, technical expertise, and experiences to successfully achieve strategic goals related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Viet Nam proposed the initiative and content for the Resolution on “Digital Transformation led by Women and for Women” at the Women Parliamentarians' Conference of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (WAIPA) during the 44th AIPA General Assembly. This resolution proposed by Viet Nam is one of the two resolutions adopted at WAIPA in 2023.

In ASEAN, Viet Nam actively participates in and contributes to initiatives aimed at protecting women's rights and enhancing the role of women within the frameworks of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW). These initiatives include preventing women and children trafficking, empowering women in the digital age, supporting women entrepreneurs, establishing an ASEAN network of women entrepreneurs, and eliminating violence and discrimination. In its role as the ASEAN Chair for 2020, Viet Nam proposed the initiative to organize a special session for ASEAN leaders on women empowerment in the digital era.

Overall assessment of these achievements:

Over the past 30 years of implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Viet Nam's policies, laws, and national strategies on gender equality have contributed to enhancing awareness, responsibility, and actions of

²⁹ In March 2024, for the first time, a senior female leader of Viet Nam - Vice President Vo Thi Anh Xuan attended and spoke at the CSW68 Session.

the State and the society regarding gender equality. These efforts have promoted gender equality in state management and across various aspects of social life, thus helping Viet Nam gain the recognition of the international community as a country that excels in the pursuit of gender equality³⁰. In 2023, Viet Nam's gender equality ranking increased by 15 places compared to that of 2021 and 11 places compared to that of 2022 (from 87th out of 146 countries, then to 83rd, and then to 72nd), with a gender equality progress rate of 71.1%³¹. From 2019 to 2024 alone, Viet Nam has developed and implemented a comprehensive system of policies and laws on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, with more significant results compared to the period of 2015-2019. As a result, Viet Nam's role and status in international cooperation have been significantly improved.

Overall, the awareness within the State and the society regarding gender equality has recorded positive progress, particularly in terms of rights, as evidenced by the increasing participation of women in political, economic, community, and family activities in both urban and rural areas. The implementation of national gender equality goals during the 2021-2030 period has shown clear progress. As of the end of 2023, 11 out of 20 targets have been met or exceeded compared to the goals set for 2025, with 3 out of 20 targets partially achieved in relation to the goals set for 2030, of which 12 targets have witnessed better performance better than in 2022³².

Reasons for such achievements

Gender equality has received increasing attention and instruction by the entire political system. The Government and the Prime Minister have adopted the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2021-2030 and various other programs and projects to promote gender equality, which include specific goals, indicators, tasks, and solutions. After over 17 years of implementation, the provisions of the 2006 Gender Equality Law and related laws have gradually become integrated into the people's daily life, contributing to the promotion of gender equality in state management and across various socio-economic sectors. The organizational structure for the implementation of gender equality work has been established from the central to local levels, and funding for gender equality initiatives has been allocated as required. The Government's international cooperation activities on gender equality at multilateral and bilateral forums have also yielded positive results. In addition to general policies, laws, programs, and projects on gender equality, from 2019 to 2023, Viet Nam gave special priority to several specific areas to enhance and promote the rights of women and girls, such as: political participation and representation, elimination of violence against women and girls,

³⁰ UNDP, Global Human Development Report 2020: "The Next Gender Frontier: Human Development in the Era of Climate and Environment Change", 2021; World Economic Forum (WEF), Global Gender Gap Report 2022; UNWomen, ADB, ILO & Australian Aid, Overview Report on Gender Equality in Vietnam 2021.

³¹ The Global Gender Gap Report 2023 released by the World Economic Forum in June 2023.

³² The Government, *Report no. 237/BC-CP dated 16 May 2024, on the Results of Implementing National Gender Equality Goals in 2023*, Hanoi.

broader access to gender equality perspectives in the fields of economic affairs, labor, and employment, provision of quality education, training, and lifelong learning for women and girls, and efforts to bring about changes with regard to discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes. Thus, Viet Nam has implemented comprehensive policies, laws, programs, and projects on gender equality while also prioritizing specific areas, leading to significant achievements in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in recent years.

3. LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES FROM 2019 TO PRESENT

3.1. Limitations and challenges in the drafting of laws and policies

The Law on Gender Equality was promulgated in 2006. However, to date, due to the development of the country's socio-economic conditions and legal system, a number of provisions of the Law on Gender Equality are no longer suitable for the situation on the ground at present. Some contents have been amended by other legal documents, while a number of newly emerged areas have not been regulated in this Law.

A number of gender impact assessment reports of policies in proposals for law and ordinance development have not met expectations, lacking gender-disaggregated data. The assessment of gender impacts in conjunction with socio-economic impacts has not been made clear, only limited to determining policies which do not uphold gender discrimination and affect the opportunities, conditions, and capacity to exercise and enjoy the rights and benefits of each gender because policies are applied in a comprehensive manner, with policies and regulations being gender-neutral and posing no risk of causing gender inequality.

3.2. Limitations and challenges in the implementation of laws

The implementation of policies and laws continues to face numerous difficulties due to the fact that certain laws and by-laws have not been fully gender mainstreamed or gender-neutral, and that human resources and technical expertise have not been sufficiently allocated for gender equality performance.

In specific areas, there are certain limitations and challenges. The participation rate of women in politics does not reflect their current qualifications and capabilities. Female workers predominantly occupy labor-intensive sectors³³, often with low professional qualifications or in the informal sector. The average income of male workers is 1.14 times higher than that of female workers (8.4 million VND compared to 7.4 million VND)³⁴. The average number of unpaid hours spent by women on household chores and caregiving duties remains significantly higher than that of men (2.3 hours per day, which is 1.8 times more than men)³⁵. The gender imbalance at birth has not decreased, which poses long-

³³ The term "labour-intensive" refers to a process or industry that requires a large workforce to produce goods or services (e.g., textiles, footwear, wood processing).

³⁴ General Statistics Office, Viet Nam Labour Market Situation in 2023, Hanoi, 02 January 2024.

³⁵ Government, *Report No. 237/BC-CP dated 16 May 2023 on the Results of Implementing National Gender Equality Goals in 2023*, Appendix 01.

term impacts on Viet Nam's population structure and may lead to social and demographic consequences, contributing to gender inequality. Gender-based violence, domestic violence, and trafficking in persons still persist.

Gender stereotypes regarding the roles and capabilities of women in work, career development, and leadership remain barriers for women in seeking better-paying jobs. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is also presenting challenges for women concerning their professional and technical skills, the risk of job loss, and impacts on family life, career development opportunities, and gender inequality in the society. The female labor force in Viet Nam is primarily concentrated in the informal sector, therefore limiting their access to comprehensive social protection, including training opportunities, financial resources, income, and social welfare programs.

The use of gender-disaggregated data remains inadequate. Although there is primary data available, published gender-disaggregated statistics are still limited. There is a shortage of personnel for gender statistics, both in quantity and in professional expertise.

The development of science, technology, and digital transformation serves as a driver for socio-economic development in general and contributes to promoting gender equality. However, it also causes negative impacts, increasing the gender gap in certain fields and giving rise to new forms of gender-based violence through the use of technology.

Causes of limitations and challenges

A legal framework to support the enforcement of the Gender Equality Law has not fully synchronized, which creates barriers for agencies, organizations, and individuals to fulfill their roles, tasks, and powers.

Gender bias, patriarchal attitudes, and gender stereotypes that dictate the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and the society, along with a preference for sons over daughters, still exist, especially in rural areas. Harmful practices and child marriages still persist in certain regions, particularly among ethnic minority communities.

There is a lack of stability in the team of officials in charge of state management of gender equality at all levels, especially at the grassroots level. The budget for implementing gender equality work is still insufficient to meet practical needs. Statistics, information, and reports on gender equality have not effectively supported state management of gender equality at all levels.

PART III:
PROGRESS IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE
BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION
FROM 2019 TO PRESENT*

**This section will update the progress in implementing key areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Viet Nam from 2019 to 2023 (but information on relevant policies and laws is updated up to August 2024)*

1. INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK

1.1. Policies, laws and implemented activities

Viet Nam has always given priority to promoting gender equality and enhancing the role and status of women in the field of labour and employment. From 2019 to present, a number of legal documents have been enacted and policies, support models have been implemented aimed at ensuring female workers' legitimate rights and interests and creating quality employment for the entire society (Labour Code 2019 and related legal documents).³⁶ The Labour Code 2019 includes a number of new provisions to ensure gender equality, creating a friendly, healthy and supportive working environment for workers (both male and female), ensuring work – life balance, and considering gender equality an issue of both men and women. The Code has adjusted all involved parties, including the State, female workers, male workers, and employers in ensuring gender equality in labour relations. This is to concretize provisions of the 2013 Constitution on gender equality, ensuring civil rights and human rights in the field of labour, reflecting a new approach and mindset on gender equality, which is aligned with the requirements, characteristics, and qualifications of workers, creating a fundamental legal framework to make optimal use of human resource potentials during the "golden population structure" period, making an important contribution to socio-economic development, ensuring social protection and improving people's living standards. Besides, documents guiding the implementation of the Labour Code 2019 have also been adopted and taken effective since 2021 to ensure the consistency and feasibility of the labour law system and contribute to promoting gender equality and narrowing the gender gap in the field of labour, employment, and ensuring rights of female and male workers.

³⁶ Decree No. 145/2020/ND-CP dated December 14, 2020 of the Government detailing and guiding the implementation of a number of articles of the Labour Code on working conditions and labour relations; Decree No. 74/2019/ND-CP dated September 23, 2019 of the Government amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. [61/2015/ND-CP](#) dated July 9, 2015 of the Government on policies to support job creation and the National Employment Fund...

Viet Nam has also adopted regulations to narrow the retirement age gap between men and women. The Labour Code 2019 stipulates that retirement ages of employees in normal working conditions shall be gradually increased until reaching full 62 for men in 2028 and full 60 for women in 2035. Accordingly, the retirement ages of employees in normal working conditions was 60 years 03 months for men and 55 years 04 months for women in 2021 and have been increased by 03 months for men and 04 months for women every year since then. Decree No. 50/2022/ND-CP dated August 2, 2022 by the Government allows the application of higher retirement age for civil servants with high professional and technical qualifications in public non-business units and civil servants working in some specific public service fields. Civil servants may retire at an age higher than the prescribed retirement age but not more than 5 years (60 months), starting from the date the civil servant reaches his/ her retirement age. Decree No. 83/2022/ND-CP dated October 18, 2022 by the Government provides for retirement at a higher age for officials and civil servants holding leadership and management positions has added a significant number of female leadership positions of which the retirement age is extended, and clearly stipulates the principle of retirement at a higher age which is to ensure objectivity, fairness, transparency, and compliance.

Regarding the rights of workers, the Labour Code 2019 expands the scope of beneficiaries of maternity leave; it includes those entitled to benefits during the care of sick children, maternity, and adoption of contraceptive measures.³⁷ During the process of developing the Social Insurance Law 2024, which was passed by the 15th National Assembly during its 7th session in June 2024,³⁸ a gender impact assessment was conducted and gender mainstreaming in law-making ensured as required, therefore, progressive policies aimed at minimizing gender inequality in participating in and benefiting from social insurance were developed. According to this law, the minimum number of social insurance contributions to receive pension is 15 years. The law also adds a provision that Vietnamese citizens are entitled to social retirement benefits when they reach 75 years of age or older and are not receiving a monthly pension or social insurance allowance, except in certain cases specified by the Government; for those aged from 70 to under 75 living in poor and near-poor households, social retirement benefits are available (to establish a multi-tiered social insurance system); and there is also a provision on workers who are not eligible for pension and are not old enough to receive social retirement benefits. Additionally, the law introduces maternity benefits within the voluntary social insurance scheme and sets regulations to enhance benefits, making it more attractive to encourage workers to preserve their contribution period to receive pensions rather than opting for a one-time social insurance payment.

³⁷ Article 139 of the Labour Code 2019.

³⁸ This law will take effect from July 1, 2025.

In the economic sector, to specify the Law on Support for Small and Medium Enterprises 2017, Decree No. 80/2021/ND-CP dated August 26, 2021 by the Government details and guides the implementation of certain provisions of this law, introducing new policies with budget support rates and levels for women-led SMEs and those employing a higher proportion of female workers compared to regular SMEs. This includes support for consulting and training to enhance human resources for these enterprises.³⁹ Additionally, the E-learning Training System for SMEs, developed and operated by the Ministry of Planning and Investment since 2018, offers online courses specifically tailored for women-owned enterprises, covering diverse topics relevant to female entrepreneurs, such as leadership skills in the new era, networking strategies, and decision-making skills for female leaders. Furthermore, the National Employment Fund continues to play a crucial role in creating job opportunities for workers, particularly rural women, focusing on activities that support the sending of workers overseas for work under contracts and vocational training. The Project to Support Women's Entrepreneurship 2017-2025⁴⁰ aims to raise women's awareness of State policies and laws on start-ups, promoting the realization of business ideas, and contributing to the national goals of enterprise development. The project sets a target to have 100,000 newly established women-owned enterprises receiving consultation and support by 2025. During its implementation, the Viet Nam Women's Union has organized various activities, including training to provide knowledge and start-up skills for women; organizing fairs for networking and trade promotion for women-owned businesses; and encouraging women to develop business ideas and engage in successful production and business initiatives, thereby fostering their entrepreneurial passion and supporting the establishment of women-led enterprises and farms. The National Strategy on Gender Equality, 2021-2030 also sets a target to achieve at least 27% female directors/entrepreneurs, cooperatives by 2025 and 30% by 2030.

Viet Nam has also enacted numerous policies and laws to ensure women's rights in the land sector and access to credit. Regarding land-related rights, this includes the right to access land legally (equal to men regarding common property through the registration of both husband and wife in the land use right certificate; ensuring women's equality when participating in mortgage, donation, lease, conversion, and transfer transactions of land use rights); equal rights in fulfilling women's rights and obligations when participating in land law relationships; protecting women's rights in the land sector through court adjudication (Constitution 2013, Land Law 2013, Land Law 2024, Marriage and Family Law 2014, Civil Procedure Code 2015). The Land Law 2024 prohibits gender discrimination in the management and use of land (Clause 11, Article 11).

³⁹ In addition, the Minister of Planning and Investment issued Circular No. 06/2022/TT-BKHDT dated May 10, 2022 guiding a number of articles of Decree No. 80/2021/ND-CP, accordingly, the provision "agencies and organizations supporting SMEs shall prioritize funding to support SMEs owned by women and SMEs employing a significant number of female workers" has been supplemented to increase opportunities to access state support policies for this target group.

⁴⁰ Decision No. 939/QĐ-TTg dated June 30, 2017, by the Prime Minister.

Regarding women's access to credit, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 149/QĐ-TTg dated January 22, 2020, approving the National Financial Inclusion Strategy until 2025, with a vision to 2030. Additionally, Circular No. 04/2015/TT-NHNN dated March 31, 2015, by the Governor of the State Bank of Viet Nam regulating people's credit funds has been amended and supplemented several times (in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2023).⁴¹ On January 18, 2024, the National Assembly approved the new Law on Credit Institutions, which amends and supplements regulations on credit issuance to facilitate credit institutions' autonomy in their credit activities and their agreements with customers regarding loan management and repayment. The law also allows for banking activities, including credit issuance, to be conducted electronically, thus promoting digital transformation in banking operations. Viet Nam has implemented various regulations and measures to enhance cashless transactions, which contributes to increasing financial access for women, especially those in mountainous, remote, and rural areas.

In the field of sending Vietnamese workers to work abroad under contract, in 2023, the Government issued Resolution No. 225/NQ-CP on the Plan to implement Directive No. 20-CT/TW dated December 12, 2022 of the Party Central Committee's Secretariat on strengthening the Party's leadership over the work of sending Vietnamese workers to work abroad in the new context; Decision No. 16/2023/QĐ-TTg dated June 1, 2023 of the Prime Minister on implementing support for loans to ensure a guarantee at the Viet Nam Social Policy Bank for workers belonging to policy beneficiaries working in South Korea under the EPS program of South Korea. On September 29, 2023, the Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs issued Circular No. 09/2023/TT-BLĐTBXH on economic and technical norms for foreign language training for Vietnamese workers working abroad under contract... In addition, Decision No. 40/2021/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister which took effective from February 21, 2022 regulates that Vietnamese workers working abroad under contract will participate in the Overseas Employment Support Fund. These policies and regulations have contributed to creating favorable conditions for workers in general and women in particular when working abroad.

To improve women's access to modern technologies, Viet Nam has implemented series of initiatives to enhance the application of digital technology in small and micro enterprises owned by women; supporting women to improve their skills, applying information technology, accessing digital government,

⁴¹ In addition, the Governor of the State Bank also issued Circular No. 01/2020/TT-NHNN dated March 13, 2020 and amended and supplemented circulars to implement the policy of restructuring debt repayment terms, exempting and reducing interest and fees, and maintaining debt groups to support customers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; Circular No. 02/2023/TT-NHNN dated April 23, 2023 implementing debt repayment term restructuring and maintaining debt groups to support customers facing difficulties in production and business activities and difficulties in repaying loans to serve their living and consumption needs, while organizing the implementation of credit policies within the framework of the Socio-Economic Recovery and Development Program...

digital economy, digital society and improving knowledge and skills in applying information technology, as well as promoting digital transformation for female officials, association members and women in localities...

In recent years, Viet Nam has also adopted policies and actions to recognize, minimize and/or redistribute unpaid housework and care work. Decision No. 622/QĐ-TTg dated May 10, 2017 of the Prime Minister on approving the National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, at target 5.4, has identified ensuring equal participation in housework and family care; recognizing unpaid housework and care work; strengthening public services, social assistance infrastructure and policies, family support services, and child care. Circular No. 10/2019/TT-BKHĐT dated July 30, 2019 of the Minister of Planning and Investment regulates the Set of National Gender Development Statistical Indicators, which specifies statistical indicators for example the average number of hours spent on unpaid housework and family care; the average number of hours spent on paid work and unpaid work. The National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030 sets the target to reduce the average number of hours that women spend on unpaid housework and family care to 1.7 times that of men by 2025 and 1.4 times by 2030. Additionally, in the division of assets between spouses in cases of divorce, the spouse who stays at home to care for children and the family without work outside is considered as having income equivalent to that of the spouse who works outside, and the spouse who has made a greater contribution will be allocated more assets.⁴²

With the aim to continuously improve the lives and employment of female workers in industrial zones, a number of policies and programs have been implemented and mobilized the participation of enterprises and stakeholders. Decree No. 105/2020/NĐ-CP dated September 8, 2020 of the Government regulates policies to provide assistance for preschool children who are children of workers in industrial parks. Accordingly, children studying at private and non-public preschool which have been licensed by the competent authority to establish and operate in accordance with regulations, whose father or mother or guardian

⁴² Point b, Clause 4, Article 7 of Joint Circular No. 01/2016/TTLT-TANDTC-VKSNDTC-BTP announced by the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court, the Director of the Supreme People's Procuracy, and the Minister of Justice on January 6, 2016, stipulates that in cases where the statutory property regime of spouses is applied to divide the property of spouses upon divorce, the common property of the spouses is, in principle, divided equally. However, the following factors must be considered to determine the proportion of property that each spouse receives: *"The contributions of the wife and husband to the establishment, maintenance, and development of the common property"* includes contributions of separate property, income, household work, and labour of both spouses in creating, maintaining, and developing the common property. A wife or husband who stays at home to care for children and the family without working is considered to have labour equivalent to the income of the working spouse. The party with greater contributions will receive a larger share.

working at an industrial parks under a labour contract with the enterprise, are entitled to a minimum support of VND 160,000 per child per month.⁴³

In addition to implementing these policies, there are also models providing support services on gender equality for workers for example: the "Female Workers' Club" model in residential areas near industrial parks and export processing zones led by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and local agencies are guided to pilot the implementation nationwide;⁴⁴ the family service model and the "When mom and dad are away" club model led by the Viet Nam Women's Union... Furthermore, the communication campaign to promote public awareness about gender equality in the roles and abilities of men and women in family care and economic development; models for example "Responsible father"⁴⁵ "Exemplary mother, loving hands of father"⁴⁶ has been implemented in localities.

During the period affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government implemented 12 policies to support workers and employers facing difficulties due to the pandemic (Resolution No. 68/NQ-CP dated July 1, 2021, on some policies to support workers and employers facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic). *In the post – pandemic recovery period*, the Government issued Resolution No. 11/NQ-CP dated January 30, 2022, on the Program for Economic and Social Recovery and Development and implemented Resolution No. 43/2022/QH15 of the National Assembly on fiscal and monetary policies to support the Program and Resolution No. 6/NQ-CP dated January 10, 2023, on developing a flexible, modern, efficient, sustainable, and integrated labour market to quickly recover the socio-economic situation.

