



Gender Country Profile for the EU Delegation to Tajikistan

prepared by

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Actions
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CWFA	Committee on Women's and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DRS	Districts of Republican Subordination
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCP	Gender Country Profile
GTG	Gender Theme Group
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind
MIP	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme
MTDP	Mid-Term Development Programme
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NAP	National Action Plan
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEET	Not in Education, Employment and Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation on Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDV	Project on Prevention of Domestic Violence
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
SC	Security Council
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Executive summary

Gender Country Profile (GCP) for Tajikistan was drafted in the framework of the European Union (EU) Gender Action Plan (GAP) III for 2021-2025 to provide the EU Delegation (EUD) to Tajikistan with comprehensive and structured gender analysis in line with the thematic areas of the EU GAP III and directions of the upcoming MIP for Tajikistan for the period of 2021-2027. It is based on secondary data with some primary qualitative data collected through meetings with international development partners and civil society organisations. Statistical sex-disaggregated data on all EU GAP III thematic areas and indicators are not available, especially for “Climate change and environment and digitalisation”.

Tajikistan has ratified several international human rights treaties relating to gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and numerous ILO Conventions. Tajikistan did not ratify the ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment. Tajikistan receives many recommendations on women’s rights and gender equality from all human rights monitoring mechanisms, but current implementation mechanism of these recommendations is not linked to national policies and strategies aimed at the achievement of gender equality and elimination of violence against women. The Beijing Platform for Actions (BPfA) is not used effectively as a guiding document for drafting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating gender equality in all sectors in Tajikistan. Tajikistan faces significant challenges in achieving SDG 5.¹ The fundamental principle of equality is established by Article 17² of the Constitution. It is replicated in national laws governing various spheres (labour, health, education, etc.). Still, this approach is not appropriate to prohibit discrimination on various grounds, including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), against women living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and persons with disabilities.

At the political level, Tajikistan shifted towards a conservative understanding of the role of women when in 2009, the President adopted a Decree to rename the 8th of March - the International Women’s Day - Mother’s Day. Women are perceived as playing a role of mothers and within the families rather than as workers, leaders in public domain. Several targeted programmes were adopted: a National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2030; a State Programmes on Education, Selection and Appointment of Talented Women and Girls to Management Positions for 2017-2022; a State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014-2023. There is no comprehensive approach applying the intersectionality perspective and the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) inherent in SDGs. Tajikistan did not develop a strong mechanism to implement gender equality laws and policies across national development sectors. The Committee on Women’s and Family Affairs (CWFA) is understaffed and underfunded, and its status in the government hierarchy does not correspond to its expected role of implementation of gender equality policy in the coordinated manner. The coordination on gender equality issues between the government, international development partners and civil society, as well as internally between international development partners, especially on the issue of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is weak.

The environment for the participation of women in decision-making is not conducive. Participation of women in the representative, executive and judicial branches remain has not reached even a 30 per cent representation of women. Against this background, the legislation of Tajikistan does not provide for temporary special measures to advance gender equality.³

Reliable national statistics on the prevalence of various forms of GBV do not exist. GBV in Tajikistan, especially domestic violence, has deep-rooted structural causes of gender inequality and patriarchy. There is a high tolerance of GBV, especially domestic violence, in society, including among women. Not all forms of GBV are prohibited in Tajikistan. The response to GBV is weak in Tajikistan. Judges, police, lawyers, and prosecutors are not required to receive training on GBV, its prevention, and the protection of the survivors. There are very few state-funded services for victims of GBV, especially in rural and community levels. One of the most critical gaps in service provision is access to effective legal remedies.

¹ Sachs et al. (2020): The Sustainable Development Goals and Covid-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/TJK/indicators>

² Everyone is equal before the Law. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed by the State for all without distinction on the basis of nationality, race, sex, language, religion, political convictions, and education, social or material status. It also stipulates that men and women have equal rights.

³ CEDAW Concluding observations 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraphs 21 (b), (c); 32 (a).

