



**Alternative Report
of the Coalition of Non-Governmental
Organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan
“From Equality de jure to Equality de facto”
on the Implementation of the Beijing
Platform for Action+25**

DUSHANBE 2019

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FOREWORD

We bring to your attention a Alternative report of the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan “From Equality de jure to Equality de facto” on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action+25.

The Coalition has been created on 22 May 2008 and operates in accordance with the Partnership Agreement without the formation of a legal entity. As of 1 August 2019, the Coalition includes 41 non-governmental organizations from the city of Dushanbe and other constituent provinces of the Republic of Tajikistan. The main goal of the Coalition is to strengthen the non-governmental organizations’ contribution to and impact on the implementation of the CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, the process of localization, implementation and monitoring of the implementation of the gender-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at the promotion of gender equality in Tajikistan.

In July 2019, consultations were held in all provinces in order to assess the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Republic of Tajikistan in an interactive manner, to agree the main approaches and provisions of the Beijing+25 Report, as well as to develop further measures to implement the Beijing Platform for Action objectives and promote gender equality. In total, 80 persons from the Coalition, other civil society organizations, government agencies, the media and ordinary women took part in the consultations.

To summarize the collected data and prepare the consolidated report, an expert group has been created consisting of Tatiana Bozrikova (team leader), Larisa Aleksandrova, Guljahon Bobosadykova, and Shahlo Juraeva.

The Beijing+25 Report was prepared using the materials of three shadow reports of the Coalition regarding the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Gender Review of the National Report on Implementation of Strategic Documents of the Country in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the results of researches, monitoring and assessment conducted by the Coalition in the recent years.

The Report is also based on the results of sample surveys in the Republic of Tajikistan, including the Labour Force Survey, the Demographic and Health Survey, and the Household Budget Survey.

The Report focuses on complex factors that impede the empowerment of women and promotion of gender equality, and the need to develop a cross-sectoral approach. In the context of implementing the principles of inclusiveness and “No one should be left behind,” attention has been drawn to diversity of gender groups, various opportunities and needs of vulnerable groups of women (rural women, women with disabilities, HIV-positive and others). New challenges and problems related to labour migration, the impact of climate change, etc., have been examined on the way to achieving *de facto* equal rights between women and men.

The process of preparing the Alternative report has also been used to strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organizations, to further enhance the dialogue with the Government, and to expand the opportunities of non-governmental organizations to participate in the decision-making process of the Government.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAE	Centre for Adult Education
CCR	Commissioner for Children’s Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHR	Commissioner for Human Rights
CoES	Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense
CSO	Civil society organization
CWF	Committee on Women and the Family
DF	Dehkan farm
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
HEI	higher educational institution
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MHSPP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MtDP	Mid-Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020
NABWT	National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan
NAP	National Action Plan
NDS 2030	2030 National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PA	Public association
PLHIV	People living with HIV
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSEI	Specialized secondary educational institution
Coalition	Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan “From Equality de jure to Equality de facto”
TNW+	Tajikistan Network of Women Living with HIV
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFCL	Worst forms of child labour
WLHIV	Women living with HIV

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CHAPTER 1. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE POLICY ON ENHANCING WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES AND ENSURING EQUAL RIGHTS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN IN 2015–2019

This Chapter provides a general assessment of achievements and systemic problems of implementing the State Policy to Empower Women and Ensure Equal Rights Between Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan over the past five years. Recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the government measures are also proposed. Particular attention is given to the implementation of the priorities of the Beijing Platform for Action and its strategic objectives: *H*) Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; and *I*) Human rights of women.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past five years, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has clearly demonstrated its commitment to international and national obligations related to women's empowerment by adopting new strategic, legal and regulatory acts, strengthening special measures to ensure women's rights in multiple sectors of the economy, continuing the policy of appointing women to administrative civil service positions and so on.

The 2030 National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan (NDS 2030) plays a key role in respecting women's rights and promoting gender equality in the Republic of Tajikistan. In contrast to the previous long- and medium-term development strategies of the Republic of Tajikistan, in the NDS 2030 and the in the Mid-Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020 (MtDP), a cross-sectoral approach has been used with regard to gender equality issues. As a result, not only an independent sub-chapter on ensuring gender equality have been prepared, but also tasks and measures to strengthen the rights of women have been identified in chapters on various sectors, including chapters on effective public administration system, productive employment, improvement of business environment and investment climate, etc. The NDS 2030 contains the main action lines in the field of improving gender policy with a focus on ensuring *de facto* equal rights of women and men.

In 2018, three working groups were established at the government level to improve regulatory framework aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes, protecting women's rights and preventing domestic violence.

In 2015–2019, the Government increased the amount of financial support of gender-related measures in some areas of gender policy as well as the number of areas in which special measures have been used. In addition, to measures to support women in expanding access to education and developing women's entrepreneurship, measures within the civil service sector have been introduced.

During the reporting period, the number of annual Presidential grants to support women entrepreneurs for the period of 2016–2020 doubled, reaching 80. The total amounted to 2 million somonis (\$340,000).

The Presidential quotas were purposefully used to educate girls and boys from rural areas in higher educational institutions. In 2018/2019 academic year, a total of 3,423 girls and 3,752 boys studied at the universities of the Republic of Tajikistan under quota; 799 girls

and 865 boys were enrolled in the first year; 591 girls and 606 boys graduated with a Specialist degree.¹

The number of girls enrolled in universities of the Republic of Tajikistan under quota makes up a significant part of the total number of female students studying on a budgetary basis. In 2016/2017 academic year, the total number of girls enrolled in universities under quota was 13 per cent of the total number of girls studying on a budgetary basis. This indicator is even higher (21 per cent) among girls admitted this year. Among last-year female budgetary students, those who had studied under quota made up 8.4 per cent (see Table 1).

Table 1. NUMBER OF GIRLS FROM RURAL AREAS ENROLLED IN UNIVERSITIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN UNDER THE PRESIDENTIAL QUOTA IN 2016/2017 ACADEMIC YEAR, NUMBER OF PERSONS²

No		QTY	Budgetary students	Under quota from rural areas	Girls under quota among all budgetary students, %
1	Girls studying	65,916	25,572	3,332	13.0
2	Admitted girls	13,583	4,757	995	21.0
3	Graduated girls	10,225	5,247	441	8.4

As for the implementation of the strategic objective H.3 of the Beijing Platform for Action, “generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation,” positive dynamic in the generation and dissemination of gender statistics has been noticed in the Republic of Tajikistan.

The webpage “Gender Statistics” is functioning on the website of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan; it includes sections on regulatory documents, analytical articles on gender issues and a database. The section “Women Entrepreneurs” has been created in the section “Gender Statistics” in 2016 and has been updated since then; the statistical datasets “Men and Women of the Republic of Tajikistan” and “Gender Indicators in the Production Activities of Dehkans (Farms)” have been published; demographic and health surveys and others inspections have been carried out with the support of international organizations.

In 2019, a separate section titled 2019–2030 Development of Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan has been added to the draft 2030 National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for Statistics Development, establishing goals and objectives, main action lines and expected results. The draft Strategy is under discussion and agreement.

To implement the strategic objective *I.1* of the Beijing Platform for Action, “[p]romote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW],” Tajikistan regularly reports on the implementation of ratified international treaties, adopts plans to implement the recommendations of the UN Committees and entities to the Republic of Tajikistan. The National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan on Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN Committee on

¹ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2019. P. 70.

² Calculations based on data from the yearbook *Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2017*. Pp. 62–70. Unfortunately, calculating the indicator for 2019 is not possible due to the lack of access to all necessary data.

CEDAW, as well as the National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Implementation of resolutions No. 1325 and No. 2122 of the UN Security Council, among others, have been developed and adopted.

CHALLENGES

The list of implemented programmes and action plans to protect women's rights, taking into account the Beijing Platform for Action, can be continued. However, despite the measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan between 2015 and 2019 to empower women and ensure the equal rights of women and men, discrimination of women (usually indirect) in many areas and a decrease in various indicators reflecting the implementation of the legally granted rights for women compared with men have been recorded.

Since 2008, the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations has regularly conducted public monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the adopted legal and programme instruments, researches on gender equality issues in various fields. Based on the results of the gender analysis, we have concluded that there are systemic factors that impede effective implementation of policies to empower women and ensure *de facto* equal rights of women and men in the Republic of Tajikistan.

The list of systemic factors that impede the implementation of the policy *en masse* to ensure actual gender equality, as well as on a sectoral level, shall include:

- ✓ Lack of a comprehensive cross-sectoral approach in the development of policies to empower women and ensure gender equality in various areas. Most often, it has not been taken into account that the solution of a particular problem of inequality of women's rights in a specific sector depends on a whole range of factors and on the activities of various institutional structures to protect women's rights not only in one specific sector, but also in other sectors;
- ✓ Incomplete consideration of structural causes of the inequality of rights of women and men when developing an activity plan (women's limited access to various types of resources, decision-making, violence against women);
- ✓ Weak orientation of programmes and measures under development to assess the real opportunities of women and their results compared to men;
- ✓ At the stage of planning, rare use of differentiated approach to assessment of opportunities and needs of various groups of women (rural or urban, young or old, with or without disabilities, etc.). Generally, women are evaluated and perceived as a homogeneous group;
- ✓ Weak consideration of new challenges and their impact on women (unregulated migration, patriarchal norms strengthening in society, young marriages, etc.).

The factors listed above directly affect the efficiency of measures under implementation. For example, measures to support women's entrepreneurship have been taken in the country for many years. At the same time, analysis of official statistics shows that, in the period of 2016–2018, not only the total number of registered individual women entrepreneurs decreased, but the share of active women entrepreneurs also decreased significantly. The rate declined by almost 15 per cent (see Table 2).

Table 2. INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED AND ACTIVE INDIVIDUAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS (BY YEAR)³ (Source: Uniform State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Tajikistan)

Year	Registered			Active			
	Total	Under Certificate	Under Patent	Total	Under Certificate	Under Patent	% from the total number of registered companies
2016	98 992	63 824	35 168	80 466	61 609	18 857	81.3%
2018	95 859	47 442	48 417	63 906	42 796	21 110	66.7%

There is no doubt that the general business environment in the Republic of Tajikistan has a significant impact on the development of women’s business. However, this rate is three times smaller in men than in women over the same period. The share of active male entrepreneurs of the total number of registered entrepreneurs decreased only by 5 per cent in 2018 compared with 2016.

In our opinion, one of the reasons for the reduction in the number of women entrepreneurs is the decision to reduce the types of work performed under patent, and the announcement of re-registration with a simultaneous re-issuance of a new type of document—work under certificate. The decision-making process was gender-neutral; there was no direct gender-based discrimination. However, it was not taken into account that a significant proportion of individual entrepreneurs who worked under patent and now needed to be re-issued a certificate, were women. As a result, a considerable number of women individual entrepreneurs stopped their activities.

Overcoming obstacles to expanding women’s opportunities for employment and mobility in the labour market depends directly on expanding women’s access to education, acquisition of professional skills and knowledge, development of pre-school education, domestic services infrastructure, transport communications, etc.

Since the gender roles and relationships have a significant impact on the course and consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is impossible to solve problems and ensure the rights of women living with HIV through the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population. There are multiple factors that increase the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV infection. Those include not only gender stereotypes and social norms that prevent women from gaining the necessary knowledge on issues and practices of sexual and reproductive health, but also other gender issues. The vulnerability of women is also compounded by the fact that they have limited access to economic opportunities and limited independence, as well as there are multiple household and community responsibilities that they must fulfill. The situation is exacerbated by the woman’s low status in the family, her exclusion from the decision-making process within the household, and domestic violence.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that in the Republic of Tajikistan the percentage of women among registered cases of HIV has grown from 30 per cent in 2011 to 40.8 per cent in 2019.⁴ In order to stop the spread of HIV, it is necessary to help overcome gender inequality, ensure

³ Calculations based on data of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan as of 1 October 2018: <https://www.stat.tj/ru/gender-zhenshiny-predprinimateli>

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

de facto equal rights of men and women, and expand women's opportunities in all areas of life.

Among the obstacles to the implementation of policies to ensure women's rights and overcome gender inequality, it is worth highlighting:

- ✓ Lack of effective mechanisms for the implementation of legislative norms of equal rights between women and men in all areas, and poor introduction of gender approaches in sectoral legislation;
- ✓ Lack of obligatory gender analysis in new legal and regulatory acts;
- ✓ Limited and weak institutional mechanisms for the protection of women's rights, as well as gender policies;
- ✓ Low level of gender sensitivity of employees of all authorities;
- ✓ Underdeveloped system of continuous monitoring and assessment, limited gender indicators for the implementation of policies to promote women and ensure *de facto* equality of rights;
- ✓ Lack of gender budgeting and deficit of financial resources to implement the planned measures for the empowerment of women and girls;
- ✓ Gender stereotypes that impede the promotion of women's rights in all areas, and the huge burden of domestic work that falls on women.

The Beijing+25 National Report draws attention to a similar list of issues. However, it is necessary to take active steps to resolve them. The Republic of Tajikistan has long passed the first stage in designing a gender policy and ensuring the women's rights, creating a common legal framework for State guarantees of the protection of women's rights, and adopting national and sectoral strategies and programmes to promote gender equality until 2030. Currently, Tajikistan is at a more crucial stage, which is the implementation of adopted strategies, laws and programmes, which requires the selection of the most effective implementation mechanisms in the light of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and new approaches and principles of the SDGs, as well as new challenges. When developing action plans, it is necessary to use a differentiated approach taking into account the specific features and opportunities of target groups of women.