1.2. Achievements gained

The number of employed workers in 2023 recorded an increase in both urban and rural areas, as well as among both men and women. In urban areas, the number of employed workers is 19.0 million, an increase of 1.9% (equivalent to 364,400 people), and in rural areas the number of employed workers is 32.2 million, an increase of 1.0% (equivalent to 318,000 people).⁴⁷ The labour force participation rate of Vietnamese women in 2023 was 62.9%, compared to 75.2% for men).⁴⁸ Viet Nam is one of the countries with a high rate of female

⁴³ The specific support level is determined by the People's Council of the province/city under central authority. The support duration is calculated based on the actual number of months of study, but not exceeding 9 months per academic year.

⁴⁴ Decision No. 565/QĐ-TTg dated April 25, 2017, of the Prime Minister approving the Target Program for Developing the Social Assistance System for the period 2016-2020; Official Letter No. 3989/LĐTBXH-BĐG dated September 21, 2018, of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs regarding the pilot implementation of the "Female Workers' Club" model in 2018.

⁴⁵ Implemented by the Central Committee of the Vietnam Farmers' Union in the provinces and centrally-run cities: Bac Giang, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Bac Ninh, Da Nang, Lam Dong.

⁴⁶ Efforts to enhance men's participation in sharing household responsibilities, encouraging and motivating men to participate in prenatal classes, caregiving, and child-rearing...

⁴⁷ General Statistics Office, January 2024.

⁴⁸ General Statistics Office, December 2023 and March 2024.

participation in the labour force worldwide. The proportion of female workers who have received vocational training has gradually increased from 20.1% in 2015 to 26.8% in 2023.⁴⁹

Approximately 98% of Vietnamese enterprises are small and medium-sized, and 20% of which are owned by women, contributing to vocational training and job creation for millions of female workers.⁵⁰ By 2021, the percentage of female directors/owners of enterprises and cooperatives reached 28.2%.⁵¹ From 2012 to 2022, the number of women-owned enterprises consistently increased at a rate of at least 2% per year, higher than the average growth rate of the business sector.⁵²

According to the MasterCard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE) published in 2020, Viet Nam ranks 23rd out of 58 countries evaluated for women's business ownership rates. In Viet Nam, women own 26.5% of businesses, which is relatively high compared to some countries in the ASEAN region. The industries that businesses owned by women are most concentrated in the wholesale and retail services, accounting for about 75%, followed by the processing and manufacturing industry at 14.6%, and scientific and technological industry at 7.3%.⁵³

The Government has made significant efforts to develop and improve infrastructure and non-cash payment services, leading to an increase in access to non-cash financial services.⁵⁴ More and more people, especially women, in remote and mountainous areas, have been able to access financial sources thanks to these services.

As of June 30, 2024,⁵⁵ the total outstanding balance of policy credit programs at the Viet Nam Bank for Social Policies reached VND 350.741 trillion, an increase of 3.8% compared to 2023, with more than 6.888 million borrowers. The total number of female borrowers under these credit programs at the Viet Nam Bank for Social Policies is 4.7 million, representing 68% of all active borrowers, with an outstanding balance of 165.262 trillion VND, accounting for 47% of the total outstanding balance. The Viet Nam Women's Union has implemented activities to enhance women's economic empowerment, focusing on solutions to improve access to preferential credit for various groups of women.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ General Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook 2023, Statistical Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 181.

⁵⁰ Ministry of Planning and Investment, Promoting Business Growth by Removing Barriers: White Paper on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Owned by Women, January 2024.

⁵¹ Government, *Report No. 237/BC-CP dated May 16, 2023 on the Results of Implementing National Gender Equality Goals in 2023*, Appendix 01.

⁵² Ministry of Planning and Investment, Promoting Business Growth by Removing Barriers: White Paper on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Owned by Women, January 2024.

⁵³ Ministry of Planning and Investment, May 2024.

⁵⁴ Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper, <https://nhandan.vn/thanh-toan-khong-dung-tien-mat-tang-truong-an-tuong-post801417.html>, March 25, 2024.

⁵⁵ Official Letter No. 6344/NHNN-TCCB dated July 31, 2024 of the State Bank.

⁵⁶ Official Letter No. 3647/DCT-QT dated July 1, 2024 of the Presidium, Vietnam Women's Union.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the entrusted social policy credit implementation through the effective implementation of Decree No. 78/2002/ND-CP by the Government on credit for the poor and other policy beneficiaries, and Directive No. 40-CT/TW dated November 22, 2014, by the Party Central Committee on strengthening the Party's leadership over social policy credit. As of June 2024, the outstanding balance of entrusted credit through the Viet Nam Women's Union has reached over VND 132 trillion, with nearly 2.6 million borrowing households, mostly women, through nearly 20 loan programs, focusing on sources of credit to serve production, business needs to support livelihoods and create employment, accounting for over 73%, and credit to meet daily living and consumption, accounting for 27%.

To enhance credit for agricultural and rural development under Decree No. 55/2015/ND-CP dated June 9, 2015, by the Government on credit policies for agricultural and rural development, the Viet Nam Women's Union has signed a cooperation agreement with the Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development to continue promoting the development of borrowing groups in various regions. This aims to provide opportunities for women to access preferential credit for agricultural and rural development. As of June 30, 2024, the outstanding balance is over VND 31 trillion for more than 206,000 borrowing households, with a non-performing loan rate of 0.48%.

Upgrading and developing microfinance organisations and programs operating professionally, safely, effectively, and sustainably in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, creating favorable opportunities for women to easily access credit at local levels. By December 31, 2023, 51 out of 63 provinces/cities had microfinance programs in operation. By June 30, 2024, the total outstanding loan balance of loans from social funds and microfinance programs reached over VND 1.752 trillion, with nearly 155,000 customers and total savings exceeding VND 926 billion. Tinh Thuong One-member Limited Liability Microfinance Institution (TYM) focuses on applying information technology, diversifying financial and non-financial products, meeting the needs of various groups of women, including start-up groups, with over VND 2.3 trillion for 116,000 women borrowing in the first half of 2024 and a outstanding balance of credit was over VND 2.5 trillion. The employment creation fund disbursed nearly VND 27 billion, with an outstanding balance of employment creation loans and investment capital of nearly VND 116 billion for about 2,500 customers.

Diversifying credit sources to support women to start up their businesses. Accordingly, the Women's Union at all levels has signed cooperation programs with banks such as the Fortune Viet Nam Joint Stock Commercial Bank (LPBank) and Southeast Asia Commercial Joint Stock Bank (SeABank), with LPBank's outstanding balance of over VND 760 billion, helping to increase opportunities for women to access and use financial services that meet their needs (micro insurance, start-up credit, business development credit, etc.)

Some results of supporting small and medium enterprises owned by women:⁵⁷ In 2023, the Ministry of Planning and Investment launched a programme to train 28 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing and processing sectors owned by women and SMEs employing a large number of female workers nationwide on digital transformation, with the aim of raising awareness and improving human resource quality for SMEs on digital transformation. In 2024, the Ministry of Planning and Investment collaborated with the Ministry of Finance to continue allocating funds to ministries and localities to implement business support programs in accordance with the law on Support for SMEs, with digital transformation support as one of the key topic. From 2021 to 2023, in addition to the state budget, the Ministry of Planning and Investment actively mobilized international resources to support the developing and implementing digital transformation roadmaps for nearly 100 SMEs, of which 44% are SMEs owned by women and SMEs employing a large number of female workers. So far, about 28% of SMEs owned by women have implemented one or more forms of "digital transformation", and less than half of them have a "digital transformation plan". This digital transformation is taking place most commonly in medium-sized SMEs owned by women and seems to be evenly distributed across all industries. Particularly, nearly 9,000 SMEs owned by women are now developing e-commerce models or online businesses.

In recent years, emphasis has been placed on vocational training and job creation for female workers, especially in rural areas. Vocational training has recorded significant reforms in both training and curriculum methods towards socialization and cooperation to enhance quality and meet social needs.

From 2019 to the present, approximately 35-40% out of over 100,000 Vietnamese workers going abroad for work under contract each year are female workers (in 2023, the total number of Vietnamese workers going abroad was 159,986 with 55,804 females, accounting for nearly 35%⁵⁸). This has contributed to job creation, income increase, and sustainable poverty reduction; while also providing female workers with opportunities to learn, integrate into the society, and develop industrial work habits and discipline, thereby enhancing the quality of the female workforce. Recently, both domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI) enterprises have shown increasing interest in the lives of their employees by offering various welfare benefits, ensuring favourable conditions for their work and life. The business community has actively participa gender equality activities across the country. Results of gender equality performance in recent years have been positive and been recognized by the international community.⁵⁹ 2024 marks the 6th time that Viet Nam has participated in the “Ring the Bell for Gender

⁵⁷ Ministry of Planning and Investment, May 2024.

⁵⁸ Department of Overseas Labour (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs), January 2024.

⁵⁹ Evaluation information at the Workshop to summarize and evaluate communication work in 2023 and develop a Plan to implement the Month of Action for Gender Equality and Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in 2024, organized by UN Women in Viet Nam and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs in May 2024.

Equality”⁶⁰ event which aims to highlight the crucial role of the private sector in promoting gender equality and enhancing women's economic empowerment, towards sustainable business and social development. A number of policies and solutions have been implemented to support post COVID-19 recovery (in accordance with Resolution No. 43/2022/QH15 dated January 11, 2022, of the National Assembly on fiscal and monetary policies to support the Recovery and Socio-Economic Development Programme) to ensure feasibility, timeliness, and effectiveness; for example credit policies from the Social Policy Bank, a 2% reduction in value-added tax, and tax exemptions/extensions... these have positively impacted and helped people and businesses reduce costs, maintain cash flow, overcome difficulties, and sustain and recover production and business.

1.3. Challenges and difficulties

Viet Nam still faces challenges in gender equality in the economics, labour, and employment sectors. The percentage of female labour force in the working age group who have received vocational training has gradually increased from 20.1% to 26.8% during the period from 2015 to 2023, but still lags behind that of men (from 23.6% to 31.8%).⁶¹

Despite regulations on wages and salaries ensuring gender equality, the average salary of female workers remains lower than that of male workers. Additionally, the adjustment to narrow the retirement age gap is still underway according to the roadmap, resulting in ongoing differences in retirement age between men and women under current regulations.

Social norms regarding gender and gender bias expectations have been a long-standing burden, affecting not only women's confidence but also their entrepreneurial decisions. When deciding to start a business, there are some cases that women face discrimination and unfair judgments from the society due to gender biases. Sometimes, women's achievements and efforts in business are not fully and comprehensively recognized.

Due to socio-cultural barriers, women-owned enterprises in Viet Nam, similar to those in other developing countries, are limited in their growth scale, with the majority being small and medium-sized enterprises or household businesses in the informal economy. Their operational scope is often concentrated in labour-intensive sectors that use low technology, resulting in low profits and poor resilience against economic fluctuations.⁶²

⁶⁰ This is an initiative of UN Women, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative (SSE), the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

⁶¹ General Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook 2023, Statistical Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 181.

⁶² Economics and Forecast Magazine (Institute of Development Strategy, Ministry of Planning and Investment), January 2024.

The informal economy, which is relatively large in Viet Nam, plays an important role in ensuring access to income opportunities for both women and men, contributing to high economic activity levels and low unemployment rates. However, informal workers are at risk of facing poverty and occupational problems. In 2023, the number of informal workers reached 33.3 million, with the preliminary rate of informal employment at 64.9% (the rate for men is 49.7% and for women is 74.3%).⁶³ Accordingly, women make up the majority of the household workers. The average number of unpaid hours spent by women on domestic and care work was still higher than that of men.

Ensuring women's rights to using land and ownership of properties linked to the land still encounters difficulties due to administrative procedures and costs associated with updating certificates to include both husband and wife's names. This issue arises in cases where certificates previously issued in the husband's name, while both spouses had joint use rights.

Cybersecurity imposes both opportunities and challenges for women in accessing comprehensive financial services. On one hand, it helps women to access secure information about credit sources and provides information about financial scams to help them understand and avoid such risks. On the other hand, women are also a group that is more vulnerable to scams through technology, especially those with limited access to information (for example those in ethnic minority or remote areas) ...

Factors affecting gender equality in the economic and labour sectors include the situation of women without formal training who lose their jobs due to changes in production technology and automation. Automation increases production efficiency but also means that some jobs typically performed by women may decline or become unnecessary. Gender issues in accessing and participating in new professions emerge in the context of the increasing number of new economic models, such as the sharing economy, green economy, and circular economy. Gender issues in the new normal context after COVID-19, such as the trend of working from home and remotely, also pose challenges. These issues require early action to be able to use new technologies to narrow the gender gap.

2. POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

2.1. Laws, policies and activities implemented

In 2022, the Prime Minister adopted the National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction, 2021-2025 to ensure a minimum living standard and access to basic social services for the people. The overall objective of this program is to achieve multidimensional, inclusive, and sustainable poverty reduction, preventing reimpoverishment and newly-emerged poverty; supporting

⁶³ General Statistics Office, Viet Nam's labour market situation in 2023, Hanoi, January 2, 2024; General Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook 2023, Statistical Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 175.

the poor and impoverished households to rise above the minimum living standard, to access basic social services according to the national multidimensional poverty standards, and to improve their quality of life; and assisting poor districts and specially disadvantaged communes in the coastal and island regions to escape from poverty and extreme hardship. Among them, women from poor, near-poor and newly escaped poverty households are one of the focus groups of the program.

Viet Nam's social assistance policies are continuously supplemented and revised to align with the country's economic development conditions and gradually approach the global trends of social assistance. Social assistance policies are designed to cover most target groups throughout their lifespan, from early childhood to old age, aiming to prevent and mitigate various risks that people may face throughout their life. These policies provide diverse support to meet the basic needs of beneficiaries regarding income, nourishment, education, healthcare, rehabilitation, career guidance, and vocational training, to better ensure rights of the beneficiaries. These include: monthly cash allowances for individuals and households, support for health insurance (HI), tuition exemptions or reductions for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (poor and ethnic minorities); support for housing, access to clean water, and information for the poor, rural communities, ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged areas. Social assistance policies have created a comprehensive and interconnected social safety net, covering different groups of the society, including women and girls. These social assistance policies have generally reflected regional and local characteristics (such as extremely difficult regions, border areas, islands, remote and isolated areas) for example: policies and programs to support high school students in these regions; support poor households (HI, production, electricity costs), and support ethnic minorities (vocational training for ethnic minority students). Notable policies and activities implemented from 2019 to 2024 include: Decree No. 20/2021/ND-CP dated March 15, 2021 by the Government on social assistance policies for vulnerable individuals (later amended and replaced by Decree No. 76/2024/ND-CP dated July 1, 2024); Decision No. 1190/QĐ-TTg dated August 5, 2020, of the Prime Minister approving the Project on Assisting Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030; Decree No. 75/2024/ND-CP dated June 30, 2023 of the Government on adjusting pensions, social insurance allowance, and monthly allowances⁶⁴, Decree No. 110/2024/ND-CP dated August 30, 2024 of the Government regulating social work...

*In 2023, the Master Plan on Social Assistance Network 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050, was approved by the Prime Minister.*⁶⁵ This plan has created a legal framework on social protection, meeting the needs of socio-economic development of the country and each locality at different stages, reflecting Viet

⁶⁴ This Decree replaces Decree No. 42/2023/ND-CP dated June 29, 2023 by the Government, which adjusts pensions, social insurance allowance, and monthly allowances. Previously, Decree No. 42/2023/ND-CP was adopted to replace Decree No. 108/2021/ND-CP dated December 7, 2021 by the Government, which adjusted pensions, social insurance allowance, and monthly allowances.

⁶⁵ Decision No. 966/QĐ-TTg dated August 17, 2023, of the Prime Minister.

Nam's commitment to continue expanding the target groups, improving their living standards, and aiming to cover all vulnerable groups in the society, Social assistance places human beings at the centre, ensuring the principle of transparency, timeliness, effectiveness, and user-friendliness in access.

Viet Nam has enacted and implemented the Law on Disability and relevant legal documents related to people with disabilities, with the principle of non-discrimination and ensuring the rights of women and girls with disabilities. Recently, MOLISA has collaborated with the Viet Nam Women's Union on a work plan to support women with disabilities to implement the Law on Disability and the programs and plans approved by the Prime Minister. Notably, the Program to Support People with Disabilities 2021-2030 has been adopted, focusing on key activities including: healthcare, education, vocational training, job creation and livelihood, disease prevention and disaster mitigation; access to infrastructure facilities; access to and participation in transportation; access to and use of information and communication technology; legal aid; support in cultural, sports, and tourism activities; assistance for women with disabilities; independent living and community integration; improving awareness, care and support capabilities, and monitoring and evaluation.

Legal aid is one of the key areas which has been at the centre of attention of the Party, State, and society. Viet Nam enacted the Law on Legal Aid in 2006, amended in 2017. According to the 2017 Law on Legal Aid, there are fourteen groups of beneficiaries entitled to free legal aid from the State, including women and children (these groups include: national devotees; people from poor households; children; ethnic minorities residing in areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions; individuals accused of crimes who are from 16 and under 18 years old; individuals accused of crimes from near-poor households; certain groups with financial difficulties). Additionally, other legal documents also include provisions related to legal aid, such as the Criminal Procedure Code 2015 (amended in 2021), the Law on Administrative Procedure 2015, and the Civil Procedure Code 2015. Since 2021, the legal aid institution has been continuously accomplished, of which, for the first time, a Party Resolution assigned tasks and proposed solutions for legal aid work which is to enhance its role, professionalism, quality and to develop its network, modernizing the legal aid system.⁶⁶ The Ministry of Justice has come up with criteria for successful participation in legal proceedings and regulated legal aid in online trials.⁶⁷ In 2021 and 2022, legal aid provisions were integrated into all national target programs

⁶⁶ Resolution No. 27-NQ/TW dated November 9, 2022 of the 6th Conference of the 13th Party Central Committee on continuing to develop and accomplish the socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam in the new period.

⁶⁷ Decision No. 1179/QĐ-BTP dated May 16, 2022 of the Minister of Justice on promulgating the Criteria for determining successful legal aid cases participating in litigation; Joint Circular No. 05/2021/TTLT-TANDTC-VKSNDTC-BCA-BQP-BTP dated December 15, 2021 of the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court, the Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme People's Procuracy, the Minister of Public Security, the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Justice detailing and guiding the implementation of organizing online court sessions.

for sustainable poverty reduction (2021-2025), new rural development (2021-2025), and socio-economic development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas (2021-2025), reflecting its positive role in social protection and socio-economic development.⁶⁸

Viet Nam has recently enacted policies aimed at improving the health of women and girls, for example universal health insurance (UHI), basic healthcare, reproductive and sexual healthcare. Aiming for universal health insurance coverage, the Prime Minister has issued Decision No. 546/QĐ-TTg dated April 29, 2022, assigning targets of UHI coverage for 2022-2025: 92.6% for 2022, 93.2% for 2023, 94.1% for 2024, and 95.15% for 2025. This includes focusing on supporting individuals from near-poor, multi-dimensionally poor households that are not covered under point a, clause 9, Article 3 of Decree No. 146/2018/ND-CP dated October 17, 2018 by the Government which details and guides the implementation of certain provisions of the Law on Health Insurance, ensuring that 100% of these individuals participate in HI; supporting individuals from households engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishery, and salt production with average living standards; and students to increase their participation in HI...

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in early 2020 and rapidly became a global outbreak. In this context, *Viet Nam promptly enacted 4 major policy packages during 2020-2022 to support people, workers, and businesses affected by the pandemic, with women and children identified as priority groups and receiving higher levels of support.* Resolution No. 68/NQ-CP includes 12 policies to support workers and employers, in addition to policies to support workers in general, there are specific policies to support pregnant women or those having children under 6 years old, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. This policy provides an additional VND 1,000,000 per person to three groups: (i) workers who have to stop their work, or have their employment contract temporarily suspended, or take unpaid leave, or terminate their employment contract but do not qualify for unemployment insurance if they are pregnant or taking care of a child under 6 years old; (ii) children who required treatment for COVID-19 infection or were under medical quarantine during their treatment; (iii) the elderly, people with severe disabilities and severely disabled ones who required treatment for COVID-19 infection or were under medical quarantine according to the regulations of competent authorities. This is a priority policy group for pregnant women and vulnerable groups, in addition to policies applied to workers in general, with simplified procedures to facilitate implementation.