The Health Code (2017), in Article 1, defines reproductive health and reproductive rights, with Chapter 13 explicitly dedicated to them. Education programs on a healthy lifestyle that were developed and piloted in some schools did not fully cover sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.⁴ Tajikistan has made significant progress in the reduction of maternal mortality, reaching 15.4 per 100,000 live births in 2019⁵ compared to 53 per 100,000 live births in 2000,⁶ with 99 per cent of births attended by qualified personnel.⁷ The birth rate of adolescents aged 15-19 has remained at seven per cent since 2012. In 2020, women made up 35.4 per cent of the estimated 14,565 People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Tajikistan, but in recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of women among new HIV cases, from 20.5 per cent in 2010 to 41.4 per cent in 2019.⁸

One of the areas where women lag behind men the most is economic and social rights. The low percentage of ownership of assets among women results in limited economic opportunities for women. Young women are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. Unemployment affects women, especially young women, disproportionately. Women bear a high burden of unpaid care work, resulting in their low participation in the labour force and employment. Women's labour is concentrated in the sectors of agriculture, education and health.⁹ Some improvements were tracked in narrowing the gender wage gap. The shortage of affordable and quality childcare institutions, especially in rural areas, is one of the main impediments to improving the economic opportunities of women. Gender inequality at the school level remains persistent despite some improvements over the years. Professional education is male-dominated in Tajikistan with girls selecting traditional subjects of study like education, health and social care.

Women are at higher risk of the effects of climate change due to the gender inequality in Tajikistan. Women make up the majority of the labour force in agriculture, but they have limited knowledge about agriculture and farming, new technologies, new crops, fertilisers and their utilisation. In 2019, Tajikistan adopted a National Strategy of Climate Change Adaptation until 2030 which mainstreams gender.¹⁰ Tajikistan has adopted a Concept of Digital Economy in the RT,¹¹ Concept of Electronic Government in the RT,¹² and the State Programme on the Introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to General Educational Institutions of the RT for 2018-2022.¹³ These documents are gender-blind.

Several recommendations are proposed for the EU Delegation to consider to implement the EU GAP III:

- Strengthening policy dialogue with the Government of Tajikistan on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all programmes funded by the EU.
- Support evidence-based research using sound theoretical frameworks to study existing approaches, methodologies and models on the prevention and response to GBV and protection of GBV survivors with a focus on communities to identify good practices which lead to a transformation of social norms and change the culture of tolerance of GBV.
- Support NGOs in developing and implementing programmes on informing parents about sexual and reproductive health and rights and encourage them to transfer this knowledge to their children outside the education system.
- Commission a study on girls' education to understand the reasons for their low participation in education, including dropouts and develop respective recommendations.
- Support a gender assessment of the digitalisation sector and mainstream gender in the policy and legal framework in this area, specifically addressing the digital divide, increasing the number of girls studying IT and supporting them in their career path in IT, and improving participation of women as employees, managers and decision-makers in the sectors relevant to digitalisation.

⁴ Ketting, E and Ivanova, O (2018), *Sexuality Education in Europe and Central Asia: State of the Art and Recent Developments*, An Overview of 25 countries, p. 163.

⁵ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), *Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan*, p. 26.

⁶ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2007), *Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan*, p. 29.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UNDP (2020), *Funding Request Form Allocation Period for 2020-2022*, The Global Fund, p. 3.

⁹ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), *Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan* (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), p. 154.

¹⁰ Approved by the Resolution of the Government No. 482 on 2 October 2019.

¹¹ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 642 on 30 December 2019.

¹² Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 643 on 30 December 2011.

¹³ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 443 on 29 September 2017.

1. Introduction

This Gender Country Profile (GCP) for Tajikistan was drafted in the framework of the European Union (EU) Gender Action Plan (GAP) III for 2021-2025 to provide the EU Delegation (EUD) to Tajikistan with comprehensive and structured gender analysis. The specific objective of the assignment is to conduct a context analysis of the gender equality situation in Tajikistan at macro-, meso-, and micro-levels and to provide conclusions and recommendations for the next seven years in Tajikistan in line with the EU GAP III thematic areas and sectors of the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Tajikistan. The EU GAP III thematic areas are as follows:

- Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence.
- Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women.
- Promoting equal participation and leadership.
- Integrating the women, peace and security agenda.
- Climate change and environment, and digitalisation.

While the EUD to Tajikistan is still in the process developing the MIP for the period of 2021-2027, the following three priority areas have been identified: 1) a green and inclusive economy; 2) human development; and 3) natural resource management, efficiency and resilience.

This GCP provides qualitative information and sex-age disaggregated data and analysis of the gender situation in the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) to contribute to the political/policy dialogue and facilitate the development of gender-sensitive country strategies as well as programmes and projects. It is based on secondary data with some primary qualitative data collected through meetings with international development partners and civil society organisations. The GCP was drafted primarily by a desk review of relevant policies and legislation on gender equality, studies and reports tackling the gender equality situation in Tajikistan. The desk review was also supported by meetings with key actors in Tajikistan, such as civil society organisations and international development partners working on gender equality. These meetings were conducted face-to-face and online during May 17-28 2021, and covered the following areas: (i) the mandate of the agency on gender equality; (ii) an assessment of gender equality in the priority areas of the agency and identification of key gender problems; and (iii) proposals and entry points for addressing gender equality in general and relevant to the EU priority sectors in Tajikistan and EU GAP III thematic areas. The following key actors were reached:

- International organisations: International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UN Women, United National Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- International financial institutions: Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- Like-minded donors: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
- Civil society organisations.
- Independent gender and digitalisation experts.