The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Implementation (Law on State Guarantees), which, *inter alia*, proclaims State guarantees to equal protection of men's and women's opportunities in the area of public service, socio-economic area, exercise of suffrage, has been in force for 19 years. However, the mechanisms ensuring the implementation of those guarantees have not been established by this Law. During such a long period, no provision has been virtually introduced into sectoral legislation regarding specific mechanisms for the implementation of State guarantees. As a result, as explained in the sections of the Report, below, women and men *de facto* do not have equal opportunities, and there is a gender imbalance in all areas.

Due to the lack of a national legal norm on conducting mandatory gender analysis, State guarantees in women's equal rights and opportunities are not taken into account in new legal and regulatory acts.

The UN Committee on CEDAW, after reviewing national reports on the implementation of the CEDAW in the country, regularly issues recommendations on improving gender

legislation as a whole and enhancing the gender-sensitivity of sectoral legislation, including by introducing the concepts of “direct” and “indirect” discrimination. However, those recommendations have not been implemented.

In accordance with the MtDP Action Plan for 2016–2020, specific measures have been envisaged to improve national legislation in order to empower women and ensure gender equality. In January 2018, three working groups were created to improve legislation to guarantee women’s right, overcome gender stereotypes and prevent violence. Until now, those groups’ developments have not been available and non-governmental organizations have not been involved in the discussion of the planned changes.

Institutional mechanisms play an important role in *de facto* ensuring the rights and empowerment of women. The Government is taking measures to strengthen the National Mechanism—the Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CWF). However, due to its status and potential opportunities, the Committee cannot fulfill the assigned mission without the support and active work of the ministries. Moreover, the policies to ensure women’s rights in corresponding sectors are determined by ministries, not the Committee on Women and the Family.

In most ministries and agencies there are no units mandated to solve gender issues. Once, in collaboration and with the support of UNIFEM, in the ministries there were gender groups created to promote women’s rights and ensure equal rights for women and men. Despite being established by ministers’ orders, they currently do not exercise their function. One of the main reasons is that the members of those groups performed their functions on a voluntary basis.

Inter-agency institutional mechanisms have not been developed, and effective mechanisms for cross-sectoral coordination of activities of all structures involved in the process of ensuring women’s rights have not been established. Local gender action plans are poorly implemented.

The job done by the Inter-Agency Working Group to Support Women’s Entrepreneurship under the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan, established in 2015, can make an exception. The activities of the Secretariat of this Working Group are supported by the Secretariat of the Investment Council under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

A special role in protecting women’s rights belongs to the Institute of the Commissioner for Human Rights (CHR). In 2014, the Department for State Protection of the Rights of the Child at the CHR was expanded, and it was mandated to protect the rights of women. To date, in connection with the introduction of the position of the Commissioner for Children’s Rights, this Department was completely disbanded and there is no unit within the CHR responsible for the protection of women’s rights. On the CHR website, there are webpages about the rights of the child and people with disabilities. However, there is no individual webpage about women’s rights.

In the Strategy of the CHR Institute in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020, ensuring gender equality has been set as the 4th priority line. However, beside the enhancement of law, no measures to ensure gender equality have been provided.⁵ Meanwhile, according to the Article 11 of the Law on the CHR, the main functions of the Commissioner for Human Rights, in addition to promoting the enhancement of law, include observance of human and civil rights and freedoms, enforcement of violated human rights and freedoms, etc.

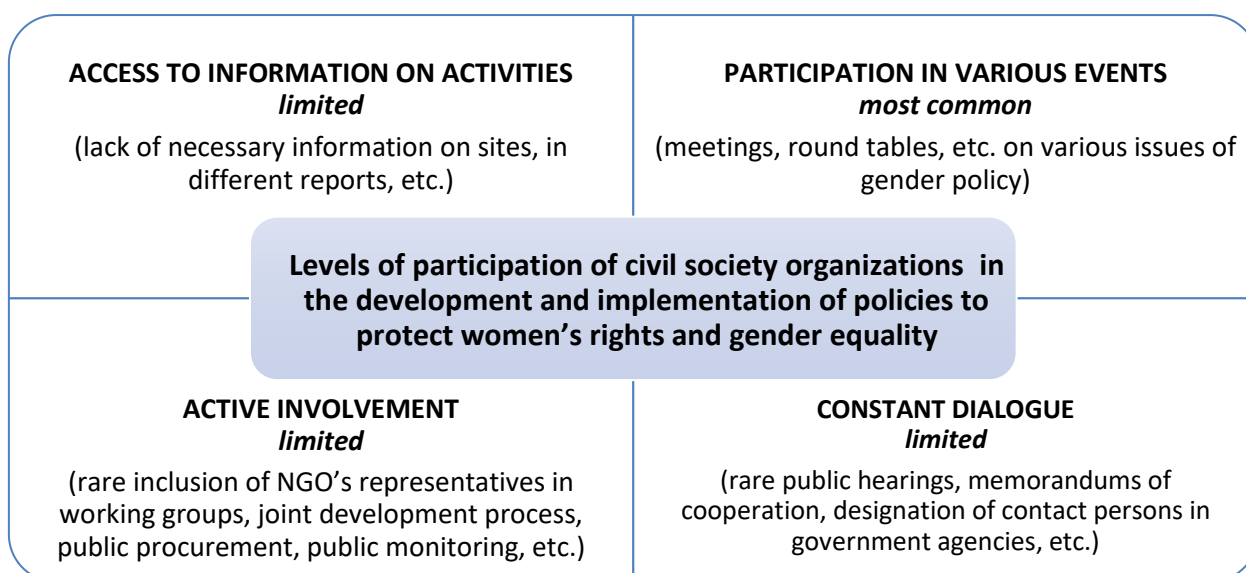
⁵ See: <http://ombudsman.tj/rus/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Strategiya-2016-2020-rus.pdf>

The CHR prepares annual reports on its activities. In the reports for 2017–2018, in the Chapter 2 on the state of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Tajikistan, a separate section on gender equality and the rights of women has been introduced. However, in the Chapter 1 on the activities of the CHR in 2018, activities to protect women’s rights have not been mentioned. The data on citizens’ filings on the observance of various rights have not been presented by gender. The section on gender equality provides data on the number of filings submitted by women on certain women’s rights. However, even here the data on filings on certain rights has not been presented by gender. For example, in a press release of the CHR before a press conference on the results of work in the first half of 2019, data on filings of citizens have been presented, yet again, not by gender. There is no information on undertaken actions to protect women’s rights.

In almost all national reports on the implementation of international obligations and national strategies, the attention has been drawn to the negative role of gender stereotypes in promoting gender equality. However, virtually, there are no comprehensive and targeted communication strategies to influence public opinion. Neither public nor private media conduct this work on a regular basis. It should be taken into consideration that solving this problem requires a set of legislative, financial and organizational measures.

The mechanisms of social partnership between the State, civil society and business entities in empowering women are weak and not sufficiently developed. Major part of gender coordination councils established within the ministries during the implementation of the State programme entitled Guidelines for the State policy to Ensure Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2001–2010 ceased to exist after the end of the programme.

Figure 1. LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs) IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES TO PROTECT WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY



The main obstacles to the development of social partnership with CSOs are:

- ✓ Gaps in the legal framework on the forms of the CSO participation;
- ✓ Lack of understanding of the importance of close partnership with CSOs for the outcome of policies aimed at protection of women’s rights and gender equality;
- ✓ Low involvement and capacity of a considerable number of CSOs.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to achieve *de facto* gender equality and outcomes of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and SDGs in all areas, it is important to step away from the traditional sectoral approach when addressing gender inequality. Truly holistic and integrated policies are needed in all sectors and at all levels (both national and local). Individual measures do not bring the expected outputs.

When developing measures to implement the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, taking into account the new principles and characteristics of the SDGs, it is necessary to rely on the following approaches to empower women and ensure gender equality:

- ✓ The need to consider tight linkage between gender equality, economic development and environmental sustainability;
- ✓ Focus on addressing the structural causes of gender inequality when developing measures: ensuring gender equality in the distribution of all types of resources and opportunities; ensuring life free of violence against women and girls; involving women in decision-making in the public and private sectors;
- ✓ Focus on ensuring *de facto* equal rights between women and men, and on the elimination of all forms of discrimination;
- ✓ Adopt additional special measures of women's empowerment to achieve equal results for women and men;
- ✓ The implemented policy should be based on the principles of inclusiveness and leaving no one behind. Integrating a differentiated approach into the process of assessing women's opportunities and developing measures to address the inequalities of various groups of women (rural and urban, disabled, people living with HIV, women with low educational level, women from national minorities, migrants, among others);
- ✓ Wider use of civil society and private sector potential, etc.

In order to create effective cross-sectoral institutional mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the adopted national strategies and programmes, it is viable to discuss the establishment of a single Coordination Council under the President or under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to empower women and overcome gender inequality; it should also envisage the creation of permanent inter-agency commissions/councils in key areas to achieve *de facto* equal rights of women and men with the participation of civil society representatives.

Strengthening the role of the CHR in protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality through the creation of a structural unit dealing with women's rights protection, as well as building capacity of the CHR staff related to the use of gender statistics, gender analysis, and gender analysis of legislation, etc.

Ensuring the implementation of planned measures in the Mid-Term Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016–2020 (MtDP) on the creation and functioning of structural units in the ministries to empower women and ensure gender equality.

More active involvement of civil society organizations in the process of developing and implementing policies to promote gender equity. Wider use of public hearings, consultative meetings, joint projects and other forms of partnership.

Implementation of the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, recommendations of the UN Committee on CEDAW, planned measures according to the Mid-Term Development Programme to enhance the legal framework in the field of protecting women's rights and promoting *de facto* equal rights of women and men, including introduction of new concepts of "direct" and "indirect" discrimination, adoption of a regulation for a mandatory gender analysis of new legal and regulatory acts, inclusion of norms regarding mechanisms for ensuring State guarantees in sectoral regulation, etc.

Continuous monitoring and assessment of the implementation of adopted gender strategies and programmes based on a developed system of indicators. Preparation and publication of annual reports on the results of monitoring and assessment in the media, in accordance with the Law on State Guarantees.

Allocation of targeted financial resources from the State budget for the implementation of measures to empower women, stipulated in the Mid-Term Development Programme Action Plan, the State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023, etc. Implementation of gender budgeting in the system of development and implementation of the annual State budget of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Improving gender statistics by expanding the list of data disaggregated by gender and other gender indicators in the database at the website of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, on the Gender Statistics webpage, including data on female entrepreneurship, adding new statistics on access to credit, including indicators for borrowers by gender, by gender in urban or rural population, by sectors of issued loans (agriculture, trade, industrial production, etc.)

Introducing more data disaggregated by gender and other gender indicators in sectoral yearbooks—in labour, education, healthcare areas, etc.—as well as sample survey books by including not only gender statistics, but statistics on rural and urban men and women, different age groups of men and women, people with disabilities, etc.

Using more indicators for the statistical dataset "Gender Indicators in Dehkan Farms" by adding new indicators for shareholders, such as gender, average size of a dehkan farm land led by men or by women, indicators on dehkan farm credits and others.

Improving the system of statistical data collection and publication on poverty by gender, on household by gender of household's head, including the Household Budget Survey, etc.

Conducting a series of meetings with gender experts to discuss optimization of indicators disaggregated by gender in the 2020 census. In the 2010 census form, the indicator "Head of the household" was excluded and replaced with the indicator "Person recorded first in the household." However, in publications on the results of the 2010 census, there were no data on the new indicator by gender. As a result, it was impossible to conduct a gender analysis of social differences in households led by men and by women.

To improve coordination between donors in order to increase the effectiveness of ongoing projects, implemented in the Republic of Tajikistan with the support of international organizations, as well as the efficiency of use of financial and human resources.

CHAPTER 2. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITIES OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION TO ENHANCE ACCESS OF WOMEN TO ALL TYPES OF RESOURCES

One of the key systemic factors that impede the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action both at the policy level—to empower women and ensure *de facto* gender equality—

and in various areas, is the limited access to all types of resources (land, financial resources, property, education, information, etc.).

This Chapter presents the achievements, challenges and recommendations for a whole range of implementation of strategic objectives and priorities of the Beijing Platform for Action in the context of SDGs, directly related to women's access to various types of resources.

A. WOMEN AND POVERTY

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Government of Tajikistan has been making considerable efforts to improve the standard of living and well-being of the population by establishing conditions for sustainable economic development. It should be noted that the Republic of Tajikistan was included in the list of ten countries with the fastest poverty reduction over the last 15 years.⁶ According to official statistics, the level of general poverty in Tajikistan in 2017 decreased to 29.5 per cent, and that of extreme poverty decreased to 14 per cent. The most vulnerable households are those with three children or more, as well as those of retired people.⁷

In order to improve the legal framework and create optimal mechanisms to support the poorest social strata, in February 2017 the Law on Targeted Social Assistance of the Republic of Tajikistan has been adopted.⁸ At present, households recognized as poor receive annual assistance in the amount of 400 somonis. Each school student of a family from this strata receives 40 somonis each month. The family has the right to use 250 kilowatt-hour of electricity per year for free. Members of the poorest families are eligible for medical benefits. University students studying on a contract basis pay only half of the amount stipulated by the contract.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of the Republic of Tajikistan, in partnership with international organizations, are actively implementing programmes to support women from poor families, including by providing financial assistance, training them in new occupation, providing mini-grants, and establishing self-help groups, etc.

For example, in the Sughd province, the public association "Ehyo, farhang va tarakkiyot" with the support of international organizations provided mini-grants to women helping to create mini-plants specialized in drying fruits and wood carving as well as 4 mini-farms, thus contributing to the employment of more than 50 women. In Isfara and Bobojon-Gafurov districts, two-day trainings on the implementation of business initiatives were held, in which 35 women obtained entrepreneurship, marketing and management skills. 88 training sessions were conducted for 82 women from poor families and vulnerable groups.