The program to develop the primary healthcare network in the new context, 2016-2025, approved by the Prime Minister in 2016, has been continuously implemented with the goal of enhancing the capacity and quality of services provided by the grassroots healthcare network, in which emphasis is placed on

⁶⁸ Ministry of Justice, Report No. 01/BC-BTP dated January 1, 2024 Judicial work situation in 2023, assessment of work results up to mid-term; orientation of judicial work tasks up to the end of the term and main tasks and solutions for work in 2024.

training village health workers and midwives in severely socio-economic difficulties, and requiring commune health stations to fully perform their primary healthcare tasks, including for the elderly, mothers, and children. Additionally, Decision No. 468/QĐ-TTg dated March 23, 2016, of the Prime Minister approved the *program* to control the gender imbalance at birth 2016-2025, aiming to "effectively control the growth rate of sex imbalance at birth and strive to achieve a balanced natural ratio". The National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030 also sets forth four specific targets in the healthcare sector.

On April 28, 2020, Decision No. 588/QĐ-TTg on the Program to adjust birth rates by region and group until 2030 was adopted. The objective of this program is to increase the birth rate in regions with low birth rate regions and reduce that in high birth rate regions, contributing to the success of Viet Nam's Population Strategy by 2030 and to the rapid and sustainable national development.

The right to education is one of the most important human rights. Therefore, the State has consistently affirmed its comprehensive policy on ensuring the right to education, considering this a crucial motivation for constructing and defending the country. Viet Nam has implemented policies to ensure equal access to education, especially for poor students, ethnic minority children, and those in ethnic minority, remote, mountainous areas, to ensure that they have the opportunity to study. From 2019 to 2023, outstanding programs and policies have been implemented to support access to basic education and improve education and training for the population, including women and girls, for example tuition free for 5-year-old preschool children in areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions⁶⁹ and for 5-year-old children in public schools⁷⁰; universal preschool education for 5-year-old children; tuition compensation for preschool, primary, vocational education and university institutions; exemptions and reductions in tuition for boys and girls from poor and near-poor households, support for food and accommodation for preschool and primary school students (both female and male), children from poor households or those studying in semi-boarding schools in particularly difficult communes, as well as support for food and accommodation for both female and male students in ethnic primary boarding schools, and lunch support for preschool pupils aging 3 and 4 years old, concessional loans for students, ect. As a result, groups of women and girls in difficult conditions, for example those who are poor, from ethnic minorities, or living in areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions, have had the opportunity to attend school for literacy and vocational training, and improve their qualifications to find better jobs, get out of poverty, and have a brighter future. Furthermore, the project to support children with disabilities to access protection, care, and education services in the community 2018-2025 continues to be

⁶⁹ Effective from December 1, 2018 (Decree No. 145/2018/ND-CP dated October 16, 2018 by the Government).

⁷⁰ Effective from the 2024-2025 school year (Official Letter No. 2179/BGDĐT-KHTC dated May 13, 2024, from the Ministry of Education and Training).

implemented aiming that by 2025, children with disabilities can access protection, care, and education services in the community to be socially integrated and fully realize their rights.⁷¹ The National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030 also sets forth four specific targets in the field of education and training.⁷² In 2024, the project "Introducing gender and gender equality in the training program for teachers in early childhood education at the College level and University level, 2024-2030" started.⁷³ At the same time, the Government adopted policies to promote digital transformation in education to narrow the digital gap, for example Resolution No. 11/NQ-CP dated January 30, 2022, on the program for socio-economic recovery and development stipulates the provision of tablet computers under the "Signal and computers for children" program from the Viet Nam Public Telecommunications Service Fund, ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective use.

2.2. Achievements gained

Viet Nam's poverty reduction achievements are significant both in the region and globally. The poverty rate in Viet Nam has significantly decreased, which was 2.93% in 2023⁷⁴. Government policies and projects aimed at poverty alleviation in recent years, along with support from international organizations and non-governmental organizations, have been implemented to facilitate better access and benefit of women and girls.⁷⁵ Viet Nam has always prioritized social security, focusing on women and girls. Some social assistance policies have specifically addressed the specific needs of women (including women with disabilities) and girls. For instance, when determining the care standards for female beneficiaries in social assistance facilities, monthly hygiene allowances for women was considered; and these facilities are equipped with separate bathing and sanitation facilities for women and men. In 2023, monthly social assistance was provided to 3.3 million people, including 1.4 million elderly and 1.6 million people with disabilities; 21,000 children receiving support for being orphans and those without caregivers; 146,000 children under 3 years old; 84,000 single parents raising children under 16 (mostly women); and 76,000 other beneficiaries.

⁷¹ Decision No. 1438/QĐ-TTg dated October 29, 2018, of the Prime Minister.

⁷² - Target 1: Gender and gender equality will be included in the curriculum of the national education system and officially taught in universities of education from 2025 onwards.

- Target 2: The completion rate of primary education for ethnic minority boys and girls will exceed 90% by 2025 and approximately 99% by 2030; the completion rate for lower secondary education will reach about 85% by 2025 and 90% by 2030.

- Target 3: The ^{proportion} of female trainees, students, and learners newly enrolled in the vocational education system will exceed 30% by 2025 and 40% by 2030.

- Target 4: The proportion of female master's degree holders among the total number of master's degree holders will be no less than 50% from 2025 onwards. The proportion of female doctoral degree holders among the total number of doctoral degree holders will reach 30% by 2025 and 35% by 2030.

⁷³ Decision No. 4247/QĐ-BGDĐT dated December 12, 2023, by the Minister of Education and Training.

⁷⁴ Decision No. 134/QĐ-BLĐTBXH dated January 31, 2024, by the Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, on results of the review of poor and near-poor households in 2023 according to the multidimensional poverty standards for the period 2022-2025.

⁷⁵ Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs, 2018.

Additionally, there are 349,000 households and individuals providing care and nurturing for beneficiaries monthly. 100% of social assistance beneficiaries receive monthly allowance; 100% of individuals affected by natural disasters, floods, or food shortages receive timely assistance, ensuring no one is left hungry. More than 90% of the elderly in disadvantaged situations receive timely social support and care; over 90% of people with disabilities in difficult situations receive timely assistance, care, and rehabilitation.⁷⁶

Viet Nam has established 425 social assistance facilities (195 public and 230 non-public). Among these, 46 facilities are for elderly care, 73 for individuals with disabilities, 149 for child care, 102 general ones, 32 are for mental health care, and 23 social work centres.⁷⁷ To date, the network of social assistance facilities has met the needs of 30% of the population requiring social assistance, providing services such as reception, management, care, and nurturing of social assistance beneficiaries; organizing rehabilitation activities, work and production, education (literacy and vocational training), career guidance, and offering social work services. The impact of social assistance on beneficiaries is very positive. The level of social assistance has continuously been adjusted upwards. The standard social assistance allowance has increased from VND 45,000 per month,⁷⁸ in 2000 to VND 500,000 (starting from July 1, 2024).⁷⁹

Provinces have also been successful with social assistance models related to providing care to children, to people with disabilities, and to the elderly. Social work service centres are public units under the Department of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs, responsible for providing social work services to individuals in the local area. These centres serve various groups, including victims of gender discrimination, abuse, violence, and maltreatment. Among their tasks are family assistance, counselling, information provision, and gender equality support ... Social organizations and associations have also initiated many humanitarian and charitable programs to assist social assistance beneficiaries, for example community-based rehabilitation programs, the "Smile Surgery" program, specialized education and integration programs, and funds to support war survivors.

With regard to legal aid,⁸⁰ in Viet Nam, there are 63 state legal aid centres located in 63 provinces/ cities and 97 branches of those centres including: (1) law practice organisations, legal consulting organizations signing contracts with Departments of Justice to provide legal aid; (2) law practice organisations, legal consulting organizations registering to participate in legal aid activities. In 2023, throughout the country, there were 38,371 legal aid cases and 33,013 cases

⁷⁶ Department of Social Assistance (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs), Year-end Conference 2023 and plans on social assistance for 2024, December 2023;

⁷⁷ Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, 2022.

⁷⁸ Government Decree No. 07/2000/ND-CP dated March 9, 2000.

⁷⁹ Government Decree No. 76/2024/ND-CP dated July 1, 2024.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Justice, *Report No. 01/BC-BTP dated January 1, 2024 Judicial work 2023, mid-term assessment; orientation up to the end of the term and main tasks, solutions for 2024.*

with 33,013 individuals were successfully dealt with (an increase of 19% compared to 2022). Of these cases, 25,506 were litigation cases (77% of the total, also an increase of 19% compared to 2022). All these cases were reviewed and assessed to have at least met quality standards. Between 2021 and 2023, legal aid centres handled 83,389 cases, with 67,748 involving litigation (approximately 77% of the total cases). Most of these cases were rated as having at least met quality standards. In general, the quality of legal aid services has improved, which has contributed to the effective protecting of legal rights and interests of those receiving legal aid. Through these cases, vulnerable groups were able to access justice, contributing to the objective determination of facts, and protecting the rights and interests of the poor, policy beneficiaries, and other vulnerable groups, thereby ensuring human and civil rights.⁸¹ Moreover, Viet Nam is also actively implementing legal aid measures within national target programs. Provincial regulations on legal aid ensure that the concrete measures are specific, feasible, appropriately tailored, without overlaps regarding beneficiaries and support content in one locality. They clearly define the target group, responsible agencies, cooperating agencies, implementation timelines, and responsibilities of each agency involved. To meet the legal aid criteria outlined in Decision No. 318/QĐ-TTg dated March 8, 2022 by the Prime Minister, which sets national criteria for rural areas and enhanced rural areas 2021-2025, centres have conducted campaigns to disseminate information on legal aid in communes with high rate of poverty and new rural development ones. They have distributed free materials, provided legal counselling, and addressed legal issues for many individuals. These efforts have raised awareness about the right to legal aid among the public, particularly those eligible for assistance, and many have been proactive in seeking legal aid.

Viet Nam's healthcare system has continuously been improved to meet the needs of our people. Health insurance coverage has been successfully expanded. In 2008, only 11% of the population participated in health insurance, but in 2009 (one year after the Health Insurance Law was implemented), this rate increased by 58%.⁸² The coverage of health insurance has continued to grow sustainably over the years: in 2021, the rate was 91.01% (exceeding the target by 0.01%); in 2022 it was 92.04% (exceeding by 0.04%); and in 2023, over 93.3 million people were insured, achieving a coverage rate of 93.35% (exceeding the target set in Resolution 01/NQ-CP of the Government by 0.15%), getting closer and closer to the goal of universal health insurance. Each year, over 100 million people go to hospitals and are covered by health insurance.⁸³ Notably, health insurance cards are issued free of charge to children under 6 years old, and there are groups that

⁸¹ Ministry of Justice, *Report No. 01/BC-BTP dated January 1, 2024 Judicial work 2023, mid-term assessment; orientation up to the end of the term and main tasks, solutions for 2024.*

⁸² Vietnam Social Security, Online Conference to summarize 15 years of implementing Directive No. 38-CT/TW dated September 7, 2009, of the Secretariat on "Promoting health insurance work in the new situation", April 16, 2024.

⁸³ Party Committee of the Ministry of Health, Conference to review 15 years of implementing Directive No. 38 of the Secretariat on promoting health insurance work in the new situation, May 24, 2024.

receive support to pay for health insurance or free health insurance cards. Results of the Population and Housing Census 2019 showed that the maternal mortality rate in Viet Nam is 46/100,000 live births, which has seen a sharp decrease from 2009 (69 per 100,000 in 2009 to 46 per 100,000 live births in 2019). The reported maternal mortality rate in the health statistics system shows a continuous downward trend over the past years, and it is estimated to reach 42 per 100,000 live births by 2025 (meeting the target set by the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030). Besides, the national average life expectancy has steadily increased from 65.5 years in 1993 to 73.7 years in 2023.⁸⁴ Of this, the average life expectancy for women is 76.5 years, while for men, it is 71.1 years.

Viet Nam successfully achieved universal preschool education for 5-year-old children in 2017. In 2022, 63/63 provinces and cities, 100% of district-level units, and 99.9% of commune-level units maintained the standard of universal preschool education for 5-year-olds. The goal for the preschool education level by 2025 is that localities mobilize children of preschool age to go to early childhood education facilities to be taken care of and educated according to the national preschool education program (achievement by 95%). This rate is targeted to reach 97% by 2030. At the primary school level, by the end of the 2022-2023 school year, the enrolment rate of children attending school at the appropriate age nationwide reached 99.7%, an increase of 0.74% compared to the 2012-2013 school year. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, the enrolment rate for secondary school students nationwide reached 91.96%, compared to 89.92% in the 2012-2013 school year, an increase of 2.05%. Currently, 63/63 provinces and cities maintain and meet the standard of universal primary education, with 30 out of 63 provinces and cities achieving level 3 of universal primary education, an increase of 6 provincial units compared to 2015; 11 provinces and cities achieving level 2 of universal secondary education; and 7 provinces and cities achieving level 3 of universal secondary education. In 2023, the completion rate for primary education was 94.3% (for ethnic minority children, the rate is 96%); the completion rate for secondary education was 90.7% (for ethnic minority children, the rate was 90%).⁸⁵ It can be observed that the gender gap in basic education in Viet Nam has almost been eliminated.

The proportion of women out of all people with doctoral degree (in the education sector only) is 39%, exceeding the target set in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030.

Viet Nam has recently implemented several solutions to contribute to economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, which will help narrow the gender gap in issues related to poverty, employment, social assistance, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated. These include Resolution No.

⁸⁴ Ministry of Health, Information at the Rally in Response to World Population Day, July 2023; General Statistics Office, Press release on population, labour and employment situation in the fourth quarter and year 2023, December 29, 2023.

⁸⁵ Government, *Report No. 237/BC-CP dated May 16, 2023, on the Results of Implementing National Gender Equality Goals in 2023*, Appendix 01.

28/NQ-CP dated March 30, 2021 approving the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030; Resolution No. 11/NQ-CP dated January 30, 2022, on the Program on Socio-Economic Recovery and Development and the implementation of Resolution No. 43/2022/QH15 of the National Assembly regarding fiscal and monetary policies to support the Program; and Decision No. 345/QD-TTg dated April 5, 2023, by the Prime Minister approving the Project "Improving the quality and effectiveness of legal support for enterprises 2021-2030". During 2021-2022, over VND 101 trillion from the state budget and insurance funds was disbursed to support 68 million citizens and nearly 1.4 million employers to overcome difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and restore socio-economic development.⁸⁶ Policies to support businesses to overcome difficulties, maintain and recover production, thereby preserve jobs and income for workers; policies to support workers and citizens (such as cash transfer and house rental) to maintain basic living needs, retain workers, and contribute to a rapid recovery of the labour market, preventing disruptions in the labour supply chain. Women-owned businesses and female workers are also beneficiaries of these support policies. These contribute to promoting gender equality in the economy.⁸⁷

The “Godmother” program, implemented by the Viet Nam Women’s Union (VWU), aims to support and care for children orphaned due to the COVID-19 pandemic and those in difficult circumstances. This program is so meaningful and has been widely implemented, being highly evaluated by the Party and State leaders and support from the public. Women’s Unions at the provincial level have chosen appropriate methods, either directly adopts the children or being the one to connect resources, care, and nurture for orphaned children, helping them to have a better life. After one year, the program has gained support from various levels of the Union, attracting attention from government agencies, organizations, and individuals collaborating with the Union. By May 2024, the Women’s Union and its members have mobilized nearly 170 billion VND, taking care of nearly 30,900 orphaned children in disadvantaged circumstances across the country.⁸⁸

2.3. Difficulties and challenges

Most social assistance policies, whether on a regular or emergency basis, are generally gender-neutral.

The current social assistance policies have only focused on mitigating risks for the poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged groups, not been able to emphasize people's capacity to prevent and respond to risks throughout their life cycle. The level of social assistance is still low compared to the minimum living standards. There are still limitations regarding the facilities of some social assistance centres.

⁸⁶Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, <https://molisa.gov.vn/baiviet/235386?tintucID=235386>, January 25, 2023.

⁸⁷ Official Letter No. 6255/BKHĐT-LDVX dated August 6, 2024, of the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

⁸⁸ Official Letter No. 3647/DCT-QT dated July 1, 2024 of the Presidium, Vietnam Women's Union.

In practice, the private sector (businesses and individuals) has not actively participated in social assistance efforts.

Abortion among adolescents and illegal abortions still occur in some private poor healthcare facilities. Children of migrant women face difficulties in accessing public education.

Sex education content has been included in school programmes, but it is too new, inadequate, and largely theoretical. Teachers have limited experience in this content. Additionally, there is a lack of detailed sex disaggregated data in the field of education, especially in STEM, to better analyse gender gaps.

3. FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA, AND STEREOTYPES

3.1. Policies, laws and activities implemented

The prevention and response to gender-based violence have been prioritized by the Vietnamese Government. Based on the Constitution of Viet Nam 2013,⁸⁹ the Gender Equality Law 2006 and relevant legal documents, regulations on acts of violations and violence related to gender and the family have been incorporated into important legal documents for example the Labour Code 2019, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control 2022, and other by-laws.⁹⁰

Building upon the achievements gained in the prevention of and responding to gender-based violence 2016-2020 and the National Action Plan implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in 2020, a Program to prevent and respond to gender-based violence 2021-2025 was issued aiming to continue to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence, to raise public awareness and strengthen the capacity of service providers. In order to implement the Program, MOLISA issued guidance documents for ministries, agencies, local authorities on the implementation up to 2025, as well as annual implementation guidance⁹¹, which details the tasks and solutions for each targets of the period and annually, including: Communication activities to raise awareness and sense of responsibility regarding the prevention and response to gender-based violence through diverse forms suitable for different groups; Maintaining, expanding, and enhancing the effectiveness of models and facilities providing services for the prevention and response to gender-based violence; Training and capacity building for staff and collaborators responsible for areas related to gender-based violence;

⁸⁹ Clause 1, Article 20 of the 2013 Constitution stipulates that everyone has the right to inviolability of his or her body and to the protection by law of his or her health, honor and dignity; no one shall be subjected to torture, violence, coercion, corporal punishment or any form of treatment harming his or her body and health or offending his or her honor and dignity.

⁹⁰ Decree No. 144/2021/ND-CP of the Government dated December 31, 2021, stipulating administrative sanctions for violations in the fields of security, order, and social safety; prevention and control of social evils; fire prevention and fighting; rescue; prevention and control of domestic violence; Decree No. 125/2021/ND-CP of the Government dated December 28, 2021, stipulating administrative sanctions for violations in the field of gender equality...

⁹¹ Official Letter No. 212/LĐTBXH-BDG dated January 26, 2021 of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.

Mobilizing technical and financial support from agencies, enterprises, and international organizations for the prevention and response to gender-based violence; Strengthening inspection, supervision, and evaluation by agencies, organizations, and individuals in the prevention and response to gender-based violence. In addition, the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030 has identified the prevention and control of gender-based violence as a goal to ensure gender equality. To implement the above documents, the state budget is allocated annually to Ministries, industries, central and provincial agencies,; in national target programs and other relevant programs to implement the activities and solutions of the Strategy and Program.

Regarding the prevention and combat against domestic violence, the Law on Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence in 2022, with a human rights-based and victim-centred approach was adopted replacing the Law in 2007. The Law on Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence 2022 provides for proactive prevention of domestic violence through information, communication, and education on knowledge and skills related to preventing and combating against domestic violence. The Law on Prevention and Combat of Domestic Violence 2022 amends and supplements measures to protect, support, and handle violations in the prevention and combat of domestic violence to overcome the shortcomings of the 2007 Law and meet the practical demands. The Law also amends the provisions on mediation to avoid the case that mediation is taken advantage of and avoid the handling of acts of domestic violence; supplementing a "National Hotline on Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence" and responsibilities in handling reports and denunciations of acts of domestic violence and the use of audio and visual materials related to acts of domestic violence. In addition to that, a new point of the Law on Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence 2022 is that it encourages the socialization of preventing and combating domestic violence, at the same time increasing the State's responsibility in allocating resources for preventing and combating domestic violence to aim for the development of professional and effective domestic violence support facilities. To implement the Law on Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence 2022, on November 1, 2023, the Government issued Decree No. 76/2023/ND-CP detailing a number of provisions of the Law on Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence, including a provision on protecting and ensuring the safety of female victims of violence. The law on Handling Administrative Violations stipulates that people who commit acts of domestic violence violating the decision on prohibited contact according to the provisions of the law on prevention and combat against domestic violence can be subject to temporary detention following administrative procedures with the purpose of immediately preventing acts that have the actual possibility of infringing on the health and life of others (point d, clause 1, Article 120). In addition, Decree No. 144/2021/ND-CP of the Government dated December 31, 2021 regulates sanctions for administrative violations in the field of security, order and social safety; preventing and combating social evils; fire protection and

prevention; rescue activities; there is a separate section is for domestic violence prevention and control (administrative violations on domestic violence prevention and control).