A full list of people met can be found in Annex 1.

However, the development of the GCP had several limitations. Given the short period allocated for drafting the GCP, the arrangement of the meetings with government officials was not feasible. For the same reason, it was not possible to map all relevant international development partners operating on gender equality. Further, statistical sex-disaggregated data on all EU GAP III thematic areas and indicators are not available, especially for "Climate change and environment and digitalisation".

This GCP opens with an introduction describing its objectives and methodology. It is followed by Chapter 2, which outlines the international and national commitments of Tajikistan on gender equality as well as its legislation and gaps. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the institutional framework on gender equality. Chapter 4 assesses gender inequality patterns as per thematic areas of the EU GAP III. In the final Chapter, conclusions and main recommendations are presented.

2. Legal and political context on gender equality in Tajikistan

2.1. International commitments of Tajikistan on gender equality

Tajikistan has ratified several international human rights treaties relating to gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It participated in two cycles of the Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights (UPR), and also ratified numerous ILO Conventions, including – No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation); No. 100 on Equal Remuneration; No. 103 on Maternity Protection; and the ILO Convention. A list of all relevant ratified instruments is attached to the GCP as Annex 2. Tajikistan did not ratify the ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment.

At the national level, the mechanisms of implementing international human rights obligations are through the Commission and national action plans. In 2002, an inter-agency Commission on the implementation of international human rights obligations under the chairmanship of the First Deputy Prime Minister was established.¹⁴ The Human Rights Ombudsman and civil society organisations can be observers in the sessions at the discretion of the chairperson.¹⁵ The First Deputy Prime Minister adopts national actions plans and the Commission oversees their implementation. While the Constitution of RT in its Article 10 established the primacy of international treaties ratified by Tajikistan over national legislation and the direct application of international law, courts do not apply international law in practice. One of the major challenges to the implementation of international human rights obligations is the absence of any effective mechanism. Specifically, the abovementioned plans do not have indicators measuring the progress of implementation and monitoring is limited to the collection of descriptive reports from line ministers and agencies.

As to the CEDAW, the Government adopted two National Action Plans (NAP) on the Implementation of the CEDAW recommendations with the Committee on Women's and Family Affairs (CWFA) under the Government of Tajikistan as the responsible body. The latest NAP covers the period of 2019-2022. From the CEDAW reviews, UPRs and other UN human rights treaties, Tajikistan receives many recommendations on women's rights and gender equality from all human rights monitoring mechanisms. However, current implementation mechanism of these recommendations is not linked to national policies and strategies aimed at the achievement of gender equality and elimination of violence against women. Tajikistan is in the process of developing its Human Rights Strategy up until 2030 and an action plan for 2021-2023. It is anticipated that this Strategy will link all NAPs; the draft action plan to this strategy includes direct references to the other NAPs on the implementation of numerous recommendations of UN treaty bodies and in the framework of the UPR.

In 2014 and 2020, on the 20th and 25th anniversaries of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Actions (BPfA), Tajikistan submitted reports on the implementation of the BPfA domestically. Both reports highlighted significant achievements in the implementation of the BPfA and the challenges encountered. Among its achievements, Tajikistan noted: an improvement of the legal framework on gender equality; addressing gender inequalities as a cross-cutting theme to the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2030 and the Mid-Term Development Programme (MTDP) for 2016-2020; the strengthened capacity of the national gender machinery; and the establishment of a mechanism on the implementation of the policy on prevention of family violence. At the same time, Tajikistan noted that legislation requires improvement to promote gender equality and ensure gender mainstreaming in legislation. Other gaps mentioned were weak national gender machinery; limited funding of gender equality policy; and, the gender stereotypes preventing women's access to education and employment and high burden of unpaid care work on women.¹⁶ However, the BPfA is not used effectively as a guiding document for drafting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating gender equality in all sectors in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan has committed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. For this purpose, it integrated SDGs into the NDS 2030. The nationalisation of SDGs indicators and targets remains slow. Presently,

¹⁴ This Commission is mandated to draft national reports to the UN human rights monitoring mechanisms, assess compliance of national legislation with international human rights treaties, draft proposals for amendments to national legislation, and hold various studies and surveys on the human rights situation in Tajikistan.

¹⁵ The Charter on the Commission on the Implementation of International Obligations on Human Rights adopted by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on 1 April 2017, No. 163.