The NGO "Korvoni Umed" ("Caravan of Hopes") also focuses its programmes on the most vulnerable groups of women. In order to improve material well-being, increase economic independence and autonomy, women have been provided support in establishing their own business and selling their products. Cooking and baking, sewing and craft courses (for the jewelry production, decoupage, home decorations, etc.) are most popular among women.

⁶ Report on the Partnership Programme of the World Bank Group and the Republic of Tajikistan. 2015. <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Tajikistan-Snapshot-ru.pdf>

⁷ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Food Security and Poverty No. 4. 2018. P. 86.

⁸ In force since 1 January 2018.

CHALLENGES

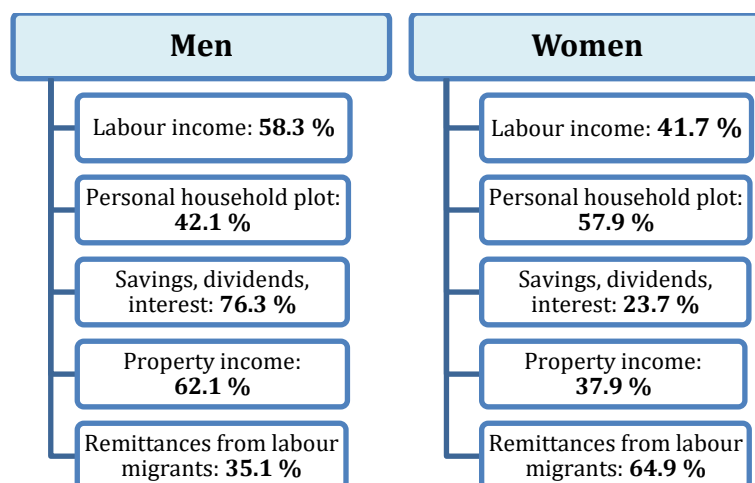
The material well-being and poverty level of women in the Republic of Tajikistan depend on the general level of social and economic development of the country and a whole range of other factors. Moreover, the targeted social assistance which amounts to 400 somonis per family per year are relatively small compared to the amount needed to meet basic needs. The existing system of targeted social assistance still makes an insignificant contribution to poverty reduction.

Until 2015, poverty level assessment in Tajikistan was performed on the basis of a survey of the living standards of the population (2003, 2007, 2009), with the data disaggregated by gender and age. Currently, it is the Household Budget Survey (HBS) that is used to measure poverty, which does not present data disaggregated by gender of household members nor gender of household head. The process of introduction of the SDGs indicators at the national level has not been completed yet; therefore, poverty level indicators disaggregated by gender, used for tracking SDGs, are also missing. In this regard, for the Republic of Tajikistan the relevance of the strategic objective *A.4* of the Beijing Platform for Action—"develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty"—increases.

The extremely limited access to property has the major influence on the poverty level of women and the reduction of their economic opportunities. The seasonal pattern of poverty⁹ in the Republic of Tajikistan indicates the importance of equal opportunities for women and men to save money or appeal for loans in financial institutions.

According to the results of the 2017 Demographic and Health Survey, slightly more than a third (36 per cent) of women aged 15–49 years own a house (alone or jointly). Only 1 per cent of women have a bank account.

Figure 2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORKING AGE POPULATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN, BY GENDER AND SOURCES OF INCOME (BASED ON THE 2010 CENSUS)¹⁰



⁹ Significant fluctuations in consumption and household well-being are observed over different seasons. This is due to the large share of the population employed in agriculture, the high dependence of households on the remittances of migrants, and the seasonal nature of the employment of labour migrants abroad. About 13 per cent of the population of the Republic of Tajikistan remains poor throughout the year.

¹⁰ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Population and Housing Stock Census of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2010. Sources of Livelihood, Economic Activity of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan. Volume VI. Dushanbe, 2012. Pp. 310–311.

Analysis of the sources of livelihood of women and men of working age illustrates significant differences and greater socio-economic vulnerability of women. The indicator on such a source of income as savings and dividends shows an even greater restriction on the opportunities of women compared to men. The proportion of women is limited to only 23.7 per cent. Among the rural working age population, the proportion of women earning income from savings and dividends is about 19 per cent.

One of the risks for women is a significant dependence on remittances from labour migrants. For this indicator, the share of women is about 65 per cent, while it is 35 per cent for men.

The ownership and management of resources can provide women with higher level of protection against poverty and increase their economic opportunities. Given the prevailing rural population (73 per cent), it is imperative that women have access to land and manage land resources on an equal basis with men, especially due to the fact that most often the land user is the male head of household, while women belong to the category of dependents.

Despite the predominance of women in agricultural work, gender inequality is clearly manifested in access to land. At the same time, according to the 2016 Labour Force Survey, about 61 per cent of the total number of employed women work in agriculture. In practice, in the Republic of Tajikistan cases of direct discrimination against women in the distribution of land are rare. However, due to unequal opportunities and differences women are often subjected to indirect discrimination. Dehkan farms led by women tend to have fewer shareholders on average, women prevail among shareholders and the average land area is smaller compared to dehkan farms led by men. Due to the lack of property and the lack of the possibility to collateralize the debt, dehkan farms led by women and rural women are much less likely to apply for loans.

From 2014 to 2017, the number of dehkan farms headed by women increased almost 2.5 times from 14,014 to 31,615. However, in 2017 the number of women managing farm was 4 times less than men. The share of dehkan farms led by women was only 19 per cent. In the context of ongoing process of agglomeration of dehkan farms, there is a significant risk that the share of women managers will decrease.¹¹

Employment income is one of the main drivers of poverty reduction in the Republic of Tajikistan, but a higher decrease in women employment has been registered.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to expand the information base for the study of the feminization of poverty, it is necessary to introduce changes in the methodology and tools of the 2020 census, dehkan farms census and other studies that allow recollect data on poverty, disaggregated not only by men and women, but also by different groups of women and men (those from rural or urban areas, various age groups, with disabilities, etc.).

To increase financial investments from the State budget, to enhance information resources and to mobilize extra-budgetary sources to expand programmes for women and especially vulnerable groups of women: women with young children, women with children or family members with disabilities, labour migrants' wives left behind, women with a low level of education, women from remote areas, etc.

To rely on a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach when developing new programmes and action plans for the elimination of poverty aimed at expanding women's access to basic

¹¹ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Gender Indicators in the Production Activities of Dehkan Farms in 2012–2017. 2018. P. 62.

services, land, financial, information, agricultural and marketing services; to involve women in decision-making process; to overcome gender stereotypes about the role of women and men in society and family.

To develop and implement targeted programmes to increase rural women's access to credits and other financial sources, agricultural services, information and other technologies.

To use actively socially-oriented credit products, including a reduced interest rate, collateral-free credit schemes for group credits, surety and other forms, to improve the access of the most vulnerable groups of women to financial resources.

To use best practices in the creation and operation of credit unions in the Republic of Tajikistan more widely, which have significant advantages, compared to other credit organizations.

To implement a set of measures to increase public awareness of the rights to various types of resources. Due to the changes of the legal framework regarding the alienation of land use rights and taking into account gender issues, as well as the formation of a land market and registration of land plots, it is highly important to introduce the corresponding changes in the legal framework and conduct extensive outreach work among the rural population, especially the poor.

To improve the competitiveness of women through the use of different forms of training in various knowledge fields through the formal and informal education systems; to create permanent programmes to build the capacity of women in the field of new finance systems, crop growing technologies, use of information and communication technologies, etc.

To mobilize civil society organizations to implement programmes to reduce poverty and expand the economic opportunities of women with a focus on vulnerable groups, such as rural women, women with disabilities, left-behind wives, retired persons, etc.

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

ACHIEVEMENTS

The challenges of overcoming gender inequality in the field of education are addressed by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. Among students in secondary specialized educational institutions, the share of girls in 2018/2019 academic year increased reaching 62.1 per cent. In universities, this figure rose to 36.4 per cent; thus, the Republic of Tajikistan finally reached the level of 1991.¹²

In order to overcome the unequal access of rural girls to higher education, in 1997 Presidential quotas have been introduced. An important step of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan was to introduce and to focus on the implementation of measures to achieve inclusive education system as the priorities of long- and medium-term development strategies of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan participating in the Asian Development Bank project has begun training girls/women in non-traditional professions (electricians, gas welders, bricklayers, technicians, etc.). It is planned to train in total 2,230 girls in pilot lyceums. There are 3-month,

¹² Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2019. Pp. 40, 60.

1- and 2-year courses. Currently, the programme covers 873 people, 147 have completed their training and are to be employed.

The agreement on the training of a girl shall be signed by four parties: the head of the lyceum, a girl who holds the scholarship, the employer and the project manager. So, from the very beginning both the issues of training and employment of girls and women shall be addressed.

Students of the 3-month courses receive a monthly stipend equivalent to 30 US dollars during 3 months of study and 3 months of internship—work experience in the area of specialization received at the lyceum. Students of 1- and 2-year courses receive this grant during the last 6 months of study and first 6 months of the employment.

NGOs together with local communities implement literacy projects for girls and women who have left school for different reasons before finishing their studies.

CHALLENGES

Gender-sensitive measurements show that the fact that the equal rights between men and women in the field of education have been proclaimed by legislation is clearly not sufficient, and the equality of opportunity is also an integral component of solving the gender-based problem in the field of education.

When considering gender issues in the education system in the context of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, 2030 National Development Strategy, Mid-Term Development Programme for 2016–2020, and the SDGs, as a rule, the indicators related to the ratio of girls and boys, women and men at different levels of education are used, while in relation to other indicators the dynamics of changes has not been monitored.

A comparative analysis of the results of the censuses of 1989, 2000 and 2010 shows that while the level of education of men has increased, women's level of education, on the contrary, has decreased, especially in professional education. The number of women with higher education per 1000 persons aged 15 years and older is almost 2.5 times lower compared to men, those with incomplete higher education—2 times lower, those with secondary vocational education—1.7 times lower. On the other hand, the number of women with primary education and incomplete secondary education per 1000 persons has increased.¹³

The dynamics of changes in the level of education has not been monitored by women's age. Meanwhile, the analysis of the 2010 census records has shown a lower level of professional education, for example, 11.7 per cent in the 20–29 years age group compared to 14.9 per cent in the 55–64 years age group.

There has been identified a group of girls who have not finished school nor got their diploma, not only for economic reasons, but also due to early marriage. The results of researches in the Republic of Tajikistan and the analysis of the reasons for not attending school by gender reveal the tangible impact of gender stereotypes on parents' attitude towards girls and boys getting education.

Given limited financial capacity of households to provide access to quality education for their children, parents prefer to educate their sons, not daughters. According to official statistics, ratio of girls and boys in the State general educational institutions is 50 per cent, the ratio of

¹³ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Population and Housing Stock Census, 2010. Educational Level of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan. Volume IV. Dushanbe, 2012. P. 157.

girls to boys in private educational institutions is 33 per cent and 67 per cent, respectively (it is considered that private educational institutions provide better education).¹⁴

Despite positive trends in secondary and higher education, gender imbalance in different areas of specialization is very significant in those institutions. Access to education for women with disabilities is still problematic.

Children and adult people living with HIV (PLHIV) virtually fall out of sight of public policies on education. There is discrimination against women living with HIV in the area of education both in higher and secondary educational institutions. In part 5 of Article 16, the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Education provides that training in general educational institutions shall be organized in full-time, evening, correspondence, distance, inclusive, family forms and externship, the implementation of which shall be determined by the State authority in the field of education. However, in practice, the above-mentioned forms of education have not been used for children with HIV.¹⁵ The law on education does not establish any mechanism to identify children who are not covered by compulsory basic general education.¹⁶

The introduction of family or distance learning would allow to receive education to children who cannot attend school. This form would also help children who are infected with HIV and have an opportunistic disease—tuberculosis.

The significant role in expanding the opportunities and competitiveness of women in the labour market is played by the existence of professional education. According to the 2010, the share of women among employed population with professional education is almost two times lower compared to men.¹⁷

According to the 2016 Labour Force Survey, the share of employed women with professional education (*higher, specialized secondary, initial vocational*) is almost half of that compared to men (36.6 per cent of men and 19.8 per cent of women) *excluding labour migrants*. At the same time, a decrease in the level of professional education of men and women has been recorded compared to 2009 (48.2 per cent and 22.7 per cent, respectively).¹⁸

Rural women have even fewer opportunities for professional education, not only compared to men, but also compared to urban women. According to the 2010 census, 39.1 per cent of employed urban women had professional education (higher, incomplete higher, secondary vocational), while among rural women it totaled only 8.7 per cent.¹⁹

In the long-term development strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan, special attention has been paid to ensuring equal access of women to all levels of education, including systems of

¹⁴ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 25 years of the State independence. Dushanbe, 2016. P. 57.

¹⁵ Two years ago, the organization “Your Choice” applied to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan regarding the family form of education, development of an instrument and practice on this issue, however no answer was received.

¹⁶ Shadow Report of Non-Governmental Organizations of Tajikistan on Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Living with HIV and Women from Affected Groups. “Tajikistan Network of Women Living with HIV;” NGO “Center for Human Rights.” Assessment of the Legal Environment in the Field of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Tajikistan, 2017.

¹⁷ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. According to the results of the Labor Force Survey, June–July 2009. P. 114.

¹⁸ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). Dushanbe, 2017. P. 144.

¹⁹ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. Based on the Labor Force Survey, June–July 2009. P. 114.

additional, lifelong education. However, the Conceptual Framework of Lifelong Education in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2023 adopted in 2017, the State Programme for the Training of Specialists in the Field of Higher Professional Education for 2016–2020 adopted in 2016, and the Programme for the Development of Professional Training for Adults in Tajikistan for 2016–2020 do not consider at all the problems of women’s limited access to education nor include any gender-sensitive measures.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to establish the education system oriented not only at lifelong education, but also covering everyone with the parity education of boys and girls, young men and women, those from rural and urban areas, as well as creation of educational possibilities for people with disabilities, people from remote villages, poor and non-poor people, people living with HIV, etc.