The Viet Nam Family Development Strategy to 2030 sets goals to resolve domestic violence cases, supporting essential services to reduce the harmful effects of domestic violence, especially for women, the vulnerable, and children. To contribute to the effective implementation of the Strategy, the Prime Minister has approved the National Program on Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence in the new context until 2025.⁹² The Program aims at enhancing the effectiveness of preventing and combating domestic violence, creating a shift in awareness and actions to gradually reduce domestic violence and promptly support victims of domestic violence.

Regarding the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace, the Labour Code 2019 have new provisions related to female workers. Shift from the view of protecting female workers to promoting and ensuring gender equality, there are open policies to promote the role of female workers as well as equal rights of women and men. The concept of sexual harassment was introduced in detail in the Labour Code 2019. Clause 9, Article 3 of this law stipulates: " Sexual harassment at a workplace is any behaviour of a sexual nature by any person towards another person at a workplace that is not wanted or accepted by the latter person. A workplace is any place where a worker undertakes work as agreed with or assigned by the employer. "⁹³ *Acts of sexual harassment in public* is now penalized under Decree No. 144/2021/ND-CP dated December 31, 2021, issued by the Government. Compared to previous regulations, ⁹⁴ Decree No. 144/2021/ND-CP has expanded the range of behaviours classified as acts of sexual harassment in public and significantly increased the fines for such offenses.

Regarding the prevention of trafficking in persons, Viet Nam has issued a Decision approving the Program on Prevention and Combat of Trafficking in Persons 2021-2025, vision to 2030.⁹⁵ Based on this, ministries, sectors, and localities have seriously and actively implemented the tasks and solutions within their functions and duties. In addition, the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030 assigns the Ministry of Public Security in cooperation with others to develop, implement and report on results of tasks and solutions on preventing and combating trafficking in persons; the Program on prevention and reduction of

⁹² Decision No. 45/QD-TTg dated January 13, 2022 of the Prime Minister.

⁹³ Sexual harassment in the workplace that does not reach the level of criminal prosecution will be subject to administrative sanctions according to Decree No. 12/2022/ND-CP dated January 17, 2022 of the Government regulating administrative sanctions in the fields of labour, social insurance, and Vietnamese workers working abroad under contracts.

⁹⁴ Decree No. 167/2013/ND-CP dated November 12, 2013 of the Government stipulating administrative sanctions for violations in the fields of security, order, social safety; prevention and combat of social evils; fire prevention and fighting; prevention and combat of domestic violence.

⁹⁵ Decision No. 193/QD-TTg dated February 9, 2021 of the Prime Minister.

child labour 2021-2025, vision to 2030⁹⁶ sets out tasks and solutions to prevent and combat the crime of trafficking in children for the purpose of labour exploitation. In particular, to strengthen coordination and effectively receiving, protecting, and supporting victims of trafficking, MOLISA, MPS, Ministry of National Defence (MND), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) have jointly issued a Regulation on coordination in the receiving, protecting, and supporting victims of trafficking in persons. This is an important milestone, affirming the joint efforts and determination in the preventing and combating trafficking in persons, protecting legitimate rights and interests of trafficking victims, and overcoming limitations and obstacles in the area. The Regulation has sent a strong message about the Government's commitment to further enhancing the effectiveness of efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. In addition, the Viet Nam Women's Union takes the lead in implementing the task of communicating about the prevention and combating of trafficking in persons in the community, focusing on organizing and implementing behaviour change communication activities in the community, innovating communication forms; building and replicating effective communication models and models for supporting victims of trafficking in persons; providing information and connecting victims with services to support them reintegrate into the community; creating conditions for trafficking victims to participate in loan support programs of Women's Unions at all levels; and improving the communication skills on the prevention and combating of trafficking in persons for a network of reporters, propagandists, and collaborators at the local level.⁹⁷

To provide necessary and timely support for victims of trafficking in persons, the Government issued Decree No. 20/2021/ND-CP dated March 15, 2021, stipulating on social assistance for the relevant beneficiaries,⁹⁸ under which victims of domestic violence, sexual and physical abuse, trafficking in persons, forced labour are defined as emergency protection beneficiaries in need of temporary care and foster within the community. At the same time, the Prime Minister issued a Decision approving the task of developing a planning network of social assistance facilities 2021-2030, vision to 2050. The planning of the social assistance facility network will create favourable conditions for people to access and enjoy social assistance services, also expanding the types of services, including activities to support, prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Regarding the prevention of violence and sexual abuse against children, to effectively prevent child abuse and trafficking in persons, MPS issued Circular No. 43/2021/TT-BCA dated April 22, 2021 stipulating the responsibilities of the public security force in applying child-friendly criminal procedures in the process of receiving and handling denunciations, reports of crimes, and requests for prosecution and investigation of cases of abuse of persons under 18 years of age.

⁹⁶ Decision No. 782/QD-TTg dated May 27, 2021 of the Prime Minister.

⁹⁷ Decision No. 193/QD-TTg dated February 9, 2021 of the Prime Minister.

⁹⁸ This Decree is amended and replaced by Decree No. 76/2024/ND-CP dated July 1, 2024 of the Government.

The Law on Vietnamese People Working Abroad under Contracts 2020 and guiding documents issued have provisions on the prevention of human trafficking in employment and sending Vietnamese workers abroad to work under contract, for example Government Decree No. 112/2021/ND-CP dated December 10, 2021 stipulating that service enterprises will have their licenses revoked if they take advantage of activities to send workers abroad to engage in trafficking in persons, exploitation, and forced labour. At the same time, the Judicial Council of the Supreme People's Court issued Resolution No. 06/2019/NQ-HDTP dated October 1, 2019, guiding the application of a number of provisions in Articles 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, and 147 of the Penal Code, guiding the resolution of difficulties in the actual trial and the organization of trials of cases of sexual abuse of persons under 18 years of age. In addition, on June 16, 2023, MOLISA, MOET, MOH, and MPS issued Joint Regulation No. 2236/QCPH-LDTBXH-GDDT-YT-CA on the prevention of violence and sexual abuse against children.

Aiming at interventions to reduce the cases of early marriage and forced marriage that still exists in ethnic minority areas and areas with difficult economic conditions, the Government has approved the National Target Program on socio-economic development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas 2021 - 2030, including a separate project on gender equality and addressing urgent issues for women and children (Project 8).

Regarding the prevention of violence and abuse in cyberspace, Viet Nam has implemented the program "Protecting and Supporting Children to Interact Safely and Creatively in the Online Environment 2021-2025,"⁹⁹ which aims to proactively prevent and detect child abuse online, and address acts of exploitation in the online environment against children in all forms as stipulated by law. In implementing this program, relevant agencies have established inter-agency coordination mechanisms for receiving information, investigating, and addressing cases of child abuse, and monitoring data related to child sexual abuse online. The Decree No. 13/2023/ND-CP on personal data protection stipulates the responsibilities of agencies, organizations, and individuals in safeguarding personal data, including children's data, ensuring that children's personal data is always processed in accordance with the principles of protecting their rights and to their best interests. Additionally, on August 18, 2022, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Information and Communications issued Regulation No. 05/QC-BCA-BLDTBXH-BTTTT on coordinating the reception of information, investigation, and handling of cases of child abuse and monitoring data related to child sexual abuse online.

Viet Nam is one of the few countries in the world to conduct a second national survey on violence against women (in 2019). After nearly 10 years since the first survey (in 2010), the results showed both positive changes and some ongoing issues. Positive changes are particularly evident among younger women. Those with higher educational levels experience lower rates of violence, indicating

⁹⁹ Decision No. 830/QĐ-TTg dated June 1, 2021 of the Prime Minister.

that education plays a significant role in empowering women, increasing their confidence, strength, and independence in life.¹⁰⁰

Non-discrimination in general and non-discrimination for specific vulnerable groups are also stipulated in Vietnamese law. The Constitution 2013 stipulates: “No one is subject to discriminatory treatment in political, civil, economic, cultural or social life.” (Clause 2, Article 16).¹⁰¹ This principle has been specified in various laws (including laws enacted before the Constitution 2013). Article 3 of the Civil Code 2015 states that all individuals and legal entities are equal, and no reason should be used to discriminate against them; they are protected equally by the law in terms of personal rights and property rights. The Criminal Code 2015 (amended and supplemented in 2017) considers non-discrimination as a fundamental principle in dealing with offenders. The Labour Code 2019 strictly prohibits discrimination in employment (Clause 1, Article 8). The principle of non-discrimination is emphasized in laws protecting the rights of vulnerable groups. Article 5 of the Gender Equality Law 2006 defines gender discrimination as the restriction, exclusion, non-recognition or disregard of the roles and positions of men and women, causing inequality between men and women in various aspects of social and family life, and considers “men and women are not discriminated against based on gender” as a fundamental principle of gender equality. The Child Law 2016 (Article 6) prohibits discrimination against children based on their personal characteristics, family circumstances, gender, ethnicity, nationality, belief, or religion. The Advertising Law 2012 (amended and supplemented in 2018) prohibits advertising that is discriminatory based on ethnicity, race, infringes on freedom of belief, religion, gender biases, or disability (Clause 6, Article 8). Additionally, laws on administrative sanctions contain provisions on prohibited acts and penalties related to discrimination.

3.2. Achievements gained

During the 2019-2023 period, the Vietnamese government continued to focus on developing the professional knowledge, skills, and capacity of state management officers, social workers, and service providers in preventing and responding to gender-based violence, preventing and combating child abuse, and communication activities about preventing and responding to gender-based violence and child abuse.

Training content focused on providing knowledge and skills to assist victims of violence; coordinating skills in preventing and responding to violence; skills in working with perpetrators; case management, etc. MOLISA developed and piloted training materials for master trainers on the prevention and response to gender-based violence; issued a directory of agencies and organizations providing support services for women and children who are victims of violence and abuse; organized specialized conferences, workshops, and contests, including

¹⁰⁰ Report of the National Study on Violence Against Women in Viet Nam 2019.

¹⁰¹ The principle of non-discrimination is also stipulated in some other provisions of the 2013 Constitution: Clause 2, Article 5, Clause 1, Article 24, Clauses 1 and 3, Article 26.

a workshop to share models of prevention and response to gender-based violence in Viet Nam and ASEAN countries; reprinted 1,000 copies of the document “Guidelines for managing cases of gender-based violence”; conducted a survey on public safety for women, girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, etc. The Ministry of Public Security (MPS), in coordination with UN Women, organized four training workshops on gender-sensitive investigation guidelines in cases related to trafficking in persons and guidelines for supporting and protecting trafficked women. MPS organized training sessions for investigators on skills to work with victims in a friendly manner, skills for handling denunciations and reports of crimes, as well as skills for initial contact with denunciations and reports of crimes in cases of child sexual abuse. MPS has also compiled two training documents to be distributed to the grassroots level; at the same time, issued 1,400 certificates to investigators on victim-friendly skills when handling the cases. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) developed guidance documents¹⁰² and organized training for Legal Aid Assistants, Legal Specialists, Legal Aid Trainees, and contracted lawyers to provide legal aid in a number of Legal Aid Centres based in the localities.

Since 2019, Viet Nam has continued to focus on communication programs to raise awareness about gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence, including the "National Action Month on Preventing Domestic Violence" organized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) in June every year, and the "Action Month on Gender Equality and on Prevention of Gender-Based Violence" chaired by MOLISA from November 15 to December 15 every year. These initiatives include awareness-raising communication campaigns for community members, local leaders, and policymakers, as well as the development of educational and communication materials, and the promotion of monitoring and supervision of gender equality in the localities. Local police cooperate with departments, sectors, and social organizations to mobilize and encourage public reporting of crimes through mailboxes, tip-off boxes, telephone numbers, and hotlines. They also incorporate content on preventing and responding to gender-based violence and domestic violence into public awareness campaigns against crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and in building a national movement to protect security. The Ministry of National Defence has focused on strengthening the public engagement in combating social evils and preventing the trafficking of women and children across borders. As a result, awareness and attention of the community in preventing and combating gender-based violence at the local level have been raised, contributing to the enhanced role and responsibility of individuals and organisations in this area.

¹⁰² Legal Aid Guide for Victims of Violence and Victims of Trafficking; Gender-sensitive and Collaborative Legal Aid Guide for Victims of Violence and Trafficking; Several training courses on rights-based and gender-sensitive legal aid for people with disabilities; for victims of violence and victims of trafficking; and Gender-sensitive and Collaborative Legal Aid Guide for Victims of Violence and Trafficking.

MPS has directed public security forces at all levels to conduct fundamental investigations into the situation, identify victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence, especially children; identify perpetrators of violence and abuse; identify acts of violence and abuse whose causes are from families, such as families with parents who have committed crimes or are drug addicts; families that frequently have acts of violence and abuse among members and against women and children; has directed public security forces at all levels to implement intensive attack plans to contain crime, including domestic violence related crime to ensure public security and order during holidays, festivals, and political, cultural, and social events nationwide; coordinated with Viet Nam Television in producing and broadcasting the reportage "Improving the effectiveness of preventing trafficking in persons" and the program "Identifying the crime of trafficking in persons"; coordinated with the Command of the Border Guard to direct the Public Security and Border Guard forces of border localities to investigate the basic situation of trafficking in persons on Viet Nam - China, Viet Nam - Laos, and Viet Nam - Cambodia borders; launched an intensive containing attack on the crime of trafficking in persons, focusing on directing the Criminal Police force to grasp the situation from the grassroots, proactively analyse, identify, and accurately forecast the situation of the crime of trafficking in persons and related crime; has directed the Public Security of border localities to closely coordinate with the Border Guard force to continue to organize meetings, negotiations, exchanges of information through hotlines, border patrols, and implementation of professional plans with counterpart units in the fight against trafficking in persons and trafficking in persons under 16 years of age¹⁰³; has promptly verified and returned children who are victims of trafficking in persons; has cooperated with the International Criminal Police Organizations (Interpol, Aseanapol) in exchanging information about visitors to Viet Nam who have criminal records of child abuse abroad so as to prepare preventive measures.¹⁰⁴ MPS has widely deployed and promoted the app "Virtual Assistant - Prevention of Child Abuse" to instruct officers, soldiers, and people in communication skills and skills to prevent child abuse and trafficking in persons. The app has had nearly 20,000 downloads for use and positive reviews on Google Play. By July 2024, MPS had developed the model of "Friendly Investigation Rooms" to 100% of units and localities for the handling of cases involving people under the age of 18, with the focus on women and girls¹⁰⁵ and developed a training plan to improve the skill of friendly investigation for the police force at the community level.

By June 2024, the Supreme People's Court had established 41 Family and Juvenile Courts in 38 provincial People's Courts, 01 district People's Court, 02 High People's Courts, and established the Department for Cassation review and

¹⁰³ Coordinate with the Border Guard Command to direct the forces of 10 localities bordering Laos to conduct a basic investigation into the situation of human trafficking crimes on the Vietnam - Laos border.

¹⁰⁴ Report on the results of implementing gender equality work, for the advancement of women, family and children work in the People's Public Security in 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Document No. 2314/BCA-X036 dated July 11, 2024 of the Ministry of Public Security.

examination of labour, family, and juvenile judgements in the Supreme People's Court.¹⁰⁶

For stricter administration of the publishing sector, Viet Nam has taken measures to prohibit publishing houses from publishing any publications, books, or newspapers containing any form of gender discrimination or gender bias, and from validating the registration of publications related to gender discrimination in any form.¹⁰⁷

Gender equality models and models of gender-based violence prevention and response have been gradually developed in quantity and improved in the quality of support services for victims. Services for victims of gender-based violence including domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual abuse, and forced prostitution have got attention to develop. These services are offered at different levels depending on the capacity of the support facilities, such as: trusted addresses - temporary shelters in communities; social assistance facilities (both public and private); the pilot One-Stop Service Centres for victims of gender-based violence. In 2018, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs introduced the regulation on temporary standards for the minimum conditions of Trusted Addresses - Temporary Shelters in communities, which is still in force.¹⁰⁸ The application of several models has contributed to raising awareness, enhancing the capacity and responsibility of the governments at all levels, related sectors and organizations, and communities in preventing and addressing gender-based violence, with a focus on groups who have a strong tendency to commit violence and individuals vulnerable to such violence. In 2024, Viet Nam has more than 6,000 models and facilities providing assistance and services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, domestic violence with practical support forms, gradually meeting the needs of violence victims. A number of effective models continue to operate and to be replicated such as: Peace House Shelters; One-stop service centres to support victims of gender-based violence (Sunshine House model); the one-stop model to support women and children who are victims of violence and abuse in Ho Chi Minh City (Dandelion model); the safe, friendly, and non-violent city model; the hotline for counselling and supporting victims of

¹⁰⁶ Supreme People's Court, Summary Report on the Practice of the Implementation of the Law on Organization of People's Courts in 2014, Hanoi, 2022. At the same time, this data was also provided by the Supreme People's Court at the 7th Session, 15th National Assembly, June 2024.

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Information and Communications.

¹⁰⁸ According to Decision No. 1814/QĐ-LĐTBXH dated December 18, 2018 of the Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. The Trusted Addresses - Community Shelters are operated according to Circular No. 53/2022/TT-BTC dated August 12, 2022 of the Minister of Finance regulating the management and use of funding for public non-business services from the central budget for the National Target Program on New Rural-Style Construction for the 2021-2025 period and Circular No. 03/2022/TT-BTC dated January 12, 2022 of the Minister of Finance regulating the management and use of funding for public non-business services from the state budget for the programs on social work development, support for people with disabilities, social assistance and community-based rehabilitation for people with mental illness, autistic children and people with mental disorder in the 2021-2030 period.

violence run by the Central Farmers' Union of Viet Nam (1800.1768), White Ribbon Breakfast model, etc. These models have been effective in receiving people in need of support right in the community; providing counselling services, essential services; and referring gender-based violence victims to specialized services according to their needs. Through the pilot models, MOLISA continues to research and develop guiding documents on the conditions, standards of models, service providers, and inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms for the gender-based violence prevention and response which are suitable to the practice and feasible. Currently, 100% of public social assistance facilities are implementing the task of assisting people who need emergency protection including victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, trafficking in persons, and forced labour as prescribed.¹⁰⁹

The Viet Nam Women's Union has proactively established networks, Legal and Psychological Counselling Teams, and Advising Working Groups for addressing hot cases and issues related to women and children at both the central and provincial levels. In the period of 2017-2022, there were 31,333 cases of domestic violence, violence, and abuse against women and children, 5,663 cases of which were reported/denounced by women. Many serious cases of violence against women and children that were raised by the Central Women's Union of Viet Nam received responses in writing from prosecution agencies and resolved in time.¹¹⁰ The Union also cooperated with UN Women to organize the International Forum on "Women, Cyber Security and STEM" to respond to the theme launched by the United Nations, share experiences and call for joint efforts to promote gender equality and encourage women to master Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and cyberspace. At the same time, the Viet Nam Women's Union was piloting the model "Club for Women's Integration on the Internet" in Ha Tinh to raise awareness of the positive aspects and limitations of using the internet and social media; and to teach self-protection skills for using social media (such as identifying fake news, verifying information, and behaving in civilized ways online).

The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union Central Committee has launched the "Civilized Behaviour in Cyberspace" Campaign for the period 2023-2030, aiming to create a remarkable transformation in young people's awareness and responsibility for behaviours on social media and help young people proactively change and adjust their behaviours to go online in a safe and healthy manner.

The Network of Partnership for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response was established in December 2021 and maintains its activities through

¹⁰⁹ Decree No. 20/2021/ND-CP dated March 15, 2021 of the Government regulating social assistance policies for social protection beneficiaries (with some articles amended by Decree No. 76/2024/ND-CP dated July 1, 2024 of the Government).

¹¹⁰ Ministry of Planning and Investment (2023), Assessment Report on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in 2022, Hanoi, July 2023.

quarterly meetings.¹¹¹ This is a forum for Network members to exchange, share, and update on activities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence carried out by agencies, organizations, and individuals; discuss and provide comments on relevant draft legal documents; and share initiatives to improve the effectiveness of this work.