¹⁶ The Government of Tajikistan (2019), National Review of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in the framework of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda and Final Documents of the 23rd session of the UN General Assembly (2000) in the Context of the 25th anniversary of Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020.

Tajikistan can collect 87 of the global SDGs' indicators.¹⁷ One of the major challenges in assessing the achievement of SDGs from a gender perspective is the absence of 69.4 per cent of 62 gender-specific SDGs indicators.¹⁸ Critical data gaps include the following: unpaid care and domestic work; key labour market indicators, such as the gender pay gap; and skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Comprehensive and periodic monitoring of areas such as gender and poverty, women's access to assets, including land, physical and sexual harassment, and gender and the environment is hampered due to the absence of comparable methodologies.¹⁹ The Sustainable Development Report 2020 estimated that Tajikistan faces significant challenges in achieving SDG 5 as a result of the low demand for family planning by modern methods; reduction in ratio of female-to-male labour force participation; slow progress in attaining target political participation of women; and, finally, stagnation in ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received.²⁰

2.2. National legal framework on gender equality

The fundamental principle of equality is established by Article 17²¹ of the Constitution. It is replicated in national laws governing various spheres (labour, health, education, etc.). Still, this approach is not appropriate to prohibit discrimination on various grounds, including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), against women living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and persons with disabilities. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) rights are not recognised. The rights and needs of disadvantaged groups of women and girls²² are not legally defined in Tajikistan. In 2018, the Government established a working group to draft a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. Discussion of the draft law is ongoing.

Presently, the only law which defines discrimination is the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities of their Enjoyment (2005). It is defined as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex that has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition of equal rights of men and women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. However, this notion is not inclusive of direct and indirect discrimination. The Law does not protect from intersectional discrimination.²³ It fails to prohibit workplace discrimination, introduce temporary special measures, and prohibit violence against women as a form of gender-based discrimination. It has no measures to eliminate existing social and cultural patterns on the role of women and their impact on women. The principal weakness of this Law is the lack of any clearly defined mechanism of enforcement of state guarantees and the absence of specific designation of responsible institutions for the implementation of this Law. The Law did not introduce vital mechanisms for the institutionalization of gender, such as gender expertise of legislation, gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming. Thus, public bodies are not obliged to mainstream gender across sectors of national development. The monitoring of its implementation, conducted by the CWFA in 2018, demonstrated that public bodies do not have an adequate system to collect data for tracking the implementation of the majority of its provisions.²⁴

The following are examples of legal provisions directly discriminating against women and certain disadvantaged groups in Tajikistan:

- The Constitution has a provision that directly discriminates against women. It prohibits the use of women's labour in hard, underground and hazardous jobs.
- Article 216 of the Labour Code prohibits women's labour in hard, underground and hazardous jobs and work involving manual lifting in excess of the maximum permitted amounts.
- Article 125 (part 1) of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan envisages criminal responsibility for infecting persons with HIV. This Article prosecutes not only intentional infection (by people who knew about

¹⁷ The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan (2018), National Report on the Implementation of Strategic Documents of the Country in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals, p.52, available at: https://medt.tj/documents/main/strategic_national_programm/ReportV4%5bENG%5d.pdf

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ <https://data.unwomen.org/country/tajikistan>

²⁰ Sachs et al. (2020): The Sustainable Development Goals and Covid-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/TJK/indicators>

²¹ Everyone is equal before the Law. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed by the State for all without distinction on the basis of nationality, race, sex, language, religion, political convictions, and education, social or material status. It also stipulates that men and women have equal rights.

²² CEDAW, Concluding observations on Tajikistan 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraph 12 (c).

²³ CEDAW, Concluding observations on Tajikistan 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraph 11 (a).

²⁴ Ibid, p.29.

their HIV-positive status) but also the creation of risk of contracting HIV. This makes virtually any person living with HIV vulnerable to prosecution and punishment for any sexual contact. The Criminal Code does not take into account the informed consent of a partner for sexual contact, the use of safety measures to prevent transmission, and the status of the HIV-positive person who has achieved viral suppression. Further, the legislation does not define modes of transmission.²⁵

- The Decree of the President on the Advancement of the Role of Women adopted in 1999 speaks about appointing women to the position of only Deputy minister while excluding their appointment to positions of Deputy ministers of defence and internal affairs.²⁶

Legislation relating to gender equality has several critical gaps, as indicated below:

- The Labour Code does not define sexual harassment in the workplace as a form of sex-based discrimination or provide measures to prevent and address sexual harassment at work. In Article 140, the Code specifies that discrimination in payment for work is prohibited by requiring an employer to pay workers the same remuneration for work of equal value. However, there is no system in Tajikistan to ensure the enforcement of this principle, i.e., a system assessing the value of jobs and assigning wages on this basis. Unpaid care work performed traditionally by women in Tajikistan is not explicitly recognised by the Labour Code. Maternity protection measures and work and family balance measures, while in general terms complying with the relevant ILO standards, are applicable only to women (and men in case of work and family balance) employed formally.
- The legislation of Tajikistan, including the Family Code, defines neither family nor marriage. However, the relevant articles of the Family Code clearly equate family with marriage and declare marriage as a monogamous, voluntary union of man and woman based on equality of rights and registered in line with the legal procedures, resulting in mutual personal and property rights and duties of spouses.²⁷ Cohabitation, same-sex marriage and marriage concluded through religious ceremony are not recognised. Thus, not all forms of family that exist in modern Tajikistan are protected.
- Article 28 of the Law “On Identity Documents” permits the change of passport *inter alia* due to change of sex. Article 74 of the Law “On Civil Registration” specifies that changes in civil registration records can be introduced by submission of a document evidencing change of sex issued by a medical organisation. However, the legislation does not establish a clear mechanism on how these provisions should be implemented. There is no provision permitting a change of identity documents based on a person’s gender identity without sex reassignment surgery.²⁸

The gaps and weaknesses of legislation mentioned above are not exhaustive. Further assessment of legislation will be described in the following chapters of the GCP to complement the assessment of the situation in areas of the EU GAP III.

2.3. National policy framework on gender equality

The policy environment on gender equality in Tajikistan consists of several strategies where gender equality is mentioned as a priority or a cross-cutting issue and special programmes aimed at gender equality addressing the special needs of women. In addition to these policies, the political statements of the President form an integral part of the gender equality policy environment as they provide a basis for conceptualising gender equality in Tajikistan and policy- and legislation-making on this matter.

At the political level, Tajikistan shifted towards a conservative understanding of the role of women when in 2009, the President adopted a Decree to rename the 8th of March - the International Women’s Day - Mother’s Day. The renaming was linked to a one-thousand-year-old tradition of Aryan men praising mothers during the spring season in contrast to the one-hundred-year history of International Women’s Day. In his political statements of the 8th of March, the President often refers to the important role mothers play in the upbringing of younger generations and taking young boys and girls away from extremism and terrorism, educating daughters as future mothers and bypassing the role of fathers and boys. Thus, women are perceived as playing

²⁵ NGO Women living with HIV (2018), Draft Shadow Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in relation to women living with HIV, pp.3-4.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Human Rights Center (2010), Analysis of Legislation Governing Family Relations in Tajikistan: Conclusions and Recommendations, pp. 13, 19, unpublished report in Russian language.

²⁸ IPHR and Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (2018), “We Just Want to be Who We Are” LGBT People in Tajikistan: Beaten, Raped and Exploited by Police, p.18.

a role of mothers and within the families rather than as workers, leaders in public domain. Not surprisingly, the progress in achieving gender equality in political, economic and social spheres is stagnated or minimised.

National Development Strategy 2030 and Midterm Development Programme for 2021-2025

NDS 2030, as a foundational policy of national development, focuses on the reduction of social inequality through decreasing gender inequality and ensuring *de-facto* gender equality and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. It is implemented through the MTDP adopted for a five-year cycle. The assessment of the implementation of the MTDP for the period 2016-2020 revealed that one-third of 76 gender-related measures foreseen by the Matrix of action of the MTDP for this period were not implemented. For instance, the introduction of gender budgeting and gender expertise of draft legislation remained a commitment on paper only and measures to support women's entrepreneurship and achieve gender balance in access to and control of production resources in agriculture were not delivered or were only just beginning.²⁹ The new draft MTDP covering the period of 2021-2025 is pending approval by Parliament. It treats gender equality as one of the cross-cutting priority areas and a separate priority for achieving the SDGs, however, the bulk of its text focuses on the following strategic development goals:

- The improvement of effective use of national resources: industry; agrarian sector; water; energy; transport; finance; export.
- Strengthening the institutional foundation of the economy: public administration and anti-corruption; the rule of law and access to justice; institutional reforms; digital transformation.
- Regional development.