Developing new programmes and textbooks for all levels of education, it is necessary to focus on the role of the education system in overcoming gender stereotypes, on the role of girls and women as full-fledged and active actors in the development of society.

In order to increase the impact of professional education and create a system of sustainable interaction between the vocational education system and the labour market, it is recommended to ensure the implementation of measures to expand and diversify the technological profile programmes of the primary and secondary vocational education; to develop vocational guidance mechanisms, to develop and monitor targeted programmes of employment centres for target groups (women, persons with disabilities, returning low-skilled migrants), among other measures.

In order to overcome gender inequality in general schools:

To perform regular joint monitoring and assessment by educational authorities and non-governmental organizations of student attendance, as well as of reasons for not attending school.

To intensify activities of local khukumats, educational authorities, non-governmental organizations in conducting outreach campaigns among parents and local communities regarding the need for girls to receive general and professional education. To strengthen the role of the media in conducting outreach campaigns through constant broadcasts on television, radio and print media on overcoming gender stereotypes in education.

To improve the institutional mechanisms of social partnership between State and non-governmental institutions, between formal and informal education structures, including through the resumption of the activities of the Coordination Council on Gender Issues of Education under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan.

To enhance the role of education system in overcoming gender stereotypes, discriminatory practices and relations between men and women it is necessary:

- ✓ to amend legal acts regarding the mandatory gender analysis of textbooks for secondary schools, universities and other educational institutions;
- ✓ to develop modules and conduct trainings for authors of new generation textbooks, with compulsory gender component;
- ✓ to add gender-related issues of education into refresher courses for teachers and managers at all levels of the education system.

To develop and implement standards for such forms of education as family and distance education for primary and secondary schools within the framework of national education policies, taking into account interests of people living with HIV, among others.

To increase the potential of teachers of educational institutions of all levels, from preschool to higher and postgraduate education, regarding the HIV prevention and non-discrimination of people living with HIV.

C. WOMEN AND HEALTH

ACHIEVEMENTS

A whole range of national strategies and programmes has been adopted and is being implemented in order to expand women's access to health services, ensure women's reproductive and sexual health, expand HIV/AIDS prevention and medical services coverage for women living with HIV, as well as in other areas.

Positive dynamics has been recorded during the reporting period for a number of indicators on women's access to health services. For example, in 2017 the share of skilled birth delivery amounted to 94.1 per cent (in 2016 and 2015 it was 93.3 per cent and 87.6 per cent, respectively).

In 2016, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted the National Programme on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities for 2017–2020 aimed at enhancing the social security coverage of persons with disabilities, ensuring and guaranteeing universal coverage of health and rehabilitation services. Special rooms for pregnant women with disabilities were opened in Dushanbe and in regional and district central maternity clinics (at the ground floors). In 2016, the Research Institute for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities established a Unit for Women with Disabilities.

Active work in the area of protecting women's right to health has been carried out by public organizations. In the Republic of Tajikistan about 30 civil society organizations actively work representing the interests of vulnerable and key population groups on HIV infection. The Tajikistan Network of Women Living with HIV (TNW+) is officially registered and is conducting various activities. Members of the TNW+ work actively with women's communities, providing social and psychological support, equal counseling and necessary information to women living with HIV or affected by the epidemic. Over the seven years of its activity, the TNW+ has provided support to more than 2,500 PLHIV. Currently, 150 women living with HIV and affected by the epidemic are supported by the TNW+.

CHALLENGES

The analysis of existing current health policy indicates that the approach based on epidemiological gender-based profile is prevailing in setting priorities, targets and identifying the needs of women and men in health services. With regard to women and girls, those needs are mainly associated with obstetric care and treatment of reproductive system.

However, the differences and specific problems of women and men in the health system are associated not only with the reproductive health, but all other areas. Although other main health problems are considered gender neutral, institutional and administrative reforms in the health system are poorly linked to the development and deployment of gender equality mechanisms.

According to the 2017 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 42 per cent of women aged 15–49 had at least one problem of access to medical care for themselves. The main problem, appearing more often than others, is to obtain funds for the treatment (35 per cent of women).

In accordance with Article 163 of the Health Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, people living with HIV are entitled to receive all kinds of qualified and specialized medical care free of charge in public healthcare facilities, including medication. However, those norms are not fulfilled in practice.

PLHIV receive antiretroviral therapy and counseling on HIV, however they do not receive any free medical care or medication. Women living with HIV often suffer from side diseases such as Hepatitis B and C, while those diseases have not been included into the adopted list of diseases that are treated free of charge. Fluorography, which PLHIV must make every three months to prevent tuberculosis, is also a paid medical service.

According to the official data of the Republican AIDS Centre, 77 people died of AIDS in 2017, 21 of them were women (27.3 per cent). The National Programme on Counteracting the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan 2017–2020 focuses on the problem of death of PLHIV from AIDS in combination with tuberculosis. However, the statistics is not disaggregated by gender, which is a significant deficiency.²⁰

There is still discrimination against women living with HIV even among medical workers in hospitals, AIDS centres, maternity hospitals and gynecological rooms in relation to their right to health, including reproductive and sexual health.²¹

There are various barriers to women's access to reproductive health and HIV prevention services. The most common barrier is respondents' lack of funds, which is an obstacle to receiving certain paid medical services in public organizations (73 per cent), the impossibility of paying for doctor's work (79 per cent), for social workers' services (59 per cent) and for transport to the hospital (66 per cent).

According to a study conducted in 2017, the demand among respondents was mainly for gynecological services (74 per cent) and gynecological consultations (82 per cent). AIDS Centres in many areas of the country do not have full-time psychologists and lawyers.²² Those services are also widely demanded by WLHIV, drug users, sex workers and women former prisoners. There is a high need for consultation (60 per cent) and treatment by a neurologist (60 per cent), which can be considered as an indirect factor in depressive states, asthenoneurotic syndrome and neurosis with borderline conditions, given the high level of stress in the target group, which is confirmed by 20 per cent of those in need of mental illness treatment.²³

In order to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child, the Article 12 of the Law provides parents or legal representatives of children born to HIV–infected mothers the right to receive breast-milk substitutes from the moment of child birth until the time the child is given a final HIV diagnosis to further reduce the risk of HIV transmission. However, there is no mechanism for implementing this regulation. Mothers who cannot buy infant formula

²⁰ Shadow Report of Non-Governmental Organizations of Tajikistan on Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Living with HIV and Women from Affected Groups. Tajikistan Network of Women Living with HIV.

²¹ NGO "Center for Human Rights." Assessment of the Legal Environment in the Field of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Tajikistan, 2017.

²² Survey among epidemiologists in local AIDS centers.

²³ According to the study *Determining the Needs and Demands of Vulnerable Women in the Khatlon Province*, AFEW Tajikistan. 2017. In total, 200 HIV–positive women and HIV–affected women were interviewed.

feed their children with breast milk. This problem has been identified in every province where women have been interviewed.²⁴

Pregnant women living with HIV need special care and support from the State due to their condition. Social policies, including the National Programme on Counteracting the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan 2017–2020, do not provide for measures of social support to those women.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to conduct a gender analysis on different categories of diseases and access of various groups of men and women to medical services as a part of the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of national strategies and action plans. To use the results to make adjustments to the legal framework and provision of medical services.

To include in the medical staff curriculum some topics related to gender aspects of health, such as human rights and the impact of gender factors on the access of men and women to medical services in order to improve effectiveness of public healthcare services.

To pay special attention to the rights of women living with HIV to equal access to medical services, as well as to develop regulatory, organizational and financial mechanisms to ensure those rights, including:

- ✓ to increase the capacity of gynecologists and other medical workers in the primary health care system in matters of non-discrimination of women living with HIV and women from affected groups;
- ✓ to include the Hepatitis B and C in the list of diseases for determination of disability and free-of-charge treatment. To establish a transparent procedure for providing free medical and socio-psychological assistance for all PLHIV, especially WLHIV, women who inject drugs, former prisoners and sex workers;
- ✓ to develop a mechanism for exercising the right of parents or legal representatives of children born from HIV–infected mothers to substitute breast milk from the moment a child is born until the time of the final diagnosis;
- ✓ to consider the possibility for pregnant women living with HIV to obtain benefits purchasing necessary medications and to improve their nutrition.

To perform regular monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the National Programme on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities regarding health and social rehabilitation, taking into account the characteristics and needs of women with disabilities.

To improve dissemination of gender sensitive statistics and information in the field of public health. To expand the use of webpages of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republican Centre for Statistics and Medical Information. To discuss the possibility of including “Gender Statistics” webpage on those websites.

In partnership with international and local non-governmental organizations, to conduct a research to study the determinants and consequences of teenage pregnancy.

²⁴ NGO “Center for Human Rights.” Assessment of the Legal Environment in the Field of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Tajikistan, 2017.

E. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

ACHIEVEMENTS

Tajikistan as a member of the United Nations reaffirms its commitment to fulfill its obligations to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, United Nations instruments and other international standards for peacebuilding and strengthening security, protection of women's rights and their active involvement in those processes.

In 2018, the deadline for the implementation of the first National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2122 expired. Based on the wide participation of representatives of all involved structures in the peacebuilding process, including experts and representatives of civil society, in 2018 a series of regional meetings was held to assess the impact of the Action Plan and propose recommendations for the development of a new Action Plan. Representatives of government agencies and NGOs from border areas took active part in those meetings.

With the support of the UN Women, in December 2018 a workshop was held with the participation of an international expert to identify key priorities for the development of a new Action Plan. In April and May 2019, national consultations were held to ensure the interconnection of the draft new Action Plan with the long-term development programme, to discuss the draft 2019–2022 National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2122. Those events have been notable due to the close cooperation of all government entities aimed at promoting gender equality and general issues of peacemaking, as well as the wide participation of civil society representatives.

As suggested by the participants of the national consultations and training, in 2019 it has been planned to hold a two-day training on monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the new Action Plan, as well as a three-day training for representatives of the entities involved in sectoral planning.

NGOs of the Republic of Tajikistan have been actively interacting with the Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and local khukumats on promotion of the peace and security in the country. In particular, within the framework of the project Cross-Border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development (2017–2018, UN Women), the public association “Ehyo, farhang va tarakkiyot” and the NGO “MIR—Office for Initiatives Development” implemented training programmes in local communities to expand the economic opportunities of women.

Within the framework of the regional schools “Woman, Tolerance and Peace: Learning into Action,” NGO “MIR” conducted a three-day training on the topics of mediation and negotiating, conflict analysis, and dialogues within communities for peaceful coexistence, as well as a two-day training on participation in the decision-making process and joint management of natural resources. A total of 231 women received training.

A series of meetings has been held in target communities on such topics as dialogue enhancement, decision-making, conflict reduction and implementation of resolution 1325; 240 women have participated in those meetings. Six stories of success about women's best practices in peacebuilding have been documented. A regional association of women/peacebuilding leaders has been established.

CHALLENGES

In addition to the ongoing activities on the implementation of new Action Plan based on the UN resolutions, more regular and dynamic activities are necessary to fulfil the strategic

objective “Women and Armed Conflict” of the Beijing Platform for Action. The potential of women and women’s organizations in those processes has not been yet fully engaged. Few women are members of negotiating delegations, advisory groups on development of agreements and joint plans of partner countries, etc. It is important to promote more actively the participation of women in peacebuilding and country development structures.

Cross-sectoral activities should be intensified to increase women’s participation in conflict resolution at the decision-making level and to protect women’s rights in border areas; to promote the contribution of women to the promotion of a culture of peace; to conduct with the participation of women researches on peace; to use the capabilities of the education system to promote a culture of peace with a focus on gender issues, etc.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the years of the civil war, in 1990s, women and women’s organizations made a considerable contribution to the establishment of peace and the strengthening of stability. It is appropriate to use more actively the experience gained while using “people’s diplomacy” in conflict situations in border areas and in other action lines.

To strengthen and develop cross-border cooperation between women and the Peacebuilding Associations of the Border Communities of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic through joint planning and organization of events.

To strengthen the role of the formal and informal education system in conducting community-based advocacy of the culture of peace, disseminating information on the topics of women, peace and security, gender equality and the empowerment of women, etc., including the use of media and the potential of informal women leaders.

To increase the potential of government agencies staff, women and women’s organizations to fully participate in peacebuilding processes and implement the National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325.

To adopt special measures to increase the participation of women in decision-making at the national and local levels, as well as to achieve equal participation of women in delegations to international fora and negotiations.

To perform regular monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the 2019–2022 National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2122 based on the developed system of quantitative and qualitative indicators, including result and impact indicators.

To ensure public access to information on the implementation of the National Action Plan with a focus on the role of women in preventing terrorism and extremism; to increase the role of women in decision-making in the security sector; to enhance their contribution to peacebuilding, etc.

To find sources and to conduct research on peacebuilding issues and the role of women in those processes.

F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

ACHIEVEMENTS

After 2015, the Government of Tajikistan continued to pursue the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and the creation of conditions for expanding the economic opportunities of women through measures on women’s

employment within the framework of two-year employment promotion programmes, Presidential grants to support women entrepreneurs and other measures. According to the National Bank of the Republic of Tajikistan, in 2017 the share of women among loan recipients reached 39.5 per cent.

It is worth noting an individual section in the new edition of the Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, “Section 3. Features of the Regulation of Labour of Certain Categories”, including the regulation of labour of women and other persons with family responsibilities, seasonal workers, domestic workers, home-based workers and other categories.

Active work in close collaboration with partners from government agencies, international organizations, public and microfinance institutions has been carried out on a permanent basis by the Working Group to Support Women’s Entrepreneurship which operates under the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan. The activities of the Working Group are aimed at improving various areas (legislative, institutional, financial and other mechanisms).