Between 2020 and 2023, MOLISA conducted inspections to evaluate the implementation of the Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Program for the period 2021-2025. Reports from localities showed that several localities had effectively implemented the Program, such as Quang Ninh, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, and Ho Chi Minh City.

In addition, many activities and intervention projects of non-governmental organizations and international organizations have yielded results in making intervention, helping victims of domestic violence in particular and gender-based violence in general. Some organizations have been very active in communication, intervention, and response to help victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence, such as UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, Plan International, CSAGA...

The situation of violence against women and domestic violence at the local level has attracted increasing attention for addressing, and support services have improved. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only severely impacted economic and social development but has also had negative effects on women and children. The rate of detected domestic violence in April 2020 increased by 7% compared to December 2019. In the period of 2021-2023, the number of victims of domestic violence detected was 11,658 people¹¹². In 2023 alone, there were 3,193 victims of domestic violence, of which: female victims were 2,628, accounting for 82.3% (in 2022, there were 3,440 people, accounting for 87.73%); male victims were 565 people, accounting for 17.7% while in 2022, there were 481 victims, accounting for 12.27%.¹¹³ Thus, compared to previous years, the number of both cases and victims of domestic violence decreased. Statistics show that in 2023 there was an increasing trend in accessing support services. Specifically, 74.6% of victims received counselling (compared to 74% in 2022), 22.5% received post-violence care and support (compared to 19.3% in 2022), 2.9% were helped to stop alcohol abuse (compared to 1% in 2022), and 2.7% received vocational training (compared to 2.04% in 2022). In 2023, a total of 3,208 individuals perpetrated

¹¹¹ The Network has 40 members representing government agencies, socio-political organizations, social organizations, United Nations organizations, experts, lawyers, and journalists. The Network's goal is to mobilize and connect initiatives, experiences, and resources to improve the effectiveness of gender-based violence prevention and response; strengthen cooperation between agencies, units, organizations, and individuals working in the fields of gender equality and prevention and response to gender-based violence.

¹¹² Synthesized from the Government's Report on the implementation of national gender equality goals in 2021, 2022, 2023.

¹¹³ Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Report No. 27/BC-BVHTTDL dated January 31, 2024 on implementing national goals on gender equality in 2023.

domestic violence (compared to 3,975 in 2022), of which 2,677 were males (accounting for 83.4%) and 531 were females (accounting for 16.6%). Of the 3,208 perpetrators, 2,949 (92%) received some forms of sanction which mainly are reprimand and criticism in the community (2,215 individuals, accounting for 75.1%), prohibition of contact (58 individuals), educational measures at the commune/ward/town level (259 individuals), administrative fines (288 individuals), and criminal prosecution (129 individuals)¹¹⁴. Most victims detected were able to access at least one of the basic support services, such as counselling, post-violence care, and other necessary support (e.g., alcohol addiction treatment, treatment for mental disorders caused by addictive substances; vocational training and job placement).

During this period, the police received and addressed 560 reports and notifications related to human trafficking and related crimes, initiating criminal prosecution against 808 subjects.¹¹⁵ The Border Guard forces implemented comprehensive measures, promptly detecting, apprehending, and processing 400 cases with 231 subjects. They rescued and received 276 victims and suspected victims of cross-border trafficking.¹¹⁶ The hotline for counselling and supporting victims of trafficking answered 1,537 calls, including 77 calls from children, and referred 64 cases with 72 trafficking victims.¹¹⁷ After receiving victims, the authorities opened files on the cases and carried out the procedure to support the return of victims of trafficking according to regulations. The victims were provided with safe accommodation, psychological counselling, healthcare, life skill education, legal aid upon request, and were safely transferred to their families and other victim support facilities. Thus, 100% of identified trafficking victims in need of support received services as prescribed by the Law on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Persons in 2011.

An online survey on the safety of women and girls in public spaces, was conducted in 2022 and 2023 by MOLISA in collaboration with Plan International Viet Nam with the aim to explore the current situation regarding public safety, sexual harassment in public spaces, and the assistance sought by victims of violence and harassment. The survey results showed continued improvements in safety for women and girls in public areas, largely attributed to the implementation of socio-economic development policies and programs. Notable reductions in sexual harassment in public spaces have been observed due to the achievements of the new rural-style construction program, including street lighting, road repairs, infrastructure improvements, and the installation of surveillance cameras, etc. However, both central and local authorities still have

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Report No. 27/BC-BVHTTDL dated January 31, 2024 on implementing national goals on gender equality in 2023, Hanoi.

¹¹⁵ Official Letter No. 2314/BCA-X036 dated July 11, 2024 of the Ministry of Public Security.

¹¹⁶ Official Letter No. 3374/BQP-CT dated August 19, 2024 of the Ministry of National Defence.

¹¹⁷ Official Letter No. 443/CTE-PTTG dated June 27, 2024 of the Department of Children, Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs.

to continue their efforts to further enhance public safety for all citizens, with a particular focus on women and girls in public places.

According to statistics from MOLISA, from 2021 to 2023, there were 185 reports about channels and video clips with harmful content for children on the internet, and 1,300 calls to Hotline 111 concerning child protection on the internet. The Ministry of Information and Communications has engaged with major cross-border platforms such as Facebook, Google, TikTok, and YouTube, urging them to comply with Vietnamese legal regulations and to block and remove illegal and harmful content. As a result, the rate of blocking and removal of illegal content on these platforms has increased, and these platforms have better met the requirements of the Government of Viet Nam. Since 2020, Facebook has blocked and removed 105 groups with harmful content related to children and women and has been committed to receiving unlimited reports on violations related to civil issues, such as handling harmful groups and violating advertisements. YouTube has enhanced its handling of violating channels and reduced processing time. TikTok has upgraded its team of censors in Viet Nam, strengthened measures for protecting children online, and improved control over content on its platform to minimize harmful content and ensure alignment with Vietnamese cultural standards.¹¹⁸

So far, the Ministry of Information and Communications has submitted to the Government a Decree replacing Decree 72/2013/ND-CP and Decree 27/2018/ND-CP, which is added with some specific regulations on social media sites (both domestic and foreign) to protect children and women from bad and toxic content in the digital space. Specifically, the new regulations require social media sites to remove violating content within 24 hours and allow them to permanently block channels that commit serious violations and require user account authentication via phone number or personal identification number. In addition, platforms are required to conduct content classification and give warnings about content that is not suitable for children, promptly handle complaints within 48 hours, and remove illegal content upon request from competent authorities.

In addition, the Ministry of Information and Communications also launched the “News” Campaign with the message “virtual space, real trust,” including many activities to raise public awareness of preventing fake news and toxic information. The videos in the “Anti Fake News” contest attracted more than 130 million views, and called for tagging more than 1 million videos with the hashtag #AntiFakeNews on TikTok, contributing to spreading the message against fake news, contributing to protecting children and women from the spread of false and harmful information. In parallel, the Ministry of Information and Communications established Viet Nam Anti-Fake News Centre, which has received and handled thousands of reports on fake news and harmful

¹¹⁸ Official Letter No. 2903/BTTTT-HTQT dated July 22, 2024 of the Ministry of Information and Communications.

information. Since 2021, the Centre has handled more than 7,500 reports, informed the public of more than 150 pieces of fake news, and requested foreign social media platforms to handle more than 700 pieces of fake news and harmful information, as well as blocked and removed more than 1,700 gambling domains. Through close coordination with cross-border platforms, since 2020, Facebook has blocked and removed 105 toxic groups (Links about girls, sex chat, Ha Noi Handsome Men, caves of hot girls and native girls,...) and is committed to receiving unlimited feedback on toxic groups related to children, violating advertisements... Google has removed 441 gambling games, prize exchange games, violent games, and unlicensed games in Viet Nam (the rate of removing violating games reaching 96%); Apple has removed 150 gambling games, unlicensed games (the rate of removing violating games reaching 90%). In addition, YouTube has increased the handling of violating channels, reducing the time to handle feedback. TikTok has upgraded its team of censors in Viet Nam, strengthened measures to protect children online, better controlled the content on its platform, and minimized toxic content that is not suitable for Vietnamese culture."

The Ministry of Public Security has directed developing a plan to construct and maintain 38 models of "Prevention, assistance, education and rehabilitation of people under 18 years old who violate the law or have completed their prison sentences and are reintegrating into the community", "Prevention of child sexual abuse", "Prevention of child violence, abuse and trafficking" in key localities; deploying 10 models of communication on the prevention of children and adolescents from breaking the law by using the VneID application at grassroots levels in Bac Ninh, Thanh Hoa and Dong Nai provinces.

Regarding stigma and non-discrimination, in 2022, the Ministry of Health mandated that all healthcare facilities nationwide provide medical examinations and health care to all individuals without discrimination or stigma against LGBTQ+ persons¹¹⁹. Many programs and activities have been implemented with the aim to reduce stigma and discrimination against vulnerable groups, including: training on reducing stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS in healthcare facilities; addressing discrimination against children with disabilities; and a media handbook to combat discrimination against vulnerable groups. Since 2017, Viet Nam has been participating in the Southeast Asia Stigma Reduction Initiative alongside Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand which aims to promote the implementation of activities to reduce stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS both at the national level and in healthcare facilities through regular measurement; application of methods; quality improvement in both reducing stigma and discrimination; and enhancement of mutual learning and sharing among healthcare facilities.

¹¹⁹ Official Letter No. 4132/BYT-PC dated August 3, 2022 of the Ministry of Health on rectifying medical examination and treatment for homosexuals, bisexuals and transgender people.

3.3. Difficulties and challenges

The law does not yet specifically define “sexual harassment in public places”. The staff involved in violence prevention and response are limited in both number and capacity, and the funding allocated is insufficient for the given tasks. Data on domestic violence is currently collected by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism at both the national and local levels. Additionally, other agencies are also collecting data on domestic violence. However, these data are not yet synchronized, connected, or shared effectively. In Viet Nam, there is no available statistical data on sexual harassment in the workplace. The collaboration among relevant agencies in addressing violence is still not close and, in some places, not in time.

Many gender stereotypes about the roles and positions of men and women in various areas of social life, employment, the family, publications, documents, and a preference for sons over daughters still exist in reality. Public awareness of gender-based violence remains low. Many victims of violence still keep a tolerant attitude, feel fear of stigma, and do not want to report the violence because they consider that it is normal. Most victims only report and seek support from authorities when the incident is serious, for example the violence occurs for a long time or may lead to the end of a marriage. This makes it difficult to collect statistics and conduct support solutions and services, interventions, and responses to violence.

The sex ratio at birth remains high, with 113.6 boys for every 100 girls in 2022.¹²⁰ Some ethnic minority areas still have the problem of early marriage due to long-standing customs, posing severe impact on the health of mothers and children, reducing population quality, affecting the quality of human resources, and being one of the barriers to the socio-economic development and sustainable development of ethnic minority and mountainous areas.

4. PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

4.1. Policies, laws and activities implemented

Viet Nam has taken numerous actions and measures to promote women's participation in social life and decision-making. The National Strategy on Gender Equality for the 2021-2030 period sets specific targets in the political field, indicating that by 2025, achieve 60% and by 2030, 75% of the key leading positions at all levels of government and state management agencies will be held by women. On 31 December 2020, the Prime Minister issued the Decision No. 2282/QĐ-TTg, approving the Program on “Strengthening the equal participation of women in leadership and management positions at all levels of policymaking for the period 2011-2030”. The goal of the Program is to ensure the equal participation of women in leading and managerial positions at all levels of

¹²⁰ Government, Report No. 237/BC-CP dated May 16, 2024 on implementation results of national targets on gender equality in 2023, Appendix 01.

policymaking to unleash women's potential and creativity, and to work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality and women's empowerment¹²¹. It can be seen that enhancing women's status in the political field plays a particularly important role in ensuring gender equality goals and meeting the requirements for the country's sustainable development and international integration.

In 2022, the Government issued a number of decrees stipulating retirement at a higher age for female cadres, officials, and civil servants holding leadership and management positions.¹²² This reflects that Viet Nam's policies have been established and progressively removed the gender inequality, enhanced the political participation of women. Additionally, the Government has issued the Decree No. 138/2020/ND-CP on 27 November 2020, concerning the recruitment, use, and management of civil servants, and the Decree No. 115/2020/ND-CP on 25 September 2020, on the recruitment, use, and management of public employees (amended and supplemented by the Decree No. 85/2023/ND-CP). These decrees stipulate that, in final grade promotions, preference should be given to women when determining successful candidates for civil servant promotion and public employee rank advancement.

To concretize state policies, Viet Nam is implementing numerous programs and projects to strengthen the capacity of female leaders and managers in local governments. The Project to Improve the Capacity of Young Male and Female Leaders and Managers of Local Governments Abroad for the period 2023-2025¹²³, issued in 2022 and currently being implemented, has identified young (under 45 years old) people holding leading and managerial positions and female leaders and managers with outstanding abilities and development potential, when they meet the standards and conditions for overseas training as prescribed by the current law¹²⁴. The goal of the Project is to enhance the policymaking capacity,

¹²¹ By 2025, 60%, and by 2030, 75% of key leadership positions in government agencies and local authorities at all levels to be held by women. For certain sectors and specific fields, where the proportion of female officials, civil servants, public employees, and workers is below 30%, targets may be adjusted to suit the practical situation of the agency or unit; the proportion of female officials who are planned for management and leadership positions at all levels should reach at least 40% by 2025 and 50% by 2030; the proportion of female officials planned for management and leadership positions at all levels who would have received training, professional development, and capacity building should reach 75% by 2025 and 90% by 2030; in areas with ethnic minority populations, there must be leadership officials from the ethnic minorities in line with the population structure.

¹²² Specifically stated in Section I, Part 3 of this Report.

¹²³ Decision No. 1641/QĐ-TTg dated 28 December 2022 of the Prime Minister.

¹²⁴ Female officials selected for training include: a) Young leaders and managers (under 45 years old) holding positions such as Deputy Head of the National Assembly Delegation, Deputy Chairperson of the People's Council, or Deputy Chairperson of the Provincial People's Committee; b) Female leaders and managers holding positions such as Deputy Head of the National Assembly Delegation, Deputy Chairperson of the People's Council, or Deputy Chairperson of the Provincial People's Committee who are still eligible to work until the end of the 2025-2030 term; c) Young leaders and managers (under 45 years old) who are highly competent, have outstanding achievements in their work, and show potential for development, planned for positions such as Deputy Chairperson of the People's Council or Deputy Chairperson of the Provincial People's Committee for the 2021-2026 and 2026-2030 periods.

leadership, management, direction, and administration skills of young people in leading and managerial positions and female leaders and managers of local governments. At the same time, the project is also aimed at creating a significant shift in mindset and management practices; accessing new ways of thinking; and contributing to building a professional, responsible, dynamic, and talented public service.

The Vietnamese Government has consistently shown great interest in and adopted various policies to encourage the equal participation of all women in the political system, including young women and minority groups such as indigenous women and ethnic minority women. The Project to Support Gender Equality Activities in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the period 2018-2025¹²⁵ is still being implemented to bring about positive changes in gender equality and to improve the status of women in ethnic minority areas, contributing to the successful implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2021-2030 period.

Viet Nam has implemented many policies in the field of information and communication work to enable women's access to and participation in decision-making processes. The National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 sets out 6 goals and 20 specific indicators in various areas.¹²⁶ Specifically, in the goal number 6, the Strategy addresses gender equality in the field of information and communication. To implement the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 and the National Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, on 23 October 2021, the Prime Minister issued the Decision No. 1790/QD-TTg regarding the Communication Program on Gender Equality until 2030¹²⁷. For the first time, Viet Nam has dedicated a separate communication program on gender equality with a vision toward the year 2030. The Program aims to, by 2025, have 100% of ministries, sectors, and localities that develop plans and implement activities on the occasion of the annual Action Month on Gender Equality and the prevention and response to gender-based violence. The Program also aims at increasing awareness of gender equality among community groups by 10-15% by 2030 compared to 2025; by 2030, having at least 70% of media agencies to include gender indicators in communication, by 2025, 90% by 2030; and 95% and by 2030, and 100%. The Program is further aimed at, by 2025, 95% and by 2030, 100% of community agreements and conventions adopted with no gender

¹²⁵ Decision No. 1898/QD-TTg dated 28 November 2017 of the Prime Minister.

¹²⁶ Target 1: Strive to achieve 60% by 2025 and 80% by 2030 of the population having access to basic knowledge on gender equality. Target 2: From 2025 onwards, 100% of Party organizations, government bodies, administrative agencies, committees, departments, and mass organizations at all levels will be informed, updated on gender equality, and committed to implementing gender equality. Target 3: From 2025 onwards, 100% of communes, city wards, and towns will have at least 4 news articles or reports on gender equality in the local information system each quarter. Target 4: Maintain 100% of central and local radio and television stations with monthly programs or sections to raise awareness about gender equality.

¹²⁷ Decision No. 1790/QD-TTg dated 23 October 2021 of the Prime Minister.

discrimination. The Program is also intended to ensure that agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals will receive at least two rounds of communication, dissemination, and updates on laws and policies on gender equality each year. The Program seeks to significantly improve gender equality communication and to foster widespread support for gender equality by raising awareness, promoting law compliance, and encouraging positive behavioral changes.

The Project to Support Gender Equality Activities in the Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the 2018-2025 period has set a target of reaching 80% of households of ethnic minority groups with very small populations to have access to information on gender and laws on gender equality. Regular and continuous communication activities under the Project have been undertaken through mass media channels such as: developing a specialized communication section on gender equality, which has been translated into nine ethnic languages broadcasted on the Voice of Viet Nam (VOV); creating specialized pages and publishing supplements on gender equality in the Ethnic and Development Newspaper and the Ethnic Magazine. Ministries and sectors have integrated communication activities on gender equality through channels such as: Viet Nam Television, books, newspapers, and publications, etc.

The 2015 Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (amended and supplemented in 2020) requires drafting agencies to comply with regulations on gender mainstreaming in the development of legal normative documents.¹²⁸ This requirement has expanded the scope of gender mainstreaming in government decrees and decisions made by the Prime Minister.

4.2. Achievements gained

In 2024, Viet Nam has been elected to the UN Women Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) for the 2025-2027 term. As such, Viet Nam will have more opportunities to attain the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. From January 2025 to the end of 2027, Viet Nam will participate in coordinating the development and implementation of UN Women's major orientations, in order to further promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

Viet Nam is a country having a high proportion of women in leading and managerial positions as compared worldwide. As of August 2024, Viet Nam has 1 female Politburo Member; 1 female Vice President; 1 female Vice Chairwoman of the National Assembly; 3 out of 12 female Chairpersons of committees and equivalent bodies of the National Assembly; 4 out of 30 female Ministers and equivalents; 14 out of 30 ministries, ministerial-level agencies, and government agencies have women in key positions; at the provincial-level administration, the proportion of women in key leading positions (Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons of People's Councils, People's Committees at the provincial level) makes up for

¹²⁸ Article 5 of the Law on Promulgation of Legal Normative Documents 2015 (amended in 2020)

74.6% (47/63 provinces/cities directly under the central government).¹²⁹ The proportion of National Assembly female deputies in the 2021-2026 term is 30.3%, an increase of 3.58% compared to the 2016-2021 term of 26.72%. The proportion of female deputies to provincial People's Councils in the 2021-2026 term is 29% (1,079 deputies, an increase of 2.44% compared to the previous term); the proportion of female deputies to district-level People's Councils is 29.08% (6,557 women, an increase of 1.58% compared to the previous term); the proportion of female deputies to communal People's Councils is 28.48% (68,265 women, an increase of 1.89% compared to the previous term).

Since 2008, Viet Nam's National Committee for Advancement of Women, an inter-agency body, has been assigned tasks of assisting the Prime Minister in researching and coordinating the resolution of inter-sectoral issues related to the advancement of women nationwide. Alongside the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs - the state agency responsible for gender equality, the Committee continues to play a leading role in promoting gender equality and advancing women's progress from 2019 to 2023, with a particular focus on promoting gender equality in the politics.

In addition to the efforts and aspirations of women candidates in gaining the trust of voters, in order to be elected as Members of the National Assembly and People's Councils, it is important to acknowledge the role of training sessions for first-time female candidates to the 15th National Assembly and all-level People's Councils for the 2021-2026 tenure. These sessions were organized by the National Committee for Advancement of Women, the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs, the Viet Nam Women's Union, and many localities. The training sessions focused on topics such as key issues to consider during the candidacy process for women candidates, such as experiences, knowledge, and skills needed for meeting with voters and election campaigning; the requirements for women in leading positions in Viet Nam's political system; experiences of women Members of the National Assembly and People's Councils in performing their representative duties; developing and presenting action plans by women candidates to voters; and skills for building a public image and working with the media. Additionally, the Committee on Social Issues (now the Social Affairs Committee) of the National Assembly also organizes seminars for women candidates to the National Assembly and People's Councils, focusing on promoting gender equality. These traditional activities have been implemented by these organizations in many previous elections and continued to play a significant role in the 2021 elections.