These are not people-centred, let alone gender mainstreamed. The strategic development goal "human capital development and improvement of quality of social services" includes the "reduction of social and gender inequality". This priority and some measures aimed at addressing gender inequality are included to the "rule of law" and "investment climate" priorities under strategic development goal of "strengthening the institutional foundation of the economy". These strategic development priorities reflect commitments such as the improvement of policies and mechanisms for the prevention of all forms of discrimination and violence, including gender expertise of laws; improving culture and business literacy at the national level, including among women by increasing the number of business incubators, technological parks, forums and trainings; and developing a system of preferences for the active involvement of women and youth to entrepreneurial activity. The strategic development goal "human capital development and improvement of social services" encompasses the majority of measures aimed at achieving gender equality in the labour market, health and education. The priority concerning the reduction of social and gender inequality mainly focuses on improving statistics on all forms of violence against women; gender budgeting; active communication on the promotion of gender equality and elimination of gender stereotypes on the role of women and men in the society and a change of attitude towards violence against women and girls, early marriages and marriages between relatives; participation of women in decision making at all levels; and improvement of legislation promoting gender equality.

Targeted national programmes on gender equality

The new National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2030 was adopted in April 2021.³⁰ Monitoring of the previous cycle of this strategy (2011-2020) revealed that most of its activities and objectives remain unimplemented due to the absence of an implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanism and lack of funding. The main progress achieved was at the level of legal reforms but in terms of results for women, the progress was insignificant or stagnant.³¹ The current National Strategy continues to focus on the same priority areas as the previous one:

- The situation of women in social and political life in the country.
- Advancing the employment of women and their role in the labour market.
- Supporting and developing women's entrepreneurship.
- Increasing educational levels of women.
- Women and health.

²⁹ Rabieva, G. (2020), Gender expertise and expertise in the field of the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, interim and annual reports on monitoring the implementation of the Medium-Term Development Program of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016-2020, studies and reviews related to the process of implementing the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2030, p.27.

³⁰ It was adopted by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 167 on 30 April 2021.

³¹ CWFA (2021), Analysis of the Implementation of the National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2010-2020: Report on Findings.

- Developing public awareness about the need of ensuring equality of rights and opportunities.
- Preventing violence against women.
- Strengthening the family.

This National Strategy was adopted together with a five-year implementation plan. The plan specifies the total budget of 1'228'960 Tajik Somoni for five years. The Government is committed to allocating 641'360 Tajik somoni. The rest of the budget (about 48 per cent of the total budget) is expected to be funded by the international development partners. A major shortcoming of this National Strategy is the absence of measures aimed at institutionalising gender across all sectors of national development and line ministries.

In order to promote women in leadership, the Government has adopted two targeted programmes called State Programmes on Education, Selection and Appointment of Talented Women and Girls to Management Positions. The current cycle covers the period of 2017-2022 and sets a target of 30 per cent representation of women in public bodies. It is also a target of the NDS 2030, which has not been achieved yet. Yet this target is outdated as it was required to be achieved by 1995. The current target set by the BPfA and SDGs is parity of women and men in representation. This state programme is the only example of targeted funding allocation from the national budget on gender equality.

In 2013, the Government adopted a State Programme on Prevention of Family Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014-2023. This programme does not have an estimated budget, and it is not funded by the national budget. The main focus of this programme is prevention with no regard to the access of victims of family violence to justice. Additionally, the programme only targets family violence while ignoring Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all its forms.

2.4. Intersectionality perspective in national laws and policies

As mentioned above, Tajikistan is in the process of adopting an anti-discrimination law. The current draft law envisages the intersectionality concept that links discrimination based on sex with other factors that affect women, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste, sexual orientation and gender identity.³² In 2018, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women brought to the Government's attention that rights of disadvantaged groups of women and girls - such as refugee women, migrant women, women left behind by male migrants, widows of male migrants, stateless women, women and girls with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, women in prison and women ex-prisoners, and rural women - are not fully considered in Tajikistan's legislation and policies.³³

The new policies mentioned above address this gap to some extent, but not entirely. For instance, the MTDP for 2021-2025 includes several measures to ensure an inclusive approach in legislation drafting and access to services. It also envisages several measures targeting people with disabilities (while not specifying the difference in the situation of women and men), elderly people and families of migrant workers. The National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the RT for 2021-2030 also included several measures targeting women with disabilities, rural women, women with disabled children, women with many children, women heads of household, wives of migrants, and former women inmates concerning the improvement of their access to the labour market. However, there is no comprehensive approach applying the intersectionality perspective and the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) inherent in SDGs, and reforms in statistics, legislation, and policies have not yet been implemented.

3. Overview of institutions and key actors on gender equality in Tajikistan

Tajikistan did not develop a strong mechanism to implement gender equality laws and policies across national development sectors. The main body charged with the responsibility to oversee their implementation is the CWFA. However, the CWFA is understaffed and underfunded, and its status in the government hierarchy does not correspond to its expected role. The CWFA is supposed to monitor the implementation of the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities of their Enjoyment, the National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women for 2021-2025, the State Programme on Education,

³² CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of State parties under Article 2 of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW/C/GC/28, paragraph 18, 2010, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/711350?ln=en>.