From 2016 to 2019, due to the support of the Women in Business programme of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the joint EBRD–EU Programme on the Enhanced Competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness, three financial institutions of the country—Bank Eshkhat, Microcredit Deposit-Taking Organization IMON International and CJSC “The First Microfinance Bank”—have been more actively involved in supporting women’s entrepreneurship.

The EBRD’s Women in Business programme has been a great opportunity to provide Tajik enterprises led by women not only with financial support, but also with technical assistance in the form of specialist consultations, training courses on entrepreneurship and mentor tips. The programme has been financed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs through the EBRD Small Business Impact Fund.

Since 2012, the National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan every two years has holds a contest “Woman Entrepreneur of the Year—Farah Award.” The contest is held in six categories and is aimed at developing women’s entrepreneurship, increasing the role of women entrepreneurs in the development of the country’s economy, contributing to the introduction of new technologies, supporting women in opening medium and large enterprises, and creating new jobs.

Since the beginning of the contest, about 1,500 women entrepreneurs took part in it. Today, all participants are united in a single network of women entrepreneurs to strengthen the experience exchange and cooperation. The process of conducting the competition and announcement of results of the contest is very transparent, and information about the winners of the contest and their achievements is publicly available to everybody in the country.

In 2018, the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan (GosKomInvest), the Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, USAID, IMON International, ADB, Durandesh IT company, newspaper Boju Khiroj, Kayrakkum Carpets, Shahri Man radiostation and Payvand radiostation became partners of the National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan holding the contest. The general organizational partner is Tcell. The general media partner is the Asia Plus media group.

In order to expand the economic opportunities for people with disabilities to receive professional education, since 2017 new groups have been opened in three pilot districts (Dushanbe, Penjikent and Rasht). With the support of the German Adult Education

Association and the German Caritas Association, 82 persons with disabilities received professions within this project in 2017, 58.5 per cent of which were women.

CHALLENGES

Analysis of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the economy shows a number of problems for the implementation of priority objectives. On one hand, a considerable part of the planned measures to pursue active employment policy and labour market regulation, increase the employment of women, their professional education, etc., has not been implemented; while on the other hand, achieving the set objectives has been impossible due to the underdeveloped cross-sectoral approach. The key obstacle to tangible shift in this area has been the lack of consideration—at the stage of developing policy measures—of ongoing changes in labour market and employment, as well as ignoring the various women’s opportunities and their needs.

The results of the Labour Force Survey (LFS 2016) clearly demonstrate that in the Republic of Tajikistan the level of participation of women of working age, both in labour force and in employment, is significantly lower compared to men, and behavioural patterns in the labour market have a number of differences. While the proportion of men among the employed population increased from 53.4 per cent in 2004 to 59.5 per cent in 2016, the proportion of women significantly decreased from 46.6 per cent in 2004 to 40.5 per cent in 2016.²⁵

Unfortunately, the LFS 2016 data for rural areas have not been disaggregated by gender, but general indicators of rural employment in 2016 compared with 2004 show a decrease to 75.4 per cent (80 per cent in 2004).

A specific feature of Tajikistan’s employment structure is a large share of employees (34.8 per cent.) At the same time, during 2009–2016 there was a significant shift in the structure of employment of the population of Tajikistan. In 2009 more than half of the working population worked as employees, while in 2016 about 66 per cent of the population were self-employed, i.e. independently provided themselves with income, and not at the expense of State financing. A relatively low proportion of assisting family members (8.5 per cent) and people working at their own expense (45.5 per cent). The share of employers was 10.7 per cent.²⁶

According to the results of the LFS 2016, 41.2 per cent of the employees are women.²⁷ The number of self-employed women is much lower (27.5 per cent). The situation regarding the distribution of workers by gender in small enterprises (with 10 or less employees) is even more complicated. Only every fifth employee is a woman.²⁸

The general division of occupations in terms of gender equality can be measured using the occupational segregation index. The index shows how the labour market is divided into “male” and “female” professions.²⁹

²⁵ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). Dushanbe, 2017. P. 17.

²⁶ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). Dushanbe, 2017. P. 44

²⁷ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2017. P. 61, 62.

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

²⁹ The occupational segregation index (D) is in the range from 0 to 1, where “0” indicates no segregation, and 1 indicates absolute segregation.

The results of the LFS 2016 revealed that 15 most common female professions include unskilled workers; cleaning staff and servants in institutions, hotels, etc.; seamstresses, embroiderers and similar professions; teachers of secondary schools and secondary vocational institutions as well as accountants.

Based on the overall results of the LFS 2016 classification of the employed population by gender and occupation, the occupational segregation index in Tajikistan is about 0.61.³⁰ The index can be interpreted as a share of persons who should change their profession to achieve zero segregation.

According to the results of the LFS 2016, among those who do not work in the agricultural sector, one out of three men is informally employed, compared to 21.7 per cent among women. According to the data in the table below, outside the agricultural sector, the informal employment rate is two times lower for women compared to men.³¹

Table 3. INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT AT THE MAIN JOB, %³² (Source: LFS 2016)

	Total number of employees outside agricultural sector		Formal sector		Informal sector	
		Formal employment	Informal employment	Formal employment		Informal employment
Total	100	70.6	29.4	70.6	13.7	15.7
Men	100	66.8	33.2	66.8	14.5	18.6
Women	100	78.3	21.7	78.3	12.0	9.7

Productive employment is not any job, but the one that generates income that provides decent living conditions for women and men. Due to existing professional segregation in the labour market, wages among women are in general much lower than those of men in all sectors. Most part of women are engaged in the lowest paid segment: agriculture, education, healthcare, etc. At the end of 2017, women's salaries amounted to 59.6 per cent of men's salaries.

Table 4. RATIO OF WOMEN'S SALARIES TO MEN'S SALARIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN, BY YEAR, %³³

	2014	2015	2016	2017
The ratio of women's salaries to men's salaries	60.3	61.1	64.0	59.6

³⁰ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). Dushanbe, 2017. P. 48.

³¹ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). 2017. P. 54.

³² Calculations based on data of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). Dushanbe, 2017. P. 54.

³³ See: <https://www.stat.tj/ru/gender-database>

According to the official data, the ratio of women's salaries to men's salaries in the real sector is only 39.3 per cent, while it is 47.4 per cent in agriculture, 46.5 per cent in hospitality industry, 79.8 per cent in education.³⁴ Also, low salaries and a low level of women's employment leads to a low level of retirement benefits. According to the Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions, the women's average amount of assigned retirement benefits is 71 per cent of men's retirement benefits amount.

According to the 2017 Demographic and Health Survey, 74 per cent of working women received only cash salaries, while 13 per cent did not receive any money for their work. Among working women with earnings, 71 per cent made decisions on how to spend their earnings on their own or together with their husbands; 18 per cent answered that it was mainly the husband who made the decision. Most of employed women (71 per cent) earn less than their husbands.

Given the general prevalence of youth population, information on the employment of young women and men is important. According to the LFS 2016, the share of young people who were not engaged in labour activity and did not undergo professional nor vocational training is 30 per cent of the total number of young people. Moreover, among men aged 15–29 the number of those who did not work nor study was only 5.8 per cent, and among women of this age group it was 53.1 per cent. Thus, we can conclude that the potential of the male young population of the Republic of Tajikistan is used at 94.2 per cent, and that of young women only at 46.9 per cent.³⁵

Training in demanded areas of specialization is one of the key action lines to ensure productive employment, but it does not have sufficient capacity to fulfil its mission. The limited opportunities of vulnerable groups of women to obtain demanded specialties is of particular concern. According to the data of the public entity Tajikistan's Centre for Adult Education (CAE), overall share of women among students is more than a half. However, analysis of the obtained specialties shows that every second woman has been trained in the specialties of seamstress embroiderer, manufacturer of sewing products and knitter–seam cutter.

Moreover, it is very important to take into account the limited financial opportunities of women compared with men. Unfortunately, data on the students of Centres for Adult Education for 2015–2019 are unavailable. However, the analysis of students attending courses Centres for Adult Education in the previous years, by gender and forms of training, shows that while two thirds of men paid for their training to get a specialty or certification, less than a half of women (48.2 per cent) did. Therefore, it is obvious that without the support of donor organizations or government agencies it is more difficult for women, including vulnerable groups of women, to get a specialty at the Centres for Adult Education.

Women's unpaid care for family members and the combination of work and family responsibilities forms quite a difficult strategic challenge to ensure gender equality. According to the LFS 2016, the vast majority of those involved in unpaid domestic work were women.

³⁴ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2017. Pp. 146–147.

³⁵ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2017. Pp. 78–79.

Table 5. PERSONS ENGAGED IN UNPAID CARE, BY GENDER, %³⁶ (Source: LFS 2016)

Nº	Types of work	Women	Men
1	Unpaid courtyard work or housekeeping in their households	82.7	17.3
2	Unpaid care for children living in their households	75.8	24.2
3	Unpaid care or free assistance to household members of 18 years of age or older with disabilities, age-related problems, suffering from mental or physical illnesses or sick	70.7	29.3
4	Unpaid household management	36.7	63.3

The key challenges to the development of women's entrepreneurship are:

- ✓ Limited number of effective mechanisms for the development of women's entrepreneurship, including access to credits and other financial resources;
- ✓ Insufficient access to best practices, knowledge, as well as business planning, management and marketing skills among women entrepreneurs for successful business promotion;
- ✓ Gap between the national business education system from the requirements of the market economy, international standards, as well as low level of organizational, economic and legal knowledge of entrepreneurs.

The existing contest for the Presidential grants to support women entrepreneurs has been very intransparent compared to the Farah contest. Information on contest participants and results of the activities of grant recipients has not been publicly available at all. It has not been clear what indicators are applied to monitor and assess the use and effectiveness of grants nor how much Presidential grants contribute to the development of women's entrepreneurship in the country.

Ignoring gender approach while developing new programmes aimed at the enhancement of a particular industry does not contribute to expanding the economic opportunities of women and ensuring gender equality. In March 2018, the Tourism Development Programme in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2018–2020 has been adopted. In January 2019, the years 2019 through 2021 have been proclaimed "the years of rural development, tourism and folk crafts" by the Presidential Order. However, when planning measures for the tourism development, no attention has been paid to the gender aspects of the development of this industry and there has been no gender analysis of those employed in this industry, training of specialists for this industry, etc.

One of the priority tasks of this Programme is training of qualified staff. Against this background, attention should be paid to the fact that in 2018/2019 academic year among the students of the specialized secondary educational institutions of tourism and hospitality girls make up only 35.2 per cent, and three times less among university students (10.2 per cent).³⁷

³⁶ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). Dushanbe, 2017. Pp. 93–94.

³⁷ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2019. Pp. 55, 74.

Measures to support women migrant workers are poorly implemented, taking into account their capabilities and needs, including measures to create a gender-sensitive package of measures for pre-departure training of migrant workers and members of their families. According to the results of the 2016 Labour Force Survey in comparison to the 2009 Labour Force Survey, less labour migrants have professional education, 14.8 per cent of men (21.4 per cent in 2009) and 21.9 per cent of women (29.5 per cent in 2009).

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to monitor regularly the efficiency of the implemented measures of various national strategies and programmes on overcoming gender inequalities in the economy, expanding women's economic opportunities and, based on the results, making adjustments to existing policies. Relevant government agencies that develop measures of intervention shall rely on the results of sample surveys and gender analyses conducted by the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, international institutions, NGOs and independent research companies.

At the stage of policy development to support entrepreneurship, it is necessary to take into account the special features of "female" and "male" entrepreneurship, related both to the areas of their activity and the characteristics of their socio-demographic portraits, especially in rural areas. In order to create a more favorable business environment for women's entrepreneurship development, it is recommended to adopt provisional target measures to promote women entrepreneurs.

In the context of structural change of the economy, modernization of production process and introduction of new information technologies, a comprehensive system of advanced training and retraining of staff becomes highly important. The formation of the labour market depends not only on demand, supply and labour force quantity, but also on the "quality" of workers. It is recommended to develop special training and retraining programmes for women who want to resume work after a long break associated with raising children. To stimulate non-governmental educational institutions to implement special educational programmes for women to restore labour skills and professional knowledge.

To give impetus to the implementation of government measures to form an entrepreneurship support institutional system with a focus on women's entrepreneurship, including strengthening the capacity of the Working Group to Support Women's Entrepreneurship which operates under the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management; to develop business associations, networks of social and business centres and other structures for women.

It is necessary to conduct a comprehensive research and draw up a portrait of an entrepreneur, both men and women. For the development of entrepreneurship support measures, data of all types and sectors are important, including personal characteristics, areas and types of activities, working conditions, etc. It is important to revise the number and composition of dehqan farms, including such indicators as the amount of household members, its composition, average size of land, etc., with the data disaggregated by gender of the head of the household.

In order to increase the impact of professional education and establish sustainable interaction between the professional education system and labour market, it is recommended to ensure the implementation of the medium-term development programme measures on diversification of the programmes of primary and secondary vocational education of a technical profile, to develop mechanisms for a vocational guidance system, to

develop and monitor special programmes of the employment centres for target groups (women, persons with disabilities, returning low-skilled migrants).

In order to expand women's economic opportunities, it is necessary:

- ✓ to improve the competitiveness of women through the use of training programmes on new technologies, including information and communication technologies; and to offer comprehensive services, from starting a business to its active promotion;
- ✓ to strengthen Government's, NGOs and media's outreach activities to overcome gender stereotypes in the society and to improve the status of women;
- ✓ to implement special measures to involve women in economic development decision-making;
- ✓ to develop measures to promote family business and enhance the role of women in its set up;
- ✓ to provide training and retraining to unemployed people as per the specialties demanded on the market, taking into account interests and financial possibilities of women;
- ✓ to promote preferential loans with banks and microcredit organizations for women entrepreneurs.