In parallel to that, an important and regular activity implemented annually by the National Committee for Advancement of Women and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs is the training course on gender equality and

¹²⁹ Government, *Report No. 237/BC-CP dated 16 May 2024 on implementation results of national targets on gender equality in 2023*, Hanoi. Data updated by the Ministry of Home Affairs as of August 2024.

gender sensitivity for journalists and media professionals at both the central and local levels.

To implement the Program on "Strengthening the Equal Participation of Women in Leadership and Management Positions at Policy-Making Levels for the period 2021 - 2030", the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) is actively coordinating with the Viet Nam Women's Union and other relevant agencies to review and evaluate the current status of women in leadership and management roles. Based on these findings, MOHA will develop a plan for training, development, and deployment strategies for female cadres. For the project on overseas training to enhance the leadership capacity of female officials and managers from localities for the 2023-2025 period, as of 30 May 2024, six training courses had been conducted (two in Japan and four in France) for 96 participants (50 of whom are female). These courses aimed to improve the capacity of young people holding leading and managerial positions in general, and in particular, to enhance the skills of female officials in leading and managerial positions in local governments.¹³⁰

Content on gender and gender equality is integrated into the training courses for civil servants. MOHA has organized training courses for female cadres; in-depth training has also been conducted for female officials and civil servants holding leadership and management positions at the ministerial level (from the department level and above), provincial level (the department level and above), and district level (key leaders at the district level and above). In 2023, nearly 400 female leaders and managers participated in training courses organized by MOHA.¹³¹ MOLISA has organized training courses on promoting gender equality in politics, and vocational training for the advancement of women with the participation of over 950 delegates who are female leaders, managers, female cadres in the planning, and members of the Boards for the Advancement of Women from various sectors, departments, agencies of provinces and cities.

The implementation of programs and projects adopted as from 2020 has contributed to narrowing the gender gap in the political sphere, raising awareness about gender equality, and providing knowledge on gender equality, management and leadership skills, as well as soft skills. Since 2018, MOHA has collaborated with the mass media agencies, Viet Nam Digital Television - VTC, and the Voice of Viet Nam to carry out communication campaigns on television in changing mindset and behavior among leaders, policy makers and the whole society regarding the role of women in political participation. This is aimed at enhancing the awareness of various levels and sectors, heads of State organs, organizations as well as individuals about the position, role, and contributions by women, particularly women officials, civil servants and employees in the political and social life. As a result, the awareness of leaders and policy makers and the entire

¹³⁰ Official Letter No. 3664/BNV-CTTN dated 26 June 2024, from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

¹³¹ Ministry of Home Affairs, Report No. 402/BC-BNV dated 23 January 2024, on the implementation of national targets on gender equality.

society has been changed, with regard to the role of women in the political participation.

The drafting and appraisal agencies, in a more and more serious manner, have complied with the requirement in integrating the gender issue while developing legal normative documents. The quality of gender mainstreaming has been continuously improved. Ministries and sectors proactively coordinate with the National Assembly's Social Affairs Committee to organize consultative forums, conferences, and workshops with gender experts and relevant professionals to assess the impact of policies from a gender perspective in order to promote the integration of gender equality issues in the proposals and drafts of legal normative documents. In 2023, the Ministry of Justice appraised 44 proposals of legal normative documents and 194 draft legal normative documents. It also participated in appraising laws, National Assembly resolutions, ordinances from the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, government decrees, and Prime Minister's decisions, as well as took part in appraising nearly 500 other project proposals, drafts and documents.¹³²

The Government has directed ministries, sectors, and localities to strengthen the checking and inspection regarding the implementation of gender equality laws.¹³³ At the local level, according to incomplete statistics, in 2023, there were 120 checking missions and over 400 inspecting missions concerning the implementation of policies and laws on gender equality, consequently, over 100 violations were identified.¹³⁴

4.3. Challenges and Difficulties

At present, the ratio of women participating in politics does not correspond to the qualifications, capabilities of women. For the 2021-2026 term, no woman is holding one of the four highest offices in Viet Nam.

As a target set for 2025, 60 percent of state management agencies and local governments at all levels will have women in key leading positions; but the target looks to be difficult to be met as regards the local administration at the district and commune levels.

¹³² Ministry of Justice, Report No. 569/BC-VSTBPN dated 29 December 2023, from the National Committee for Advancement of Women in the Justice.

¹³³ In 2023, Inspectorate of MOLISA incorporated gender-specific content into 66 inspections of compliance with occupational health and safety regulations at businesses. Among these inspections, 48 recommendations were made for businesses to fulfil their responsibilities to help and support the establishment of nurseries, preschools, or cover a portion of the costs for preschool care for employees, as stipulated in Clause 4, Article 136 of the Labour Code. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) conducted inspections and addressed violations related to policies for women, female students, and students in various localities and institutions. In 2023, MOET organized inspection teams in Dak Lak Province and Ho Chi Minh City. Additionally, MOLISA and the National Committee for Advancement of Women conducted inspections and assessments of the implementation of the Strategy and efforts for women's advancement in several provinces, including Vinh Long, Quang Binh, Binh Thuan, Ha Giang, Hoa Binh, Bac Giang, and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

¹³⁴ Government, *Report No. 237/BC-CP dated 16 May 2024 on the implementation results of national targets on gender equality in 2023.*

The assessment of gender impact during the formulation of legal normative documents is sometimes superficial and lacks gender-disaggregated data. The policies and regulations of legislative proposals presented to the National Assembly are primarily gender-neutral, without taking into consideration the gender differences in proposing measures for promoting gender equality.

5. PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

5.1. Policies, laws and activities implemented

Recognizing the importance of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, Viet Nam has participated in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda launched by the United Nations Security Council in October 2000 through the Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security. Based on UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security, in 2024, the Prime Minister issued the Decision No. 101/QĐ-TTg approving the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for the 2024 - 2030 period. The goal of the Program is to ensure and further promote gender equality; enhance the role, status, voice, rights, obligations, and responsibilities of women in participating in peace and security, in contributing to maintaining peace, stability, and sustainable development of the country and the world at large. The specific goal by 2030 is to strengthen the full, equal, and meaningful participation of Vietnamese women across key sectors, including politics, foreign affairs, national defense, and security, as well as in addressing and responding to non-traditional security challenges, in safeguarding peace and in maintaining international security. The Program also aims to better prevent and respond to gender-based violence in the context of emergencies and disasters and to meet with non-traditional security challenges; to strengthen gender mainstreaming in relief and recovery efforts, post-war recovery, including overcoming war aftermath, preventing, controlling, handling and responding to incidents, disasters and non-traditional security challenges; stepping up international cooperation in the area of Women, Peace, and Security.

To achieve the above-mentioned goal, the Program outlines several key tasks and solutions, including reviewing and further improving mechanisms, policies, and legislation to expand women's participation in the field of peace and security, as well as in post-war recovery, prevention, control, response, and addressing of incidents, disasters and non-traditional security challenges; increasing the effectiveness of preventing and responding to gender-based violence, meeting the specific needs of women, and promoting their meaningful participation in post-war recovery, prevention, response, and addressing of incidents, disasters and non-traditional security challenges. The National Action Plan on Women, Peace, Security for the 2024-2030 period, while being implemented, has supplemented and improved the policy framework on gender equality and women's empowerment; particularly, the Program constitutes the first comprehensive framework for Women, Peace, and Security, as it contains clear-cut objectives and solutions aimed at further more actions for Women,

Peace, and Security, especially in face of newly emerging and non-traditional security challenges.

Viet Nam has always considered the mass media a crucial solution to enhance public understanding of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. Goal 5 of the National Action Plan for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has called for the use of communication to raise awareness of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.¹³⁵

Furthermore, the Communication Program on Gender Equality until 2030 put forth the targets that each year, agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals will be twice got informed and updated on laws and policies on gender equality; by 2025, 100% of ministries, sectors, and localities would develop and implement plans for the annual Action Month on Gender Equality and the prevention and response to gender-based violence; would increase awareness of gender equality among community groups by 10-15% by 2030, compared to 2025; by 2025, at least 70% of media agencies would utilize the Gender Indicators in communication work on a pilot basis; by 2030, 90% of official media agencies would apply the Gender Indicators; by 2025, 95% and by 2030, 100% of community agreements and conventions would be adopted with no gender discrimination.

To strengthen the capacity of security organizations in the field of human rights and the prevention of sexual violence, gender-based violence, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse, on 30 November 2020, Viet Nam issued the Plan for implementing the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. The objective of the Plan is to effectively implement the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (ACTIP), with a view to further improving the institutional framework, enhancing the effectiveness of the prevention and combating of transnational organized trafficking in persons and related crimes; identifying the content and roadmap for domestically codifying ACTIP provisions in line with the Constitution, laws, policies, and conditions of Viet Nam; ensuring domestic and foreign requirements, ensuring national security and social order and security; enhancing the effectiveness of international cooperation in preventing and combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children, fully fulfilling the obligations of a state, member of the ASEAN Community, in preventing and combating trafficking in persons; protecting the interests of the State, organizations, and individuals; contributing to enhancing Viet Nam's position in the region and in the world, and consolidating people's confidence in the Party and State leadership.

The Program for the prevention and reduction of child labour in violation of the law for the period 2021-2025, and towards 2030, is being implemented with the following goals: preventing, detecting, supporting, and intervening in child

¹³⁵ Decision No. 1790/QD-TTg dated 23 October 2021 of the Prime Minister.

labour in violation of the law and children at risk of becoming child laborers; communicating about preventing and reducing child labour; training on preventing and reducing child labour; regarding the orientation towards 2030: striving to reduce the rate of child labour and adolescents aged 5 to 17 to 4.5 per cent; minimizing the rate of child laborers and adolescents engaged in heavy, hazardous, and dangerous work among child laborers and adolescents.¹³⁶

Concerning the narrowing of the digital gap relating to the gender issue, in 2023, Viet Nam has promulgated the Law on Telecommunications and the Law on Electronic Transactions (2023). Based on the provisions of the 2013 Constitution and the legal requirements for integrating gender equality into the draft of legal normative documents, the drafting units, right at the starting point of proposing legislative drafts, have conducted gender impact assessments of the policies mentioned in these legislative drafts¹³⁷. The outcomes of the review and assessment have shown that the policies do not impact the opportunities, conditions, capabilities, or benefits of each gender, as they are applied uniformly and do not discriminate. During the implementation of the Law on Telecommunications and the Law on Electronic Transactions, after they were approved by the National Assembly and entered into force, the Ministry of Information and Communications has developed programs and plans to stabilize the economy, ensure social security, and improve the lives of citizens. These efforts have facilitated the implementation of gender equality initiatives, narrowed the gender gap, and enhanced the role and status of women both within the family and in society.

5.2. Achievements gained

Viet Nam, as a friend, a reliable partner, and a responsible member of the international community, has proactively and actively integrated itself into the international community, made practical contributions to implementing the UN Charter, to maintaining peace and security, to promoting cooperation and development, hence Viet Nam's prestige and position on the international arena has been heightened. Regarding these achievements, the women military personnel, women officers of the Viet Nam People's Army and the Viet Nam People's Public Security Force have made very important contributions to. In January 2018, Viet Nam sent its first female military officer to participate in UN peacekeeping operations as an individual staff officer at the mission in South Sudan. As of August 2024, Viet Nam has deployed approximately 117 female officers to participate in UN peacekeeping operations, including 19 female officers deployed individually and 98 female soldiers deployed as part of unit formations¹³⁸. Notably, Viet Nam also had 4 female officers from the People's Public Security Force participating in UN peacekeeping operations. Viet Nam's women officers joining in UN peace-keeping operations currently has reached a

¹³⁶ Decision No. 782/QĐ-TTg dated 27 May 2021 of the Prime Minister.

¹³⁷ Official Letter No. 2903/BTTTT-HTQT dated 22 July 2024 of the Ministry of Information and Communications.

¹³⁸ Official Letter No. 3374/BQP-CT dated 19 August 2024 of the Ministry of National Defence.

ratio of 15%.¹³⁹ Within the framework of ASEAN, Viet Nam actively contributes to building the region's policy framework on Women, Peace, and Security and participates in the Southeast Asian Women Peace Mediators Network.

At the missions, Vietnamese female officers have undertaken and successfully accomplished various assignments, such as military observers, staff officers, training officers, doctors, and nurses. At the International Conference on Women and UN Peacekeeping on 26 November 2022, in Ha Noi, representative of the UN was of the view that Viet Nam was among the leading countries in efforts to increase women's participation in UN peacekeeping operations. The UN representative also commended Vietnamese peacekeepers for their mission to bring peace, hope, and opportunities for a better life to people in the most challenging places in the world. Vietnamese female peacekeeping officers serve as a bridge, bringing the image, the people, and culture of their country to international friends.

Viet Nam has implemented a number of programs and models to promote women's participation in safeguarding the state border security, such as¹⁴⁰: the program “Encouraging women to participate in building and safeguarding the territorial sovereignty and state border”, the “Women's group protecting border lines and boundary markers”, the “Club Women participating in protecting the sovereignty and border security”, the “Mass movement to participate in self-managing security and order in border areas”, etc. Women's unions at all levels have mobilized members and families to join the Border Guard in managing border lines and national boundary markers. At the same time, they have closely coordinated with other forces to propagate, combat, and prevent border violations, smuggling, illegal migration, and trafficking in persons (especially women and children) across the border.

To implement the National Digital Transformation Program until 2025 with a vision toward 2030, the Prime Minister issued the Decision No. 749/QD-TTg on 03 June 2020 emphasizing that the engagement of the entire political system, coordinated actions at all levels, and the participation of all citizens are key factors for the success of the digital transformation. On 31 March 2022, the Prime Minister issued the Decision No. 411/QD-TTg, which outlines the establishment of Community Digital Technology Teams at every neighborhood, hamlet, and village. These teams, composed of dedicated and enthusiastic local volunteers and trained personnel, are tasked with promoting and assisting the public in using digital technology and “Make in Viet Nam” digital platforms, thus establishing a nation-wide digital technology network. This will help women and girls learn digital technology, to introduce their products to electronic transactions, and to contribute to raising people's knowledge, and improve people's life in all aspects. As of June 2023, 52 out of 63 provinces

¹³⁹ Official Letter No. 444/CQTT dated 26 June 2024 of the Standing Office of the Committee for the Advancement of Women, Ministry of National Defence.

¹⁴⁰ Practice in some localities: Cao Bang, Lang Son, Ha Giang, Son La, Nghe An, Binh Phuoc, Gia Lai, An Giang, Long An, Tra Vinh, Ben Tre...

and cities in Viet Nam have met the 100%-target of establishing the Community Digital Technology Teams at the commune level (in total, there are 74,422 teams with 348,362 members and each team consists of 4 to 9 members).¹⁴¹

The Ministry of Information and Communications has proactively integrated information and communication content on resolutions and policies of the Party and Government, and laws on gender equality into other contents to be disseminated through local information and communication systems, as well as radio stations in wards, communes, villages, and hamlets to raise awareness of gender equality to all people, especially those in remote areas, at the borders, on the islands, and ethnic minorities regions with limited access to mass media. In particular, a number of local stations such as those in Quang Nam, An Giang, Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Dak Nong, and Kon Tum have offered radio and television programs in ethnic languages for ethnic minorities.

At the same time, the Ministry of Information and Communications has implemented a number of training programs to improve the people's know-how about digital transformation such as: Organizing training on digital transformation through mass open online courses on the One Touch platform, providing free resources on digital transformation through the "Digital Transformation Handbook".

By 2023, Viet Nam will have 8,273 Communal Cultural Post Offices, assigned by the State to the Viet Nam Post Corporation to build, maintain and manage, to provide public postal services and other business services, as well as to organize activities which include instructing the community on reading books and newspapers, and internet searching, and to provide postal and telecommunications services and essential goods for people in rural areas. Specifically, Communal Cultural Post Offices were prioritized and chosen to: Provide public telecommunications services in the Public Telecommunications Program; Organize and implement programs and projects on rural information and communication development and other programs and projects of the State on rural areas in accordance with regulations, aiming for 100% of communes and towns to be connected and updated with the latest information and electronic transactions; support agricultural products and craft villages in breaking into e-commerce platforms, contributing to synchronous investment in projects under the National Target Program. This is also one of the efforts of the Vietnamese Government to improve access to information, knowledge and use of information and communication technology for women and girls in disadvantaged localities.

5.3. Challenges and Difficulties

To this day, even though the war ended a long time ago, the Vietnamese people, especially women, continue to suffer from lingering effects of war and

¹⁴¹ Official Letter No. 2903/BTTTT-HTQT dated 22 July 2024 of the Ministry of Information and Communications.

severe consequences from unexploded ordnance, landmines, and chemical/dioxin contamination, affecting their daily life, security, and livelihoods.

Although the number of female officers in management and leadership positions has increased from 30.25% (in 2015) to 35% (in 2024), the proportion of women in military, security, law enforcement agencies, and peace negotiation delegations remains generally low¹⁴². In 2024, women make up 3.11% of the total defense force (up from 1.8 per cent in 2010). In the police sector, as of December 2023, women constitute 14.68% of the total staff in the People's Police Force. Among leadership positions at all levels, female officers hold 9.58% of these roles, and women make up 16.54% of the total number of female personnel in the People's Police Force.¹⁴³

Viet Nam has continually faced the impacts of the digital environment and the development of science and technology on the implementation of gender equality. In the process of digital transformation, the digitalization trend, and the efforts to bring these issues to digital platforms means digital transformation affects gender promotion efforts, both in Viet Nam and globally, including the issue of gender-based violence. Studies assessing the impact of digital transformation have also shown that female workers will be the most severely affected group, as women face challenges related to professional and technical skills, as well as family-related commitments. The majority of unskilled labor are women, as they face social barriers and prejudices, and are also affected by the burden of ensuring social security by employers, and they are the first to be at risk of being laid off or losing their jobs under the pressure to ensure resources and finances for organizations and businesses, even before reaching retirement age. Women and girls often face more difficulties than men in using and interacting with digital technology due to social norms imposed upon women. Educational programs teaching digital skills may not be sufficiently encouraging or stimulating enough to generate the demand for participation in the digital environment, leading to women being more easily affected and at risk of not having access or opportunities to utilize digital services. Additionally, women and girls are also more susceptible to gender-based abuse on online platforms, news applications, social networks, and online games, such as receiving harassment messages, being secretly photographed, being verbally abused, and having personal information, images, or videos disseminated without their consent. This can lead to serious consequences such as psychological disorders and social isolation.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

6.1. Policies, laws and activities implemented

¹⁴² Official Letter No. 444/CQTT dated 26 June 2024 of the Standing Office of the Committee for the Advancement of Women, Ministry of National Defence.

¹⁴³ Official Letter No. 2314/BCA-X03 dated 11 July 2024 of the Ministry of Public Security.

The mainstreaming of a gender perspective into environmental policies has been stipulated in Clause 3, Article 4 of the 2020 Law on Environmental Protection. This law stipulates that environmental protection is harmoniously linked with social security, children's rights, gender equality, and the ability to ensure the right of all to live in a clean environment. Chapter VII of the law, with 7 articles, is dedicated to regulations on responding to climate change. Article 90 of this law stipulates the implementation of activities to adapt to climate change, mitigate disaster risks. In addition, it also details community-based and ecosystem-based climate change adaptation models, and responses to rising sea-levels and urban flooding. With this provision, the issue of climate change, gender, and the role of the community continues to be affirmed and clarified at the legal level, creating a legal framework for the development of policies, strategies, and programs that integrate gender, community, and climate change at the national, sectoral, regional, and local levels.

The 2024 Land Law strictly prohibits gender discrimination in land management and use. It integrates gender considerations to promote social progress, ensuring that both men and women have equitable access to state land policies and fair and equal rights in land management and use. Article 4, Clause 5 of the 2013 Law on Disaster Prevention and Control (amended in 2020) stipulates that disaster prevention and control measures must follow humanitarian, equitable, transparent, and gender-equal approaches. The Law also designates vulnerable groups, including pregnant women or mothers with children under 36 months, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, individuals with serious illnesses, and the poor, as priority beneficiaries of state support in terms of livelihood and production recovery following disaster impacts.