³³ CEDAW. Concluding observations on Tajikistan 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraph 12 (c).

Selection and Appointment of Talented Women and Girls to Management Positions, the NAP on the implementation of CEDAW recommendations, and a few others. However, the central apparatus of the CWFA does not have a dedicated unit or staff member in charge of this function. Yet its capacity to monitor is limited to the collection of data and drafting of descriptive reports. Monitoring so far was conducted with the support of external consultants provided by international development partners or NGOs. So was the majority of substantive activities on gender equality. The CWFA is usually tasked with holding various celebrations and mobilising women and girls to attend various governmental events, demonstrations, and concerts focusing on the traditional role of women and discussing cloth, artisans, cooking, sewing and similar activities.

There were few changes to the CWFA's staffing, funding and structures at the local level, however. At the central level, the CWFA has 23 staff members. In 2021, the position of the deputy head of the CWFA was added to the staffing. At the provincial and districts levels, 247 staff members work in the departments of the CWFA. There are no full-time staff at the *djamoat* (local self-government) level. Usually, the work is assigned to women's councils which are voluntary units supporting heads of the *djamoat*. Horizontally, the CWFA established a network of gender focal points across the line ministries who take this responsibility on an add-on basis. This network is not formalised, and gender focal points do not have the capacity to draft sectoral policies and action plans or mainstream gender in their respective sectors. Both vertical and horizontal staff members mainly collect data disaggregated by sex upon the request of the CWFA. Data is not systematic and is challenging to process and analyse. Ultimately, gender mainstreaming has not been established as a formal policy and institutional approach in the line ministries and thus not implemented in practice.

To reform the legislation related to gender equality, the Government established a working group in 2017, which was divided into the following three sub-groups:

- Review of gender equality policy: this sub-group is chaired by the Ministry of Justice.
- Review of legislation on the prevention of violence against women: this sub-group is chaired by the office of the Prosecutor General.
- Overcoming gender stereotypes: this sub-group is chaired by the CWFA.

These groups are inter-agency and inclusive of NGOs and independent gender experts. Two sub-groups are supported by the Swiss-funded Project on Prevention of Domestic Violence (PDV), and another by the UNDP Rule of Law and Access to Justice Programme. All three groups proposed several recommendations to better comply with the CEDAW and eliminate gender inequality in various spheres. According to the CWFA, all the recommendations were submitted to the President's Executive office for consideration.³⁴

Several international development partners are working on gender equality in Tajikistan. Like the EU, these partners are responsible for mainstreaming gender in all programmes, and some of them address gender inequality through targeted interventions. Among agencies implementing gender-targeted interventions are UN Women, UNFPA, OSCE. The SDC funded the Project on the prevention of domestic violence for twenty years with a total allocation of about 16 million Swiss francs. However, in 2021 this project will complete its final phase. A detailed mapping of international development partners can be found in Annex 3 of this report.

Consultations with NGOs and public participation in policy formulation and implementation are not institutionalised in Tajikistan. The Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities of their Enjoyment in its Article 20 speaks about the right of NGOs working on gender equality to participate in decision-making over gender equality in social and economic sectors. However, a practical mechanism for the exercise of this right has not been established. In the past, NGOs and gender activists played an active role in gender equality policy-making and reforms. Currently, consultations with NGOs are not systematic and are usually facilitated by international development partners. The most recent example is the joint drafting of the NAP on the implementation of the UN Security Council (SC) Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

³⁴ The CWFA (2021), Analysis of the Implementation of the National Strategy on Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020, Report on Findings.

Some experts assess that in Tajikistan, the NGO sector is in the crisis in comparison to its rise in the mid-2000s.³⁵ Civic space is shrinking for civil society.³⁶ However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the upsurge of civil activism was unprecedented in Tajikistan and mostly went online, which makes it more difficult for the Government to steer or control activism.³⁷ NGOs note that there is an overall sense of fear and pressure from the government when expressing dissenting opinions and criticising government. Sensitive human rights issues like freedom of religion, freedom of speech, rights of national minorities, right to political participation (including women's leadership) are not welcome. As to gender equality issues, NGOs and activists working on advocacy for LGBTQI rights and feminism are harassed by the authorities.³⁸ Activities of a few NGOs working in Tajikistan on gender equality issues, including those working with disadvantaged groups of women, are described in Annex 3, along with the younger generation of activists who explicitly use feminism to conceptualise their activities and projects.