It is recommended to strengthen coordination between governmental, non-governmental and international organizations with a focus on ensuring the comprehensiveness of the proposed forms of support and continuity in projects, using best practices of expanding women's economic opportunities in the Republic of Tajikistan.

J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

ACHIEVEMENTS

Among the mass media of the Republic of Tajikistan, the most robust gender-sensitive policy has been carried out by the Asia Plus non-governmental media group, which actively cooperates with partners from various sectors (business, non-governmental and international organizations, etc.). Over the past few years, the media group has initiated and implemented several special projects aimed at highlighting gender equality and empowering women. The project *I am a woman and I can!* speaks about how Tajik women despite prejudices and stereotypes have achieved success, made a career and are happy in the family. Since 2012, the Asia Plus media group has been the general media partner of the National Association of Business Women of Tajikistan in the Woman Entrepreneur of the Year—Farah Award contest.

In its project *Article 19* Asia Plus has spoken about the implementation of the Conceptual Framework on the Provision of Free Legal Aid in the Republic of Tajikistan, informed which categories of citizens are eligible to receive free legal aid, why in the modern world it is so important to provide citizens, especially those from low-income and vulnerable groups, with access to legal assistance, and so on.

In partnership with the Himoya law firm, there is a heading called *Your Personal Lawyer* about the protection wide range of women's rights: inheritance, property division, advice on resolving citizenship issues, and so on.

In 2018, Asia Plus has launched a new project *My Child*, which raises the most relevant topics related to our children: what my child does, does anyone offend him, how to protect his

rights, etc. The Office of UNICEF in the Republic of Tajikistan has been the partner of this project.

CHALLENGES

As a part of the implementation of the strategic objective of the Beijing Platform for Action to promote the creation of a balanced and non-stereotyped image of women in the media, and despite the significant impact of the community gender stereotypes regarding gender roles and status of women in society and family, at the State level a communication strategy aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes and promoting *de facto* equal right between women and men has not yet been developed and implemented. Occasional television and radio broadcasts on State channels and individual articles in print media cannot effectively affect changes in public opinion and help improve the status of girls and women in the society.

The information environment in the Republic of Tajikistan is clearly dominated by men. There is no gender analysis of the composition of State and independent media, including women's participation in the media at the decision-making level. The ratio of girls and boys in specialized secondary educational institutions (SSEIs) and universities has not been tracked. Despite the fact that girls predominate in the Communications career among students in SSEIs, less than a half of the university students are girls. Also, girls make up a very small share of those who study Telecommunications in SSEIs and universities.

Table 6. SHARE OF GIRLS AMONG STUDENTS IN SPECIALIZED SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (SSEI) AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEI) IN 2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR, BY AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION, %³⁸

Careers	SSEI			HEI		
	Total	Girls		Total	Girls	
		QTY	per cent		QTY	per cent
Communications	513	392	76.4	7367	3286	44.6
Telecommunications	236	27	11.4	947	165	17.4

Since 2010, the vast majority of universities do not read special courses on the gender dimension of the media for future journalists. The training of journalists on gender issues remains relevant. Press clubs where gender issues have previously been discussed, a best practice on gender issues, is now rarely used among non-governmental organizations and independent media.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A comprehensive research on the role of the media in covering gender issues, the new roles of men and women in society, the family and other problems is long overdue.

The Government together with State and private media as well as non-governmental organizations shall develop and implement a communication strategy to publicly discuss new

³⁸ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2019. Pp. 54, 73.

gender roles in communities and families, the problems of *de facto* equal rights of women and men, the prevention of violence against women and girls and other issues.

It is recommended to expand the implementation of special programmes on gender issues for journalists. The Ministry of Education and Science shall control the introduction of gender courses in the curricula of universities and specialized secondary educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The State media and independent media are recommended to make a wider use of the best practices of the Asia Plus media group in creating permanent special sections and programmes as well as regularly conducting information campaigns to overcome gender stereotypes and to create a positive image of women in business, politics, etc.

K. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ACHIEVEMENTS

In accordance with the strategic goal of the Beijing Platform for Action “Women and the environment,” the new SDG approaches and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (Sendai Framework), gender issues have been taken into account and integrated into all sections of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2019–2030 of the Republic of Tajikistan.

At the institutional level, in order to improve coordination mechanisms between the government agencies working in the field of disaster risk reduction and the structures working in the field of promoting gender and other types of equality, an Expert Group under the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CoES) has been created with representatives of ministries and agencies, including representatives of the Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The involvement of a gender expert in the process of the development of the draft Medium-Term Disaster Risk Reduction Programme for 2019–2022 has allowed integration of gender issues into all key priorities and action lines into the draft Programme.

To date, in partnership with international organizations, considerable work has been performed to conduct gender analysis and consultative meetings to discuss and develop methodological issues on creation of a national mechanism for collecting, analyzing and disseminating information on disaster losses, disaggregated by gender, age and disability.

In addition to gender indicators for the SDGs and the Sendai Framework, it is planned to add five gender indicators in the system of indicators for monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the Sendai Framework and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2019–2030 aimed at tracking the inclusion of women in decision-making, the coverage of women with disaster preparedness training programmes, the rational use of natural resources, etc.

From 2016 until 2019, in order to increase the capacity of national partners, representatives of women’s groups and their comprehensive participation in disaster risk management, UN Women and other international organizations have carried out activities to raise awareness among the population, especially women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, and to engage them in disaster risk management and decision-making.

In 2017, UN Women in partnership with the CoES and the Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, in a three-day training, trained 20

trainers from the CoES, staff members of the Committee on Woman and the Family, gender experts, representatives of non-governmental organizations from different provinces of the country to work with the population and government agencies.

CHALLENGES

The problems of gender inequality in the area of the environment and natural disaster risks, clearly, are consequences of the existing system of gender relations in society. Therefore, the empowerment of women and the elimination of gender inequalities in the environment field and the reduction of natural disaster risks also depend directly on the effective implementation of the SDGs and gender policy in general.

One of the problems that impede the deployment of gender approaches in the current policy is the lack of awareness among government officials, including decision-makers, about the close relationship between gender and the environment.

The low level of awareness of women and men in the use of technologies and green economy methods for sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources is recorded.

A low share of girls among students of specialized secondary educational institutions and higher educational institutions does not contribute to the increase of the level of representation of women in the managerial positions of public and private entities responsible for managing ecosystems and natural resources.

Table 7. SHARE OF GIRLS AMONG STUDENTS IN SPECIALIZED SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (SSEI) AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEI) IN 2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR, BY AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT, %³⁹

Careers	SSEI			HEI		
	Total	Girls		Total	Girls	
		QTY	per cent		QTY	per cent
Environmental Sciences	–	–	–	2,413	896	37.1
Environmental Protection	208	60	28.8	32	7	21.9
Agriculture	476	18	3.8	5,855	475	8.1
Land Management. Geodesy. Cartography and Topography	21	4	19.0	103	4	3.9

Women are still underrepresented at all levels of developing of the decision-making policy on natural resources and rational environmental management, environmental conservation and protection, and disaster risk reduction. For example, the share of women in the central office and units of the Committee for Environmental Protection is only 18 per cent, and among civil servants it is even lower—about 12 per cent.

In practice, the gender perception of women and girls as helpless victims of natural disasters and their subordinate position have led to the fact that women have been categorized as incapable of taking active measures to increase preparedness, respond to natural disasters and take further recovery actions. In the response groups established in jamoats women's representation is extremely low. As a result, women have been isolated from disaster risk planning and decision-making.

³⁹ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2019. Pp. 54, 73.

The results of the study conducted by OXFAM Tajikistan held in 2015 reveal a whole range of gender problems due to the impact of cultural aspects, for example, unequal access to control and authority. According to a member of the Women's Disaster Preparedness Group in Khatlon, *"this is part of our culture when men have more authority and have their own resources. We all work on land, but it belongs to men. We all can apply for a loan, but men more often apply for loans."*⁴⁰

According to another participant in the study, the chairwoman of the mahallah, the implementation of programmes to increase the potential of women and reduce their vulnerability to natural disasters depends entirely on men: *"Everything depends on one's husband. If the husband does not allow the woman to participate in seminars, we can do nothing."*⁴¹ A teacher at the Teacher Training College in the city of Kulob also said that women *"must get permission from their husbands to leave the house and respond in an emergency, so we can only rely on men."*

A teacher, member of a disaster management school group, has raised the issue of preparing girls for response to natural disasters: the vast majority of girls cannot swim, and it is very difficult to carry out physical exercises to form their skills aimed at reducing vulnerability to disasters because of the refusal to use sportswear in physical education classes. Despite the fact that physical education classes are designed for both girls and boys, girls have little motivation, as their parents are rarely interested in those classes.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to ensure regular monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the gender objectives of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2019–2030 and other national strategies and programmes in the area of environmental protection and natural resource management.

Due to predominance of women in the agricultural sector and high level of soil erosion, land degradation and inefficient irrigation system in Tajikistan, as well as Tajikistan's high exposure to climate change, the role of women in meeting the targets of SDG 13 is becoming more important than ever. It is recommended to take urgent measures to combat climate change and its consequences. It sets the tasks to raise awareness of women and men from rural areas about their role in preserving natural resources, to transfer knowledge about ongoing changes in the environment and alternative livelihoods, to involve women in the development and implementation of programmes for the sustainable development of local communities, etc.

Staff member of ministries and agencies, as well as local authorities, shall increase gender sensitivity in order to ensure the integration of gender perspectives into all developing sectors. Courses on gender aspects of disaster risk reduction should be included in the system of advanced training of civil servants.

It is recommended to develop target measures to promote women in specialized structures for environmental protection and disaster risk reduction at the decision-making level, including the formation of a talent pool of competent women, using Presidential quotas for university education, etc.

⁴⁰ OXFAM. Analysis on Gender, Age and Disability. Consolidation and Building of the Disaster Resilience Capacity of Entities and Communities in Eastern Khatlon, Tajikistan. Dushanbe, July 2015.

⁴¹ OXFAM. Analysis on Gender, Age and Disability. Consolidation and Building of the Disaster Resilience Capacity of Entities and Communities in Eastern Khatlon, Tajikistan. Dushanbe, July 2015. Interview, 23 June 2015.

To strengthen the capacity of national and local women's groups, NGOs and gender experts regarding gender aspect of the development and monitoring of the environmental protection and disaster risk reduction action plans. They should be provided with a platform for participation and leadership.

To increase the participation of women at the community level in various structures/commissions to establish early warning, response system and humanitarian assistance systems, identify the needs and requirements of the affected population, recovery, etc.

To ensure documentation and dissemination of information about best practices of integrating gender perspective into disaster risk reduction to advance women as leaders and advocates for change.

To enhance media capacity building to increase public awareness and understanding of disaster risks, the importance of public participation in the creation of early warning, response and recovery systems with a focus on gender issues.

To conduct extensive media campaigns on gender issues in the context of natural disasters in order to overcome stereotypes regarding the role of women and men in reducing disaster risks, saving lives, adapting to climate change and rational use of natural resources, etc.

L. THE GIRL CHILD

ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the main achievements in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action for this strategic objective in the Republic Tajikistan is the establishment of the position of the Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights—the Commissioner for Children's Rights (CCR), which has strengthened national institutional mechanisms to protect the rights of the child, particularly, the girl child. The list of the main functions of the Commissioner for Children's Rights includes a whole range of tasks aimed at facilitating the observance of the rights and freedoms of the child; restoration of violated rights and freedoms; improvement of the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan on the rights and freedoms of the child, interaction with government agencies, civil society organizations, etc.

In 2017, the Strategic Plan of the Commissioner for Children's Rights for 2018–2020 has been adopted. Taking into account the existing problems in the implementation of the right to education of children with disabilities and the development of inclusive education, the CCR of the Republic of Tajikistan identified the promotion of the right of children with disabilities to quality education in an inclusive environment as a priority area of the activity in 2018–2020.

In 2014, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted the National Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Republic Tajikistan for 2015–2020. Among the principles of the Programme, there is a principle of integration of provisions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against children, including girls and children from ethnic groups, in relevant strategies and programme instruments.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in partnership with non-governmental and international organizations has taken measures to ensure the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action to eliminate discrimination against girls in the area of education, to develop skills training and capacity building, to eliminate violence against girls as well as negative cultural traditions and practices against girls, etc.

“Charoghi Khidoyat”, a shelter and training centre for orphan girl children, which has 31 employees, receives funding from the State budget. Also, as mentioned in the National Review on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, since 2001 the Sarvar State training centre for women under the Ministry of Education and Science has been operating to train girls entering higher educational institutions under the Presidential quota; in 2014, under the Committee on Women and the Family the Council of Girl Students has been established: the School of Girls Leaders operates within this Council, where experienced and reputable teachers work. A yearly scholarship of 100 somonis per month is awarded by the Committee on Women and the Family to 20 best students from country’s higher educational institutions (15) and secondary schools (5).

CHALLENGES

Analysis of the current policy on the implementation of the girl child strategic objective of the Beijing Platform for Action demonstrates the attention that educational, health and social protection authorities and other government agencies pay to girls’ rights. At the same time, a predominantly gender-neutral approach is noticed in the development of policies related to children and youth; no comprehensive gender analysis on the observance of children’s rights has been carried out. Based on the results of the implementation of certain programmes, the impact on the rights and situation of girls and boys has not been monitored. The conceptual approaches to improve policies to ensure *de facto* equal rights between women and men most often do not focus on the specific problems of girls as a target group.