The National Strategy on Climate Change until 2050¹⁴⁴ includes specific measures to address climate change, with a focus on “ensuring social welfare and gender equality”. The Strategy emphasizes enhancing awareness, knowledge, and capacity regarding disaster management and climate change adaptation for women. Additionally, it outlines policies for mobilizing and managing financial resources to encourage and strengthen the participation of businesses and the public, with particular emphasis on women.

Viet Nam has issued the National Adaptation Plan for the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050¹⁴⁵. The plan's overarching goal is to reduce vulnerability and risk from the impacts of climate change by enhancing the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities, economic sectors, and ecosystems. It also aims to integrate climate change adaptation into national economic development strategies and planning systems.¹⁴⁶ The National Plan

¹⁴⁴ Decision No. 896/QĐ-TTg dated 26 July 2022 of the Prime Minister.

¹⁴⁵ Decision No. 1055/QĐ-TTg dated 20 July 2020 of the Prime Minister.

¹⁴⁶ Develop sustainable livelihood models with a focus on training, vocational transition, and technological support, and facilitate access to funding for communities in high-risk areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Enhance awareness, knowledge, and risk management capacities related to natural disasters and climate change adaptation among female leaders, members of

emphasizes the importance of enhancing gender equality and women empowerment through “increasing awareness and knowledge about climate change and natural disasters across all levels [...], strengthening capacities, developing female human resources, and promoting gender equality in climate change adaptation.” The Plan addresses gender through the enhancement of women's capacities and the development of female human resources to participate in climate change adaptation efforts, aligning with its second objective. Gender equality is also highlighted in Stages II and III of the Plan, covering the period from 2030 to 2050, aiming to build on the achievements of 2021-2030 to address various issues, including gender inequality.

Through the provisions of the 2020 Law on Environmental Protection, political and social organizations, including the Viet Nam Women's Union from the central to the local levels, have gained more legal basis to carry out their functions and tasks. That is done through the coordination program with the state management agency for environmental protection, through all the levels of the Association carrying out communications and popularizing environmental law, presiding over association mobilization activities, encouraging women to actively participate in environmental protection in accordance with regulations, presiding over/participating in monitoring the implementation of environmental policies and laws and contributing to the development of environmental laws.

Viet Nam has also adopted the Project on “Increasing Community Awareness and Community-Based Disaster Risk Management until 2030”, which clearly outlines the implementation role of the Viet Nam Women’s Union (in Section 11, Part V, Article 1). Since 2017, the Viet Nam Women’s Union has led the development of the “Gender Equality Integration Guide for Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Planning at the Commune Level”.

In agriculture and rural development, gender considerations have been integrated into the programs and policies of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This includes the Gender Equality Action Plan for the 2020-2025 period, which focuses on mechanisms to ensure gender equality in the ministry's human resource development strategy. The Action Plan aims to continue narrowing the gender gap, providing equal opportunities for both women and men to participate in and benefit from agriculture and rural development, and contributing to the successful implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the 2021-2030 period.

The National Target Program for New Rural Development for the 2021-2025 period is designed not only to build infrastructure and physical facilities but also to focus significantly on economic development, preserving the rural identity, promoting traditional culture, and enhancing community capacity in rural society.

women's associations, youth, and local communities, particularly in high-risk disaster zones. By 2030, strengthen the roles, capacities, and involvement of women and youth in climate change adaptation and disaster risk management activities; promote movements and initiatives to raise awareness and knowledge among youth about climate change, disaster prevention, and adaptation strategies.

This program integrates economic, cultural, and social aspects in rural areas in a cohesive and coordinated manner. These new approaches, compared to previous phases, aim to ensure that rural areas develop harmoniously and sustainably, with a rich cultural identity, as well as improved literacy and quality of life for residents through access to education, healthcare, nutrition, and gender equality, among others.

It can be seen that recent policies have made decisive steps in mainstreaming climate change and gender equality. The national monitoring and evaluation system for climate change adaptation has assigned MOLISA to carry out specific activities and collect data for 2 indicators (the number of vocational training and livelihood transition programs for communities and vulnerable groups affected by climate change, and the percentage of people, including women, in vulnerable areas impacted by climate change receiving vocational training and livelihood transition support).¹⁴⁷ In addition, the projects on the implementation of Viet Nam's commitments at COP 26 set out the task of “Developing social security models and fair transition in line with the natural, ecological, and social conditions of different regions”¹⁴⁸...

6.2. Achievements gained

Viet Nam has undertaken numerous actions and commitments to integrate gender equality and ensure women's full participation into its highest national agendas on climate action. Gender equality is embedded in policies related to disaster risk management across all stages, from prevention and response to recovery (as outlined in the 2013 Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, amended in 2020). Gender equality is also incorporated into the regulations governing specialized disaster response forces at various levels. This framework aims to streamline and enhance the effectiveness of existing disaster response personnel at both central and local levels, particularly those in charge of dyke management and disaster prevention in order to fully carry out state management objectives as detailed in the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, and to meet the requirements on natural disaster prevention and control in the time to come. These forces operate on a gender-blind basis, aligning with legal requirements for gender equality. In addition, among the nine core elements of disaster prevention outlined in Article 13 of the Law on Disaster Prevention and Control, gender-related aspects are reflected to varying degrees in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3, and more distinctly in paragraphs 8 and 9. Consideration for vulnerable groups is also addressed in points a, b, d, and e of paragraph 1, Article 30, which pertains to disaster recovery phases. Furthermore, Viet Nam has implemented numerous policies to support affected populations, including women and girls, in the aftermath of disasters and floods. These include emergency relief measures for areas which have been heavily impacted by natural disasters and diseases, as

¹⁴⁷ Decision No. 148/QĐ-TTg dated 28 January 2022 of the Prime Minister.

¹⁴⁸ Decision No. 888/QĐ-TTg dated 25 July 2022 of the Prime Minister.

well as policies providing rice support to a number of provinces during fallow periods¹⁴⁹.

Viet Nam has become a one of the few countries in the world that is integrating gender equality into its national strategy for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. In September 2020, the Vietnamese Government submitted an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), committing to increase its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by 2030.

From 2019 to 2022, Viet Nam developed gender indicators and disaggregated data (SADDD) by sex, age, and disability, which complement the socioeconomic database of the Viet Nam Disaster Monitoring System. The SADDD dataset enhances understanding of risks faced by vulnerable groups, gender-specific impacts, and details related to vulnerability levels due to disasters.

Viet Nam is making efforts to implementing its commitments at the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), including the target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Additionally, Viet Nam is upholding its commitments under international human rights conventions to protect and promote human rights. This includes ensuring fundamental freedoms such as the right to participate, transparency, accountability, equality, and non-discrimination in an effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

After three years of implementing the National Target Program on New Rural Development for the period of 2021-2025, economic and social infrastructure in rural areas has seen continued investment, upgrading, and development, resulting in a relatively well-coordinated improvement. Additionally, the rural environment has been enhanced towards a brighter, greener, cleaner, and more beautiful standard. Throughout the implementation of the program for the 2021-2025 period, efforts have been made to ensure that the approach does not lead to a "one-size-fits-all" situation across different regions. The development of new rural areas has progressively incorporated local traditional values and the unique characteristics of each region, resulting in diverse ideas for planning and rural landscape architecture. Rural areas are characterized by open spaces where people are closely connected with one another and with nature. They feature a blend of buildings and green spaces, creating communal areas for social interaction, fostering connections among rural residents, and offering pathways for engagement with urban areas.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ For example: Decision No. 1823/QĐ-TTg dated 17 November 2020, by the Prime Minister regarding the release of rice from national reserves to the provinces of Ha Tinh, Nghe An, and Binh Dinh to support hunger relief for people in flood-affected areas; Decision No. 1049/QĐ-TTg dated 13 September 2023, by the Prime Minister regarding the release of rice from national reserves to six localities to support people during the lean season in 2023.

¹⁵⁰ Numbers and Facts Magazine General Statistics Office (Ministry of Planning and Investment), July 2023.

The Viet Nam Women's Union has actively contributed to climate change adaptation and environmental protection efforts. In its leadership role, environmental protection has become a key focus of the “Building the family of 5 Without-s and 3 Clean-s” campaign, launched by the Viet Nam Women's Union in 2010. This initiative supports the implementation of the National Target Program for New Rural Development. The 13th National Women's Congress detailed specific actions for environmental protection and climate change adaptation, which include raising awareness and building skills among women to manage natural disasters, pandemics, and adapt to climate change, enhancing the representation of Women’s Union organizations in disaster prevention and response committees, focusing on “on-site logistics” within the “4 on-site” approach, promoting the representative role of the Women's Union in the steering committees for natural disaster prevention and control at all levels, focusing on "on-site logistics" in the "4 on-site" motto, promoting the role of the Women's Union in communication and mobilization of women to participate in environmental protection, organizing the annual Tree Planting Festival with the theme “Women sowing a brighter future” in response to the Government's “Planting one billion trees in the 2021 - 2025 period”, classifying waste at source and combating plastic waste, among others. Annually, the Viet Nam Women's Union incorporates key aspects of environmental protection and climate change adaptation into its plans and guidelines for implementing the Union's activities, tailored to local conditions and target groups. The Union integrates and leverages resources to implement and develop effective models, scaling up successful initiatives to promote sustainable practices.¹⁵¹

Over the past decade, since the issuance of Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW dated 03 June 2013, which addresses proactive measures for climate change adaptation, enhanced resource management, and environmental protection, numerous effective environmental protection and climate adaptation models have been established, maintained, and scaled up by various levels of the Women's Union in many localities. These models have garnered widespread participation and support from numerous officials, union members, women, and community members, and have been recognized and highly praised by local authorities, governments, and relevant sectors. In various localities, different levels of the Women's Union have inherited and developed new, innovative models. According to the 5-year report on the plastic waste reduction movement by the Viet Nam Women's Union (2018-2023), the total number of environmental protection and plastic waste reduction models led by the Union is 9,153. These include widely adopted models such as “Women against plastic bags”, “Women say no to plastic bags and single-use plastic products”, “Turning trash into cash”, and “Waste separation at source”. In addition, livelihood models that adapt to climate change, such as "free-range chicken farming" (Lao Cai), aquaculture (Ca Mau), lotus cultivation (Quang Nam, Binh Dinh), and asparagus cultivation and

¹⁵¹ Environmental Magazine (Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment), No. 11/2023.

processing (Ninh Thuan), have been actively implemented by various levels of the Women's Union across numerous regions. These initiatives have garnered widespread participation from members and women. Currently, 100% of provinces and cities have established environmental protection models, with 29,815 local sectors implementing at least one model for maintaining environmental cleanliness or livelihood models that adapt to climate change. These community-based models not only contribute effectively to environmental protection and climate adaptation but also support the Women's Unions in carrying out social welfare activities. Through models where women collect recyclable materials to fundraise for member support and to sponsor children in need, data from 45 out of 65 provinces and cities show that Women's Unions have generated a fund of 5.7 billion VND. This fund has been used to provide scholarships and health insurance to tens of thousands of women and children facing hardships across the country.¹⁵²

Promoting the role of women in mitigating the impacts of climate change, the Viet Nam Women's Union has proactively collaborated with various ministries, agencies, and international organizations to implement gender-integrated programs and projects for disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation. Notable models include: producing fish sauce, dried shrimp, and preserved foods in Hue, growing ginger in bags and moringa in Quang Binh, a cooperative for water hyacinth weaving in Dong Thap, cultivating local red peanuts resilient to erosion under VietGAP standards, raising free-range, biologically safe chickens in Lao Cai, and growing lotus on less productive rice fields according to VietGAP standards, among others. Adhering to sustainable production techniques not only safeguards the health of producers and consumers and enhances economic efficiency, but also protects the environment, contributing to the national goal of reducing overall emissions.

6.3. Challenges and Difficulties

Reality has shown that despite Viet Nam's significant achievements in socio-economic development, gender inequality persists in some areas. This not only increases the risks and impacts of natural disasters on women but also limits their ability to contribute effectively to disaster response efforts.¹⁵³

Women and children are more vulnerable than men to environmental and climate-related risks because women are more likely to be concentrated in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, particularly in rural and informal areas, which are more negatively affected by these risks.¹⁵⁴ A survey in 2022 conducted by MOLISA revealed that 81.9% of respondents believe that women and children

¹⁵² Environmental Magazine (Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment), No. 11/2023.

¹⁵³ Official Letter No. 4835/BNN-DD dated 08 July 2024 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

¹⁵⁴ GIZ, Gender Equality and Climate Change in Viet Nam: Achievements, Policy Gaps, Challenges and Recommendations, Ha Noi, 2022 pp. 24-25; UNDP, Policy Brief: Gender Equality in Climate Change and Natural Disaster Adaptation in Viet Nam, 2017.

are more vulnerable and impacted by environmental and climate risks compared to men. This is particularly true for marginalized groups such as ethnic minority women, women in rural areas, the poor, and migrants, who face multiple layers of inequality.¹⁵⁵

The voices of women at the grassroots level in the process of drafting documents with environmental and climate change policies are less heard compared to men. Particularly, women have fewer opportunities to participate in decision-making processes at all levels on issues related to the environment and climate change.¹⁵⁶ There is also a failure to recognize women as agents of change and integral parts of the solutions in the creation, implementation, and monitoring of actions related to environmental protection and climate change adaptation.

Men and women have different capacities as resource users and contributors to the implementation of climate policies. In waste management, 90% of waste collectors and scavengers are women. In the energy sector, most jobs in production, construction, and engineering are traditionally considered suitable only for men, hence women's comparatively low contribution.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Report on survey results on the implementation status and proposed amendments and supplements to the Law on Gender Equality in 2006, Hanoi, July 2022.

¹⁵⁶ UN Women and Empower, Policy Brief: Gender Equality and Climate Change in Viet Nam, 2021. Read the full report in English here: https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/images/unwomen/emp/attachments/2021/04/publication_vietnam%20report_digital2.pdf?la=en&vs=1328

¹⁵⁷ Report "The current status of gender mainstreaming in climate change response policies in Vietnam" was conducted by the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) in collaboration with UN Women and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), published in April 2021.

PART IV:

NATIONAL PROCEDURES AND MECHANISMS

1. STATE MANAGEMENT MACHINERY ON GENDER EQUALITY

The two Vietnamese governmental agencies specializing in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (the state management agency) and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women of Viet Nam (the inter-sectoral coordinating agency).

The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs is a government agency performing the state management function on gender equality nationwide. Its functions, duties and powers are stipulated by current laws, including guiding and organizing the implementation of gender equality policies and laws in line with legislation; coordinating and collaborating with related ministries, sectors, localities, socio-political organizations, agencies, and organizations to implement the National Action Month on Gender Equality to Prevent against and Respond to Gender-based Violence; and reporting to competent authorities on the implementation of gender equality as stipulated by laws.¹⁵⁸ Other ministries and ministerial-level agencies coordinate with MOLISA to perform the state management function on gender equality within their respective fields; while People's Committees at all levels perform the state management function on gender equality in their localities.

The Department of Gender Equality is a department under the MOLISA, responsible for advising and assisting the Minister in executing the state management function on gender equality nationwide as stipulated by laws¹⁵⁹. Some ministries and sectors have assigned specific departments to oversee their gender equality work, namely the Ethnic Committee has delegated such tasks to its Department of Ethnic Minorities, the Ministry of Home Affairs to its Department of Youth Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism to its Department of Family, etc...

The Circular No.11/2021/TT-BLĐTBXH dated September 22nd, 2021 on guiding the functions, duties, and powers of the Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs under provincial and municipal People's Committees and the Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs Divisions under the People's Committees of districts, towns, provincial/municipal cities stipulates that the Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs serve as both the state management agency for gender equality and the standing agency for the Provincial/Municipal Committee for the Advancement of Women. Up to now, there are gender equality officers in all Departments and Divisions of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.

¹⁵⁸ Decree No. 62/2022/ND-CP dated September 12, 2022 of the Government.

¹⁵⁹ Decision No. 239/QĐ-LĐTBXH dated March 07, 2023 of the Minister of MOLISA.

Statistics show that there are currently over 9,000 gender equality officers from provincial to communal levels nationwide (including 58 provincial-level and 65 district-level full-time staff, and nearly 9,000 part-time staff and collaborators at communal-levels).¹⁶⁰ In 2023, various ministries, sectors, and localities organized more than 1,000 training sessions on knowledge, skills, and professional practices on gender equality and for the advancement of women with more than 70,000 attendances.¹⁶¹ The training content included: analyzing gender issues in the development and implementation of laws and policies; assessing gender impacts in the formulation of legal documents; skills for gender mainstreaming in politics; communication skills on gender equality, prevention of gender-based violence, counseling and supporting victims of violence, and providing social work services for those affected by gender-based violence; as well as implementing models for gender equality and preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

The state management apparatus for gender equality at all levels has been increasingly consolidated with enhanced capacity, but there exists personnel shortage. Gender equality staff are frequently changed, which affects the effectiveness of task implementation. Gender equality is a specialized work and relates to all aspects of socio-economic life. Therefore, gender equality staff need not only to master policies and legal regulations but also to have in-depth knowledge in various fields, be gender-sensitive and able to advise on mainstreaming gender equality into the work programs of ministries, sectors, and local socio-economic development plans.

The National Committee for the Advancement of Women of Viet Nam, an inter-agency coordinating organization of the Government, was established in 1993 and continues to play its role in researching and coordinating the of inter-agency matters related to the advancement of women nationwide. MoLISA serves as the standing agency of the National Committee, with the Minister of MoLISA holding the position of Chairperson of the National Committee. This arrangement aims at ensuring close linkage between the state management agency for gender equality and the inter-agency organization for the advancement of women, facilitating the implementation of tasks aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women across the country. The Committee's members include 18 leaders from various ministries, sectors, and central agencies. The system of Women's Advancement has been consolidated with the Committees having been established in 42 ministries, sectors, and agencies at the central level, as well as in all 63 centrally-governed provinces and cities.

The State Budget Law of 2015 (amended and supplemented in 2020) serves as an important legal foundation for state budget management. The law includes provisions that prioritize budget allocation for achieving gender equality goals

¹⁶⁰ Government, Report No. 237/BC-CP dated May 16, 2024 on the achievements of the national GE goal implementation in 2023, Hanoi.

¹⁶¹ Government, Report No. 237/BC-CP dated May 16, 2024 on the achievements of the national GE goal implementation in 2023, Hanoi.

and for making an estimate of state budget based on socio-economic development tasks and ensuring national defense, security, foreign affairs, and gender equality. This is a crucial prerequisite for achieving equality in accessing and controlling the country's resources.

The state budget ensures funding for ministries, sectors, and localities to carry out gender equality initiatives outlined in the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030; the Program for the Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence 2021-2025; the Communication Program on Gender Equality up to 2023; and the regular operational activities of the Women's Advancement Committees in ministries, agencies and local levels. Additionally, budget funds to implement projects and sub-projects related to gender equality are allocated in different National Target Programs, including: the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas 2021-2030; the National Target Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2021-2025; and the National Target Program for New Rural Development 2021-2025.

2. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON GENDER EQUALITY

On March 3, 2021, the Government of Viet Nam issued the Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP approving the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021-2030. The overall objective of the Strategy is to “continue to narrow the gender gaps, create conditions and opportunities for women and men to equally participate in and benefit from all aspects of social life, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of the country.”

The Strategy includes six goals and 20 specific indicators aimed at further narrowing the gender gaps in the following areas: politics; economics and labor; family life and prevention and response to gender-based violence; health; education and training; and information and communication.

In addition to maintaining results achieved from previous phases, the 2021-2030 Strategy also introduces new indicators. These include: reducing the proportion of female workers in the agricultural sector; increasing public social assistance facilities that implement supportive activities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence; reducing the adolescent birth rate; providing pilot health care services for LGBT individuals; and including gender and gender equality contents in the national education programmes and curriculum. The National Strategy on Gender Equality for the 2021-2030 period is basically aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as outlined in Decision No. 622/QĐ-TTg dated May 10, 2017 on Issuance of the National Action Plan for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995 in Beijing, China. In 1996, shortly after the Beijing Conference on Women, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam approved the National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women by the Year 2000. The Plan established 11 objectives aimed at promoting women's participation in various spheres of economic and political life and enhancing their rights within families and society. As of 2024, Vietnam has continued to develop and implement several strategic frameworks for advancing women's progress, including the National Strategy for the Advancement of Vietnamese Women by 2010 and two National Strategies on Gender Equality 2011-2020 and 2021-2030. These Strategies encompass numerous goals, solutions, and actions that Viet Nam has committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Viet Nam has consistently adhered to the implementation and monitoring process, engaging relevant parties in the execution of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Planning and Investment are the focal agencies responsible for guiding the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, respectively. Various ministries, agencies, sectors, socio-political organizations, social organizations, and the private sector actively participate in the implementation and contribute to develop the periodic reports on these two documents.