For example, the reports of the CCR for 2017 and 2018 provide information on citizens’ filings to the CCR and the activities carried out to monitor and protect the rights of children. However, the data on filings and respect for the rights of the child have not been disaggregated by girls and boys. In 2018, the CCR of the Republic of Tajikistan considered 185 filings of individuals and legal entities, of which 45 were written and 140 were verbal. Analysis of filings shows that in most cases, citizens’ oral filings relate to children’s rights to social security (27), access to education (18; 7 in 2017), right to parents care and growing in family (14), as well as right to property and inheritance (14; 4 in 2017). Written filings are mainly those related to the rights to education, to an adequate standard of living, to health, to a fair trial, etc.⁴²

Despite the close attention paid to the education of girls/young women and the improvement of a number of indicators, girls’ access to the various levels of the education system remains more limited compared to boys. Typically, it is explained by such factors as limited financial resources of families and preference to give education to sons, gender stereotypes for the distribution of roles of girls and boys, women and men, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, child labour and girls’ domestic work overload, etc.

Table 8. SHARE OF GIRLS AMONG STUDENTS IN/GRADUATES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, %⁴³

	Students		Graduates			
		General school				

⁴² See: <http://ombudsman.tj/rus/doklady-upolnomochennogo/>

⁴³ Calculation based on data of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Education in the Republic of Tajikistan. 2019. Pp. 7–9, 29.

	Pre-school institutions	Years 1–4	Years 5–9	Years 10–11	Year 11	Primary vocational education	Secondary vocational education	Higher education
2014/2015	45.6	48.3	47.7	45.6	–	26.1	64.5	29.1
2018/2019	44.8	48.4	48.3	46.5	46.0	24.6	62.0	35.6

Despite the Government’s work to prevent early marriages, the problem of eliminating harmful practices of early and forced marriages remains relevant for the Republic of Tajikistan. Although the negative consequences for society of early and forced marriages, effective mechanisms to eliminate this harmful practice have not yet been developed.

In accordance with the Family Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, the age of marriage is 18. However, in exceptional cases, part 2 of Article 13 of the Family Code allows to reduce the age of marriage by court decision. According to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan, in 2018, 709 (642 in 2017) marriages were registered after the court decision on reduction of the age of marriage (bride under 18). The State does not monitor this situation in terms of the causes and consequences of such marriages. The Supreme Court of the Republic of Tajikistan has not given clarifications for courts of the Republic of Tajikistan on such category of cases. Comprehensive studies have not been conducted either. In such cases judges are guided by personal convictions. Consultations of young women who have divorced and want to defend their rights in a divorce show that that such problem exists.

UN Women’s analysis of the judicial wording that allows registration of early marriages has shown that almost half of the analyzed decisions of the civil registry offices in the reasoning part of the decision refer to articles of the Family Code and the Civil Procedure Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, but, at same time, no reasoning is included. The data allow to conclude that courts do not apply gender-sensitive approaches in their activities, as they do not pay attention to the rights of those who marry, especially girls’ rights, such as voluntary marriage, interests of the child and independent decision-making.

Given the prevalent practice in the Republic of Tajikistan when parents marry their daughters according to the nikokh religious custom without registering a marriage at a civil registry office, it should be assumed that the number of early marriages is much higher. Also, as a result of early and forced marriages, the possibilities of girls in obtaining general or professional education, employment and self-realization are significantly limited. This problem is also related to HIV, since early marriage is an obstacle to protecting the rights of young women when they become infected with HIV during the marriage from their husband.

According to the statistics of the State Information and Analysis Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan for 10 months of 2018, 790 crimes were committed against minors, including crimes related to violations of the rights and freedoms of minors in the area of education and early marriage of girls under the age of marriage, such as:

- ✓ obstruction to obtaining the basic compulsory general education (nine-year) for girls (105 cases; 129 in 2017);
- ✓ marriage of girls who have not reached marriageable age (12 cases; 21 in 2017);
- ✓ marriage to a person under the marriageable age (13 cases; 20 in 2017).

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood are not a medical problem only, but also a social one. The causes of teenage and early pregnancy may be different, however, one of them is early and forced marriages. Children born to very young mothers are at an increased risk of

morbidity and mortality. Teenage mothers are more likely to experience adverse pregnancy outcomes, and are more limited in access to education and self-realization in the society. According to the 2017 Demographic and Health Survey, in total, 7 per cent of women aged 15–19 already began childbearing, 3 per cent of teenage women already gave birth to children, and 4 per cent were pregnant at the time of the survey.⁴⁴

Another concern for children is the situation of children's suicide and attempts to commit suicide. In 2018, 102 children (90 in 2017) committed or attempted suicide in the country. Those cases increased in Sughd and Khatlon provinces (37 and 32, respectively; 31 and 27 in 2017).⁴⁵

According to the LFS 2016, in the Republic of Tajikistan 23.4 per cent of children aged 5–17 work. This indicator is 45.5 per cent among children aged 15–17. Most working children are engaged in agricultural work with other members of their families in their households or in the immediate vicinity.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the data of children by gender have not been presented in the Report. The workload of girls with domestic labour is significantly higher compared to boys.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Physical and mental health services shall focus on elimination of all barriers, including gender stereotypes, in order to ensure empowerment and the rights of girls to fully develop their potential and professional skills through equal access to education and training, as well as nutrition.

To enhance the system of monitoring and assessment of the observance of the rights and access of girls to all types of social services by disaggregating indicators by gender. It is mandatory the use gender analysis and disaggregate statistical data by girls and boys in reports when assessing the results of implemented strategies and programmes.

To use of special support measures for girls more widely in order to motivate families to educate girls in high schools and get professional education (scholarships, free meals, clothes, shoes and school supplies, etc.).

To expand public awareness among parents and local communities to create a strong public opinion on the need for a general secondary and professional education, both for girls and boys, involving the media, as well as religious organizations and NGOs.

To conduct a comprehensive analysis of judicial practice in cases of reduction of marriageable age. Based on that, to adopt the resolution of the Plenum of the Supreme Court on cases of reduction of the age of marriage, calling judges' attention to the joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices.

To amend part 2 of Article 13 of the Family Code of the Republic of Tajikistan with the definition of a complete list of exceptional cases for reducing marriageable age based on the general analysis of judicial practice regarding the cases of reduction of marriageable age. In the decision-making process, it is necessary to consider the fact that poverty or the poor

⁴⁴ Statistical agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan. 2017 Demographic and Health Survey. Key Indicators Report. Dushanbe, March 2018. P. 16.

⁴⁵ Report of the Commissioner for the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2018. P. 90. See: <http://ombudsman.tj/rus/doklady-upolnomochennogo/>

⁴⁶ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan. (Report prepared based on the Labor Force Survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016). 2017. P. 110.

financial situation of one of the intending spouses, especially the girls' families, should not be the main reason to reduce the age of marriage since poverty can be used to exploit girls later in marriage.

To enhance the role of the media and to implement joint projects of government agencies with NGOs and religious organizations to mobilize public opinion on intolerance to early and forced marriages as well as violence against girls and women.

CHAPTER 3. INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

G. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

ACHIEVEMENTS

In order to attract more women to the civil service, in April 2017, an amendment was introduced to the Guideline on the Procedure for Competitive Admissions for Public Service Openings. According to this amendment, if a woman has applied for public services openings for the first time, after the interview she shall be added three additional points. In accordance with this provision, 74 women were hired for various civil service positions in 2018.

In 2017, the State Programme on the Education, Selection and Placement of Capable Women and Girls in Leadership Positions in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2022 have been adopted. The total amount of funds for the implementation of the Programme for 2017–2022 is 486,000 somonis (55,000 US dollars).

According to the State Human Resources Programme, it is planned to increase the share of women among civil servants up to 40 per cent, and up to 30 per cent at managerial level by 2022. The Action Plan for the implementation of the Mid-Term Development Programme for 2016–2020 provides for a number of measures to increase the participation of women in decision-making.

CHALLENGES

At present, it is difficult to assess how the special measure on women applying for public service openings impacts the substantial growth of women among the managerial public servants. On one hand, this measure applies mainly to executive bodies. On the other hand, it is unlikely that one measure can change the situation with the involvement of women in the decision-making due to the impact of a whole range of issues on this process.

Despite the efforts made by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and non-governmental organizations to promote women in leadership positions and State guarantees proclaimed in the Law on State Guarantees, men dominate in decision-making. The representation of women in managerial positions and in government agencies is still minor. Women managers mainly occupy lower and middle management positions.

The representation of women in the Parliament is about 19 per cent, women make up about 22 per cent of civil servants and occupy 15 per cent of managerial positions.

Analysis of the inclusion of women in the legislature election process reveals a lack of a comprehensive and well-thought-out strategy for promoting women to the legislative branch. For example, the share of women among parliamentary candidates in the election campaign for the Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli decreased from 15 per cent in 2005 to 10.5 per cent in 2015.

The existing segregation of areas of specialization that girls acquire in universities does not contribute to the expansion of the representation of women in government agencies. It is clear that men dominate in the areas of specialization demanded by government agencies. Among students doing their degree in pedagogy girls make up 75.3 per cent in universities and 64.8 per cent in specialized secondary educational institutions, although among students doing their degree in law girls make up 19 per cent in universities and about 6 per cent in specialized secondary educational institutions; the proportion of girls learning economics does not reach 28 per cent. The lowest rates of trained girls are in agriculture: about 3 per cent in specialized secondary educational institutions and a little more than 5 per cent in universities.

A comprehensive database on talent pool of women professionals has not been available. Furthermore, the proportion of candidates from the talent pool appointed to managerial positions is not large. There are frequent cases of women being appointed to managerial positions without relevant professional education nor experience. As a consequence, they are dismissed from their positions soon. Thus, their appointment is detrimental to the image of women managers.

The gender stereotypes play a negative role in the promotion of women to managerial positions, according to which only men can be in managerial positions, while women are to be executants. In the State media, the planned measures for public discussion of the new roles of men and women in the society have been poorly implemented.

State periodicals, national and local television and radio do not have a developed communication strategy for a public discussion of gender inequality issues, including overcoming stereotypes about the place and role of women in the State's administration. Occasionally broadcasted programmes or articles cannot effectively change the public opinion.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure the efficiency of measures aimed at wider women's participation in the work of government agencies and their involvement into the decision-making process, it is necessary to use a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach.

To ensure regular monitoring and assessment of the implementation of programmes and action plans to promote women to managerial positions. To add result and impact indicators in the system of indicators to assess achievements in this area.

To remove legal barriers to promote of women to managerial positions within the law enforcement agencies.

To establish a women civil servant talent pool and regularly monitor their appointment to corresponding positions. To set the percentage of women candidates appointed to managerial positions of the total number of women in the talent pool as a result indicator of using the talent pool.

When assessing the implementation of policies on women engagement in the decision-making process, particular attention should be paid to achieving the goals in such areas as:

- ✓ Development of the legal framework and institutional mechanisms of State guarantees to ensure equal representation of women and men in the different level government agencies, including at the decision-making level;

- ✓ Enhancement of the competitiveness of women in the area of civil service, including expanding the access of women to university studies in specializations demanded by government agencies;
- ✓ Development of partnerships between relevant government agencies and civil society to form a talent pool and increase the capacity of female staff for the civil service;
- ✓ Building capacity of the media in overcoming gender stereotypes on the roles of men and women in the society and the formation of a positive image of women managers.

The Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is recommended, in partnership with civil society, political parties and local communities, to expand its work on women's capacity building to participate in election to legislative bodies.

The Agency of Civil Service under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan shall create the webpage on statistics on its website and regularly update the information on the representation of women and men among civil servants.

CHAPTER 4. ACHIEVING LIFE WITHOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

This Chapter presents the vision of non-governmental organizations on achievements, key challenges and recommendations regarding the prevention of violence against women and girls. The evaluation is based on the adopted strategic objective D "Violence against women" of the Beijing Platform for Action, taking into account the new SDGs approaches in this area.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023 has been adopted in 2014. Law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Tajikistan have stepped up work to identify and investigate cases of domestic violence. In 2014–2017 and the first half of 2018, the internal affairs agencies initiated 927 criminal cases on domestic violence and compiled 2,681 administrative protocols on domestic violence.

Inspectors on counteracting family violence, whose positions have been introduced into the staff structure in March 2010, continue their work in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Currently, their number has increased from 14 to 18 offices. Those positions are held by women.

During 2016–2019, internal instructions on preventing, eliminating and responding to cases of family violence as well as organizing the employees' activities have been adopted by the ministries of internal affairs, education and health.

The Conceptual Framework on the Provision of Free Legal Aid have been adopted by the Government Resolution in July 2015. The Conceptual Framework establishes a new system of providing free legal aid in certain areas, as well as legal consultancy financing. According to this Conceptual Framework, all citizens who apply to public bureaux of legal affairs are entitled to receive initial legal aid (oral consultations) free of charge. In accordance with clause 25 of the Conceptual Framework, the list of persons who are eligible for secondary legal aid (assignment of counsel before courts and other public authorities) includes victims of family violence and torture, and their close relatives and family members.

In order to implement the Conceptual Framework mentioned above, the Legal Aid Centre, a State institution, has been established to test models for the provision of free legal aid to

vulnerable groups of population. In 2016–2017, 16 public bureaux of legal affairs were created in 12 cities and districts of the country. During the period of their operation, 3,985 citizens requested free legal assistance in the bureaux. 1,626 of them were men, 2,020 were women, and 340 were people with disabilities.

Since 2018, a Resource Centre on Gender Equality and the Prevention of Domestic Violence has been launched under the Committee on Women and the Family in the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, providing legal and psychological assistance to victims of family violence.

CHALLENGES

The list of meetings, round tables, trainings, conferences, published materials, booklets, etc. is quite impressive. However, as the analysis of the situation with violence against women and girls in the country shows, there are, so far, few positive results and clearly noticeable shifts in the society, both at the behavioural and cognitive levels.

The key factor hindering the efficiency of the measures taken is the lack of a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach to creating a system of measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, including the creation of inter-agency structures at the level of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, not the level of the Committee on Women and the Family.

Another reason behind vulnerability of women to violence and weak performance of activities implemented in this area is the lack of understanding of the scope of this issue by the society. There is a widespread view that the problem of violence against women, especially family violence, has been exaggerated and, in comparison with other social problem, has not been so important.

The lack of public understanding of the significance of the problem of family violence is connected with the fact that non-governmental and governmental organizations dealing with problems of violence against women have insufficient argumentation about the urgency of this problem.

Institutional and legislative challenges

There is no legal definition of gender-based violence, harassment, including sexual harassment. In the Republic of Tajikistan, harassment has administrative liability as petty hooliganism (Article 460 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Tajikistan), but this offense does not include harassment in the workplace. There is no separate *corpus delicti* (the body of a crime) for family violence, only administrative offence, which is ineffective.

Article 143 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan on Violation of Equality of Citizens entails criminal liability for discrimination of any rights. But the list of grounds for discrimination is limited, which is unacceptable. For example, discrimination related to people's health or sexual orientation has not been taken into account, and this type of discrimination is quite common. There is no statistics on the sentences handed down under this Article of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, since it is unlikely that cases are initiated by law enforcement agencies.

The adopted State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence does not include measures against gender-based violence in a comprehensive way. The indicators of this Programme consider only quantitative data on the process of implementing measures (number of complaints from citizens who have been discriminated or suffered family violence, number

of help centres, number of inspectors on family violence, number of public awareness events, etc.), and there are no indicators of results and impact. Therefore, upon completion of this program, using those indicators, it will be difficult to assess whether family violence has decreased and how the population has changed their attitude to family violence. No State budget financing has been secured for the planned measures.

There is no comprehensive strategy to combat all forms of gender-based violence against women. Also, the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Prevention of Family Violence does not cover all types of relations in which violence may occur. In fact, such relationships as the presence of second and third wives or young couples who only date, have not been included in the Law. There is an issue related to effective mechanisms for the implementation of the Law, therefore it is necessary to develop amendments to the Law itself, and elaborate other legal instruments.

In January 2018, a group on improvement of the legislation in the area of prevention of family violence has been established, among the three working groups on improvement of the gender legislation. However, until now this working group has not held a single consultation with civil society to discuss the proposed amendments to the legislation and those are still not publicly available.

The government adopted a National Action Plan for the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee on CEDAW to the sixth periodic report submitted by Tajikistan adopted at the 71st session. But the measures in the plan to combat gender-based violence and to support groups of disadvantaged women are inadequate to the real situation and have no assessment indicators.

Collection of data on violence

Lack of unified information and statistical database on violence in the society and family impedes not only conducting comprehensive gender analysis of this issue, but also collating convincing facts and arguments which prove social significance of the issue.

Available data and indicators have not been unified and there are significant discrepancies between official statistics and informal data illustrating actual scale of violence against women. Neither the Ministry of Internal Affairs nor other State agencies have systematically collected and processed the statistics related to violence against women.

Statistics on persons who have committed a crime is prevailing. No official statistics by victims of crime and violence has been published. To a larger extent, this is due to inadequate forms of statistical reporting. The crime registration templates contain indicators for victims, however the reporting forms do not have those indicators. Therefore, in the crime database of the Ministry of Internal Affairs there is no information at all about the linkages between the victim and the person who has committed the crime.

Moreover, information about vulnerable groups of women or women in adverse situations, such as women with disabilities, HIV-positive, sex workers and others, has not been collected. There is no official statistics on sexual harassment or forced marriage.

Services for victims of violence

There are few State agencies providing support to victims of violence. Existing crisis and resource centres within public organizations dealing with prevention of violence against women and providing support to victims of violence face an entire set of challenges, including:

- ✓ lack of permanent and properly equipped facilities as well as the difficulty of concluding long-term real estate rental agreements;

- ✓ limited funding (funding from donor agencies are mainly for one year);
- ✓ poor physical infrastructure (equipment, Internet, etc.);
- ✓ lack of professional staff, necessity to build the capacity of psychologists, lawyers, medical staff and other specialists;
- ✓ limited package of services provided;
- ✓ the work with the aggressors to change their behaviour is carried out only in one region (Levakand) with the support of the PDV Project. It is not known whether it will continue after the end of the project. Legislation does not provide for this type of work and social services.

The Committee on Women and the Family under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is among the agencies set up to prevent family violence and coordinate the implementation of the State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence for 2014–2023. The Committee is to provide victims of violence with legal assistance in the form of consultations. However, according to the victims of violence who have submitted filings to the Committee, the main task implemented by the staff of the Committee has been reconciliation of the victim with perpetrator to preserve families. Preservation of the family is also a key principle in the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Prevention of Family Violence. This is an important activity. However, neither the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Prevention of Family Violence nor the Committee in its activities clearly indicate the tasks related to family violence prevention and protection of the victims of violence. It contributes to the ongoing victimization of victims, which often leads to fatal outcomes.

Access to justice for victims of gender-based violence

Victims have limited access to justice. Criminal cases initiated by law enforcement agencies are those of private prosecution. Victims themselves collect the evidence at their own expense, undergo examination, represent their interests in court. Police is reluctant to accept complaints from victims, fails to perform its duties professionally, often does not hold educational conversations with perpetrators, and issues domestic violence injunctions a few days after the act of violence, not within 24 hours.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has not assessed the impact of injunctions. Throughout the process, victim is economically dependent upon the perpetrator or his family, she is not provided with *pro bono* legal aid. In most cases, victims are illiterate, they do not have shelter and have no place to live. Courts do not deal with moral damage compensation, referring to the lack of application for that by victim, whereas the victim has not been aware of this possibility.

In the Conceptual Framework on the Provision of Free Legal Aid, victims of domestic violence are included in the list of those eligible for free legal assistance. However, they can only get free legal advice and are not provided with a lawyer, since the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Tajikistan does not provide for such a right. A lawyer is provided only to alleged offenders and defendants.

Recently, the issue of men harassing young girls and women has been raised in social networks due to lack of response from law enforcement agencies. Women usually keep silence on harassment in the workplace, especially in the provinces, because they think it is embarrassing, and besides, they are sure no one would believe them.

Vulnerable groups of women who are subjected to violence

Women living with HIV and women from affected groups are most vulnerable to family violence. One of the tasks of the State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence is the prevention of infectious diseases and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle among the population. But there are no measures to achieve those goals, and nothing has been indicated to overcome the discrimination against women and girls with HIV and people with AIDS.

In the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Prevention of Family Violence no special attention is paid to vulnerable groups of people who are most vulnerable due to their status. Their special needs are not taken into account.

A survey on women living with HIV has shown that they are subjected to:

- ✓ psychological violence in the form of insults, humiliations, taking a child away, separation of dishes and more;
- ✓ physical abuse in the form of beating and hitting;
- ✓ various prohibitions on ARV treatment, treatment of tuberculosis as well as medical supervision, which, according to WLHIV who knew them, led to the death of those women;
- ✓ economic violence: husbands' relatives evict women from their home, relatives of women living with HIV do not accept them in their home.

The introduction in 2016 of compulsory premarital medical examination is also a negative practice for girls and women. Basically, there are cases when this examination is used to check whether the girl is a virgin or not. Disclosure of HIV status during screening and girls' suspicions of being unchaste are also a common cause of their suicide.

Female sex workers (SW) form another group of disadvantaged women. This group of women is discriminated in society, in the family, and in law enforcement agencies. A registry of SWs and LGBT people is maintained. Often they become victims of rape, forced HIV and sexually transmitted infections testing, extortion and blackmail by police officers, and cannot find protection. Even with donor support, lawyers reluctantly agree to defend them in court. In the context of the criminalization of HIV, they are prosecuted for deliberately putting at risk of HIV infection (part 1, Article 125, Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan), while HIV is not transmitted to clients and condoms are used. However, they do not notify clients that they have HIV, as they are afraid of being subjected to violence and possibly even murder. And they are still prosecuted.

Judges also discriminate this group of women. Also, a sentence was twice passed for the same action of a SW with HIV for deliberately putting at risk of HIV infection, which violates the constitutional principle and Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Administrative liability for prostitution does not improve their situation (Article 130 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Tajikistan). Since 2015, in case of repeated engaging in prostitution during the year a person shall be detained for up to 15 days. Therefore, SWs often try to pay the police in cash, without drawing up protocols and in amounts significantly exceeding official fines.

In the media, HIV/AIDS issues are covered in an incomprehensive and biased manner, as a gay and sex worker disease.

Women with disabilities

Despite the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and other international treaties, women and girls with disabilities are still subjected to double and even triple

discrimination, as they are (1) women, (2) disabled, and often (3) poor. This fact is often ignored, since persons with disabilities are often viewed as neuters.⁴⁷

Despite the fact that the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have not yet been part of the legal system of Tajikistan, the attention should be paid to the recommendations to the country from the UN Committee on CEDAW (2018) on the adoption of a comprehensive legal framework in the field of mental health, inclusive education and employment for women with disabilities and girls with disabilities, ensuring that women with disabilities and girls with disabilities have not been subjected to forced placement in specialized institutions, violence, including sexual violence, and other issues.⁴⁸

A gender analysis of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Prevention of Family Violence carried out in 2015 by employees of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights with the assistance of a gender expert and UN Women has shown that the law has no specific approach to vulnerable groups of women, including women with disabilities.

Such issues as protection of the rights of transgender people have not been even raised, since those people themselves are afraid to contact any organization and even talk about their gender identity.

FURTHER ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve legislative and regulatory frameworks in the field of preventing violence in society and family

- ✓ to introduce separate article in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan that would stipulate criminal liability for family violence, when between the victim and the perpetrator there is direct dependent kinship or other personal (marriage) relationship;
- ✓ to conduct a research on the problem of gender-based violence in public places and in the workplace. In the Criminal Code, liability shall be foreseen for sexual harassment in the workplace and in public places;
- ✓ to amend the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Tajikistan to protect victims of domestic violence and ensure their access to justice. Domestic violence related cases are to be shifted from private prosecution to public prosecution or private-public prosecution;
- ✓ to develop and adopt the resolution of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Tajikistan on cases related to violence against women and children, taking into account existing practices and recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- ✓ as for the free legal aid, victims of violence, including WLHIV, women with disabilities, sex workers and other disadvantaged groups of women, should receive adequate, urgent, professional legal assistance at all stages of the investigation and trial, in a language they can communicate;

⁴⁷ The right to decent work of persons with disabilities. Arthur O'Reilly. ILO Geneva, 2007. P. 47.

⁴⁸ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on the six periodic report of Tajikistan. 71st session. See: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW_per cent2fC per cent2fTJK per cent2fCO per cent2f6&Lang=ru

- ✓ to introduce amendments to the Law on Prevention of Family Violence of the Republic of Tajikistan to take into account the needs of vulnerable groups of women—women with disabilities, with HIV, pregnant women, second and third wives, and others;
- ✓ to introduce amendments to the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Implementation with the aim of determining gender-based violence, sexual harassment, disadvantaged women and measures to respond to cases of gender and other discrimination of those groups of women, including gender-based violence;
- ✓ to adopt a comprehensive policy to combat gender-based violence.

To improve institutional mechanisms for implementing the Law

- ✓ responsibility for coordinating activities related to implementation of the Law on Prevention of Family Violence should be assigned to the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- ✓ to improve institutional mechanisms aimed at strengthening the interaction between various government agencies, as well as social partnership between non-governmental organizations and State entities. To intensify the activities of the Inter-Agency Council on the Prevention of Violence against Women under the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan. To ensure the continuous work of the Council to envisage set up of permanent commissions within the Council, consisting of Council members and interested non-governmental organizations and experts;
- ✓ local khukumats (local government authorities) and State entities are recommended to consider the possibility of providing facilities for the long term to the crisis and resource centres operating under NGOs free of charge or on preferential basis;
- ✓ local khukumats (local government authorities) are recommended, using the best practices of the Dushanbe khukumat, to establish centres of assistance to victims of violence and prevention of all forms of violence;
- ✓ to include in the State budget of the Republic of Tajikistan expenses on the implementation of the State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014–2023;
- ✓ governmental and non-governmental organizations are recommended to establish referral mechanisms for the victims of domestic violence and provide necessary response and assistance.

To expand the statistical and information database on violence against women and girls

- ✓ to improve the statistical registration and reporting on registered crimes, initiated cases and convicted people within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor's Office, using indicators not only on the people who have committed crimes, but also information on the victims and connection between them, as well as multi-dimensional discrimination;
- ✓ to develop a consolidated database for all types of violence disaggregated by victims and perpetrators using the database of registered crimes of the Information Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, cases launched by the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Tajikistan and convicts.

To build capacity of government and non-governmental employees in the field of violence prevention and assistance to victims of violence

- ✓ to continue the capacity building programme for area district police officers, psychologists, family doctors, lawyers and other staff working with domestic violence victims in accordance with two action lines: (1) prevention of violence and (2) support to victims of violence for their rehabilitation;
- ✓ to establish the Department of Family Psychology in the Tajik State Pedagogical University;
- ✓ to develop minimum standards of services provided in order to improve the quality of services and build the capacity of governmental and non-governmental agencies' staff involved in preventive activities, support of the victims of violence and their rehabilitation.

To eliminate harmful practices

- ✓ due to the HIV epidemic in Tajikistan, to replace mandatory medical HIV testing for people getting married to voluntary testing on the grounds of confidentiality, providing pre- and post-test consultations. To introduce corresponding amendments to the Article 15 of the Family Code of Republic of Tajikistan;
- ✓ to review the training programme for judges taking into account the gender-sensitive approach, especially in family matters;
- ✓ to involve independent gender experts in the training process of judges.