The Viet Nam Women's Union is a socio-political organization within the political system, operating in four levels from central to grassroots, with approximately 19 million members ¹⁶² with legal status and representing the legitimate rights and interests of women at all levels in Viet Nam, striving for the development of women and gender equality. With its function of representing, caring for, and protecting the legal and legitimate rights and interests of women, the Viet Nam Women's Union actively participates in monitoring the implementation of the Party's directions, policies, and state laws related to women, families, children, and gender equality, safeguarding the rights and interests of women. In particular, as an organization providing social criticism and protects the rights and interests of women, the Viet Nam's Women's Union has made practical contributions to promoting the implementation of the Platform for Action in Viet Nam and to the development of the national reports. Currently, the Vietnam Women's Union is implementing several programs and projects to better ensure the legitimate rights and interests of Vietnamese women during this period, such as the project on "Communication, Education, Mobilization of and Support for Women to Address Social Women-related Issues 2017-2027" and the project on "Supporting Women's Entrepreneurs 2017-2025."

In accordance with the Article 25 of the Law on Gender Equality 2006 and Article 13 of the Law on Supervision Activities of the National Assembly and

¹⁶² Official letter No. 3950/ĐCT-QT dated August 19th 2024 by the Viet Nam Women's Union

People's Councils 2015, the Government reports annually to the National Assembly on the implementation of national gender equality goals. The Social Affairs Committee is the specialized agency of the National Assembly, overseeing areas related to labor, employment, health, population, social security, gender equality, emulation, rewards, and the prevention of social evils/issues. Every year, the Social Affairs Committee prepare a review of the Government's report to send to the members of the National Assembly. In May 2024, the National Assembly listened to the Government's report and held three direct discussion sessions on the report on implementation of national gender equality goals in 2023, during which the Members of the National Assembly proposed numerous solutions to contribute to achieving national gender equality goals.

Every year, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women forms inter-agency delegations led by its members to oversee women's advancement work at various ministries, sectors, and localities. The purpose of these delegations is to grasp the situation of women's advancement and to urge compliance with policies and laws on gender equality and women's progress. They also aim to identify difficulties and obstacles in implementation so as to providing direction for resolution or gathering information for further study to propose solutions to enhance the effectiveness in the upcoming period.

In addition to the oversight activities of the National Assembly, the Central Committee of the Viet Nam's Fatherland Front, the Central Vietnam's Women's Union, and member organizations of the Fatherland Front also serve as agencies that oversee and provide counter-arguments on the implementation of gender equality policies and laws. At the same time, the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Viet Nam is carried out through mechanisms related to the legislative drafting process, social oversight, and social criticism by various entities in society.

To ensure the effective implementation of sustainable development goals, Viet Nam is implementing the National Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Plan identifies gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Viet Nam by 2030. Additionally, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are that are integrated throughout the SDGs in Viet Nam. To monitor the progress of SDG implementation, Viet Nam prepares an annual report assessing the status of SDGs. The country also actively participated in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the SDGs in 2018 and 2023, sharing achievements and lessons learned in SDG implementation with the international community.

Recognition of Viet Nam's efforts in implementing the SDGs has been highlighted by international community. According to the global SDG Index, Viet Nam's ranking has improved significantly, rising from 68th place in 2017 to 54th in 2023. In the Asian region, Viet Nam is highly regarded for its overall progress

in implementing the SDGs, ranking second only to Thailand in East and South Asia.

Regarding Goal 5 on Gender Equality, Viet Nam's 2023 report affirmed that the implementation of SDG 5 continues to be strengthened through institutional consolidation, the development and implementation of policies and laws on gender equality, and the promotion of training for female officials at all levels. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023 published by the World Economic Forum, Viet Nam currently ranks as world's 72nd for gender equality, with a progress rate of 71.1%, an increase of 11 places compared to 2022. Women make up about 37% of the workforce in the technology sector in Viet Nam, higher than the global average rate of 25%, reflecting the ongoing increase in the use of enabling technologies, especially information and communication technology, to promote empowerment of women.¹⁶³ However, the 2023 report also assessed the sex ratio at birth of 112 boys to 100 girls, indicating that the issue of gender imbalance at birth remains high. This situation calls for better solutions to address the issue in the coming years.

4. PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL REPORTS

4.1. Report Development Process

This report has been developed following the guidelines outlined in document UNW/2023/011 from the United Nations. The report focuses on reviewing and assessing the implementation of key areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Viet Nam from 2019 to present. The report also highlights existing challenges and Vietnam's priority directions for the future to ensure the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women.

The development of the report was led by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), in coordination and consultation with relevant ministries, sectors, and agencies.¹⁶⁴

4.2. Consultation of the report

This report has been developed comprehensively with contributions from state agencies, socio-political organizations, professional organizations, research institutes, non-governmental organizations, and gender equality experts who provided written feedback via email and during various workshops, including a consultative workshop organized by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) in August, 2024 in Ha Noi. The feedbacks has been incorporated by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs into this report.

5. ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF

¹⁶³ MPI (2023), Report on Evaluation of SDGs implementation, 2023

¹⁶⁴ On June 20, 2024, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs issued Official Letter No. 2625/LDTBXH-VBDG to ministries, branches and agencies requesting information to develop a National Report reviewing 30 year-implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) AND THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) TO ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

5.1. Action plan to implement recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Viet Nam completed the development and submission of its 9th report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2022. By the time of development of this report (June 2024), Vietnam had not yet received the Concluding Observations from the CEDAW Committee on its 9th CEDAW report.

Upon receiving the Concluding Observation made by the CEDAW Committee in 2016 for the Vietnam's combined 7th and 8th reports, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 668/QĐ-TTg on May 16, 2017, approving the Action Plan to implement the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW for Vietnam's 7th and 8th CEDAW reports 2017-2020. Accordingly, the main tasks of the plan include:

(1) Reviewing, studying, amending, supplementing, and enacting legal documents and policies on gender equality, women's advancement, and the protection of the rights of women and girls following the CEDAW.

(2) Promoting communication, education, and advocacy efforts to raise societal awareness about gender equality, women's advancement, and the rights of women and girls.

(3) Mainstreaming gender equality, advancement of women, and the rights of women and girls into the strategies, programs, plans and projects of ministries, sectors, and localities.

(4) Strengthening and enhancing the capacity of officers in charge of gender equality and advancement of women at both central and local levels.

(5) Ensuring that ministries, sectors, and localities clearly define their tasks, responsibilities, and timelines for implementing the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee as required by the Plan, ensuring timely and effective execution and implementation.

5.2. Action Plan to implement recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to address gender inequality and discrimination against women

During the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2019, Vietnam received a total of 291 recommendations, of which 241 accepted —220 fully and 21 partially. On December 31, 2019, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1975/QĐ-TTg approving the Master Plan to implement the accepted UPR recommendations, assigning specific tasks to 18 ministries and sectors for their

implementation. As of December 2023¹⁶⁵, Viet Nam has successfully completed 209 recommendations (representing 86.7%), including those aimed at promoting and raising awareness of gender equality and combating discrimination against women and girls.

Viet Nam has officially submitted its National Report on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights under the UPR mechanism for the fourth cycle to the United Nations Human Rights Council and participated in the UPR National Report Dialogue on May 7, 2024, in Geneva, Switzerland. Viet Nam received 320 recommendations during the fourth UPR cycle, with recommendations related to promoting and ensuring gender equality and empowering women, as well as preventing and combating gender-based violence, increasing from 24 to over 40 compared to the third cycle¹⁶⁶. The Vietnamese Government is currently reviewing the recommendations made to inform its position to United Nations Human Rights Council accordingly. Once the government finalizes the recommendations to be accepted, it will develop an action plan to implement those recommendations.

5.3. Difficulties and challenges

Due to the broad scope of the recommendations from the CEDAW Committee and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, which cover various areas under the management responsibility of multiple ministries and sectors, there are challenges in consolidating information and data for reporting and monitoring implementation.

¹⁶⁵ Official Letter No. 4115/BNG-TCQT dated August 7, 2024 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁶⁶ Official Letter No. 4115/BNG-TCQT dated August 7, 2024 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PART V:

DATA AND STATISTICS

1. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES REGARDING GENDER DATA AND STATISTICS

In recent years, collection of gender-disaggregated statistics in Viet Nam has made remarkable progress. To reflect the current situation in gender equality, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) has coordinated with MOLISA and other ministries, sectors and international organizations to conduct research and release publications on gender statistics. Particularly, the publications on gender statistics in Viet Nam in 2020, 2021, 2022 (conducted by the General Statistics Office, MPI) have been published. The 2nd National Study on Violence against Women and Girls in Viet Nam was conducted in 63 localities with the participation of 6,000 women aged 16-64 (by the MOLISA, the General Statistics Office and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) between 2018-2019).

Pursuant to the 2013 Law on Statistics (amended and supplemented in 2021), by the end of 2023, Ministries and sectors have adopted the sectoral statistical indicator system, including gender equality statistical indicators or gender equality integration. This makes the gender statistics collection and reporting more feasible than the previous periods, and satisfies the current demand for gender data in Viet Nam. In addition, regular annual key surveys that provide gender-disaggregated data were conducted, such as the Annual Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Change Survey; and Household Living Standards Survey. The General Statistics Office of Viet Nam also incorporated information on gender statistical indicators into the national statistical reporting system, which is being synthesized and prepared for submission to the Government for promulgation. Concurrently, to ensure effective and economical implementation, the General Statistics Office is reviewing and incorporating this into the national statistical database according to Decision No. 1627/QĐ-TTg dated December 15, 2023 on approving the National Statistical Database Project.¹⁶⁷ On 06 May 2024, the Minister of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs issued Circular No. 04/2024/TT-BLĐTBXH regulating the statistical indicator system in the labour, invalids and social affairs sector, including gender equality statistics.

Furthermore, to facilitate better awareness of statisticians' responsibilities, the Minister of Planning and Investment issued Circular No. 08/2023/TT-BKHĐT stipulating codes, standards of professional qualification, skills and salary scales for statistics official ranks. This is an important document for statistics in general and gender statistics in particular.

In addition, Viet Nam has also highlighted strengthening the coordination mechanism among agencies in implementing the Gender Statistics Action Plan in

¹⁶⁷ The General Statistics Office, Report No. 102/TCTK-XHMT dated 16 January 2024.

the coming time, particularly collecting gender statistics in national and international reports, ensuring consistency in gender-disaggregated data between state management agencies and national statistics agencies (National Strategy on Gender Equality and related policies), and enhancing officials' capacity in statistics utilization and collection.

Some obstacles in gender statistics are: (i) inadequate utilization of published gender-disaggregated data sources, limitations in published gender-disaggregated data despite having access to original data; (ii) the coordination and sharing of statistical information, especially among ministries and sectors, remain limited.

2. NATIONAL INDICATORS FOR REVIEWING THE PROGRESS OF VIET NAM'S SDGs IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to the implementation of the Set of National Statistical Indicators on Gender Development and Gender Equality or incorporated gender equality contents as required by the 2013 Law on Statistics (amended and supplemented in 2021), Viet Nam has promulgated and implemented the Set of Sustainable Development Statistical Indicators. The list of Viet Nam's sustainable development statistical indicators includes Order number, Code number of indicators, Corresponding National Statistical Indicator Code number, Name of goals and indicators, Implementation roadmap. The content of Viet Nam's sustainable development statistical indicators includes the concept and calculation method, main disaggregation, term of release, data source(s) and agency (ies) responsible for collection and aggregation.¹⁶⁸ This set of indicators includes 158 indicators, covering 17 comprehensive goals and 115 specific targets, of which (i) 38 indicators under the National Statistical Indicator System stipulated in the 2015 Law on Statistics; (ii) 112 indicators similar to 100 SDGs indicators at the global level; (iii) 32 indicators under the statistical indicator system of ministries and sectors, including Ministry of Education and Training; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Science and Technology; Ministry of Construction; Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, among others.

Among indicators corresponding to the 17 comprehensive SDGs, there are 70 gender indicators, including 54 gender-disaggregated indicators, 16 - indicators targeting women and girls, such as: Proportion of women aged 15-49 in need of contraception using modern contraceptive methods, proportion of women and girls aged 15 and above having experienced violence by their current or former husband or partner in the past 12 months, the proportion of women and girls having experienced violence but are identified and received counselling, proportion of female deputies to the National Assembly, proportion of female deputies to the People's Councils, among others.

¹⁶⁸ Circular No. 03/2019/TT-BKHDT dated 22 January 2019 of the Minister of Planning and Investment.

The responsibility for collecting and synthesizing data for Viet Nam's sustainable development statistical indicators is prescribed in Circular No. 03/2019/TT-BKHDT dated 22 January 2019 of the Minister of Planning and Investment. Particularly, the General Statistics Office is responsible for collecting data for 62 indicators (39.2%); 21 other ministries and agencies are responsible for collecting data for 96 indicators (60.8%). To quantify the level of achievement of the SDGs, the roadmap for SDGs implementation by 2030 was promulgated in Decision No. 681/QĐ-TTg dated 04 June 2019 of the Prime Minister and was updated in Decision No. 841/QĐ-TTg dated 14 July 2023. The roadmap lays the foundation for Ministries, sectors and localities to develop specific targets in their annual and five-year socio-economic development plans and is a measurement of the of SDGs fulfilment in 2020, 2025 and 2030.

On February 15, 2023, Viet Nam launched the National Statistical Survey Program.¹⁶⁹ The Program includes 45 investigations and surveys, including 03 national statistical censuses (Population and housing census, Rural and agricultural census, Economic census) and 42 statistical surveys across various areas. Accordingly, data on sustainable development statistical indicators are collected from the following sources: Annual socio-economic reports of the General Statistics Office, the Overall Situation of Workers in Informal Employment in Viet Nam 2021 Report 2021 of the General Statistics Office, the publications on Gender Statistics in Viet Nam in 2020, 2021 and 2022 published by the General Statistics Office, the Statistical Yearbooks of provinces/municipalities under central management, the Health Statistics Yearbook, the Education Statistical Yearbook, the Portal of the MOLISA, the Satisfaction Index of Public Administration Services Report, the Publication: Multidimensional child poverty of ethnic minority children in Viet Nam: Situation, Dynamics and Challenges.

Viet Nam's sustainable development statistical indicators provides authentic practical evidence to enable monitoring and evaluating the implementation of 115 SDGs in Viet Nam. Annually, the Ministry of Planning and Investment submits a report assessing the SDGs implementation to the Government and the National Assembly. Viet Nam participated in the Voluntary National Review on the SDGs implementation in 2018 and 2023.¹⁷⁰ Viet Nam also developed and published the National Report 2020 evaluating the 5 years of SDGs implementation (published in 2021) and the National Report evaluating the 5th year of SDGs implementation (published in 2023).¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Decision No. 03/2023/QĐ-TTg dated 15 February 2023 of the Prime Minister.

¹⁷⁰ The English version of the Report is available at the Ministry of Planning and Investment's Electronic Information Portal: [https://fileportalcms.mpi.gov.vn/TinBai/VanBan/2023-08/VNR_Full_Final\(EN\).pdf](https://fileportalcms.mpi.gov.vn/TinBai/VanBan/2023-08/VNR_Full_Final(EN).pdf), dated 07 July 2023.

¹⁷¹ The Vietnamese version of the Report is available at the Ministry of Planning and Investment's E-Portal: <https://www.mpi.gov.vn/portal/Pages/2023-9-18/Bao-cao-danh-gia-tinh-hinh-thuc-hien-cac-muc-tieu-2jyssr.aspx>, dated 18 September 2023.

Monitoring and evaluating SDGs implementation is a key component in implementing the 2030 Agenda in Viet Nam, and an annual task of relevant ministries, sectors, agencies, United Nations agencies in Viet Nam, social organizations, and non-governmental organizations. However, the outstanding issue in monitoring and evaluating the progress of SDGs implementation is the unavailability of data according to Circular No. 03/2019/TT-BKHDT. Based on reviews, nationally synthesized data is only available for only 114 out of 158 indicators according to Circular No. 03/2019/TT-BKHDT, some of which is from international organizations. Disaggregated data, especially disaggregated data by criteria and target groups, notably vulnerable groups (children, people with disabilities, among others), is insufficient for multi-dimensional review and evaluation of implementing the principle “leaving no one behind” of the 2030 Agenda. The data deficiency is also an inevitable limitation during preparation of the report reviewing the SDGs implementation. In addition, coordination and information sharing between sectors and the General Statistics Office remain ineffective and inconsistent.

PART VI:

CONCLUSION

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action made a powerful call to action for governments to ensure that policies and legal frameworks do not cause adverse impacts, but promote gender equality and ensure women and girls' rights.

In Viet Nam, from 2019 to present, the entire political system has paid close attention to and monitored the facilitation of gender equality. The Government has issued the Resolution on Promulgating the 2021-2030 National Strategy on Gender Equality, with specific goals and targets on gender equality across various areas. This also lays important foundation for narrowing the gender gap, enabling both women and men's equal participation and enjoyment in all areas of social life, contributing to the nation's sustainable development. Viet Nam's outstanding achievements focus on: strengthening gender equality policies and legal frameworks, recommending solutions to effectively implement these toward strengthening gender equality goals and assessment indicators, promoting women and girls' rights, and facilitating substantive gender equality.

However, Viet Nam has been addressing challenges in implementing gender equality, such as widespread social norms discriminating against women. Gender equality policies and legal frameworks and gender mainstreaming in composing legal documents still face numerous challenges. The outcomes of some gender equality goals and targets have not yet met expectations. Crises and the COVID-19 pandemic have constantly affected the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Viet Nam.

Based on the achievements, challenges and lessons drawn from the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Viet Nam recognizes that governments need to refer to key labour standards in trade agreements as an important step to create a more comprehensive and just environment. Trade cannot address all the challenges that women face, but it can create new opportunities. To fully seize these opportunities, gender-based barriers at the national level in most contexts must be removed. This requires greater cooperation among governmental agencies and policy consistency across various areas. Policy makers need to further collaborate and go beyond their narrow focus on increasing women's participation in trade. The ultimate goal is not only to include greater participation of women in trade, but also ensure that they participate in trade in an equal manner and all countries are able to adopt relevant policies at the national level.

It is necessary to promote the full, effective and meaningful participation of women and girls and recognize their contributions in political, economic,

cultural and social decision-making mechanisms, especially policies to support women in hunger eradication, poverty reduction, ensuring sustainable livelihoods, entrepreneurship and innovation, and eliminating gender barriers.

It is also essential to ensure the participation and leadership of women and girls in science, technology, digital transformation, and implementation of policies to narrow the digital divide in line with preventing and fighting discrimination and gender-based violence in cyberspace.

It is crucial to promote adequate and equal participation of and strengthen women and girls' role in all peace and security processes, ensure national, regional and international stability and sustainable development, set up budget and strengthen capacity-building to ensure gender equality in institutions and policies in all countries, including developing countries. By sharing success models and promoting cooperation, countries are able to enhance impacts of efforts to implement the SDGs. Countries need to accelerate gender equality progress and women and girls' empowerment, contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights, building a world of peace, cooperation and sustainable development.

Moreover, in the up-coming 5 years, Viet Nam will prioritize solutions for continued promotion and enhancement of women and girls' rights as follows:

Firstly, continue to improve policies and legal frameworks on gender equality and enhance the rights of women and girls. Focus should be placed on reviewing and amending the Law on Gender Equality 2006 in line with the current situation, expanding and developing gender equality goals and principles, and improving regulations to ensure and promote gender equality, incorporating gender equality across various areas, and addressing gender equality in specific areas.

Secondly, continue to recommend measures to enhance the effectiveness of policies and legal frameworks on gender equality and rights of women and girls. This includes improving participation and representation in politics, employment rights, women's entrepreneurship and women-led businesses, and eliminating violence against women and girls. Additionally, continue to pursue solutions aimed at changing discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes.

Thirdly, intensify efforts to integrate gender equality into the drafting of legal documents, and develop and implement programs, plans, strategies, and socio-economic development frameworks in a coordinated and effective manner.

Fourthly, continue to promote gender-responsive budgeting to reform budget allocation structures and policies. This involves ensuring that social resources are used to advance gender equality, while also assessing the socio-economic impacts of budgeting on women and men to adjust allocations accordingly.

Finally, continue to implement measures to enhance the quality of gender statistics and gender equality data, towards establishing a comprehensive national gender equality data system./