One critical area noted by both international development partners and NGOs was the weak coordination on gender equality issues between the government, international development partners and civil society, as well as internally between international development partners, especially on the issue of GBV. At the national level, an inter-agency mechanism of coordination among line ministries and agencies on gender equality does not exist. The CWFA does not have any formal coordination mechanism on gender equality across the line ministries, executive office of the President and vertically at the provincial and local levels, and its low status in government does not permit the establishment of one. The CWFA also does not coordinate with international development partners assisting in implementation of gender equality programmes. It cooperates with each agency individually, and this is not effective, especially in the area of GBV where several actors contribute. There is a lack of evidence-based research on GBV that could capture good practices from projects and be replicated by other organisations. The majority of activities on GBV are at the national, provincial and district levels, targeting service providers and the government while ignoring the community level and structural reasons for GBV. There is a lack of coordination on gender equality among international development partners. The Gender Theme Group (GTG), led by UN Women, includes international development partners and UN agencies, donors, and sometimes national stakeholders. However, information about their activities is not regularly exchanged and the bulk of joint events take place on the 8th of March and the 16-day violence against women campaign.

4. Key gender issues relating to the thematic areas of the EU GAP III and MIP priorities

4.1. Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence

Reliable national statistics on the prevalence of various forms of GBV do not exist. This gap is amplified by the absence of a legal definition of GBV and all its forms which should be used for building a statistical system on GBV. Additionally, no comprehensive nationally representative study on the prevalence of GBV in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) methodology has been conducted in Tajikistan since 2000. Few sources of data on GBV exists in Tajikistan. These are the Demographic and Health Study (DHS); court statistics; records of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on complaints in the framework of the 2013 Law on Prevention of Family Violence; and most recently, a study of the prevalence of GBV in target districts of the RT commissioned by UNDP in 2021 (UNDP study) to obtain data under SDGs indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. The DHS findings demonstrated an increase in ever-married women who experienced any form of emotional and/or physical and/or sexual violence since 2012. Specifically, 24.4 per cent of ever-married women surveyed in 2012 and 30.8 per cent in 2017 reported such an experience.³⁹ Court statistics demonstrate that 191 cases and 172 cases of sexual crimes⁴⁰ were considered in 2019 and 2020, respectively.⁴¹ Data on the prevalence of trafficking in women

³⁵ Mullojonov, P (2021), Tajik civil society during and after the pandemic: main challenges and development prospects, <https://fpc.org.uk/tajik-civil-society-during-and-after-the-pandemic-main-challenges-and-development-prospects/>.

³⁶ Lemaitre, R (2019), The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Their Last Stand? How Human Rights Defenders are Being Squeezed out in Tajikistan, Mission Report, OMCT and FIDH, p. 9, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/report_tajikistan_eng_web.pdf.

³⁷ Mullojonov, P (2021), Tajik civil society during and after the pandemic: main challenges and development prospects, <https://fpc.org.uk/tajik-civil-society-during-and-after-the-pandemic-main-challenges-and-development-prospects/>.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 16.

³⁹ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF (2018), Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, p. 233.

⁴⁰ These are rape (Article 138 of the Criminal Code); violent actions of a sexual nature (Article 139 of the Criminal Code); compulsion to engage in actions of a sexual nature (Article 140 of the Criminal Code); sexual intercourse and other actions of a sexual nature with a person below 16 years of age (Article 141 of the Criminal Code); molestation (Article 142 of the Criminal Code).

⁴¹ The CWFA (2021), Analysis of the Implementation of the National Strategy on Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020, Report on Findings.

and girls and criminal cases and sentences is scarce.⁴² For instance, in the national report on the implementation of the BPfA dedicated to its 25th anniversary, the total number of cases related to trafficking was not sex-disaggregated. The Ministry of Internal Affairs registered 3,048, 3,258, 3,661 complaints on family violence in 2018, 2019 and 2020.⁴³ Court statistics capture cases on harmful practices like early marriage and polygamy also. In 2019, courts sentenced 102 persons for polygamy (Article 170 of the Criminal Code) and 108 persons in 2020.⁴⁴ This data on crimes and complaints registered by courts and the Ministry of Internal Affairs are not publicly available. Usually, it is collected when Tajikistan reports on its international obligations or when national policies are being monitored with support from international development partners. According to a UNDP study, the most prevalent types of violence among surveyed women throughout their lives were economic violence (31 per cent) followed by psychological violence (21 per cent), physical violence (20 per cent) and sexual violence (6 per cent).⁴⁵

GBV in Tajikistan, especially domestic violence, has deep-rooted structural causes of gender inequality and patriarchy. Tajik families, especially in rural areas, remain extended families where several generations live together in one household. This extended family model is in part tradition and in part the result of a shortage of affordable housing and the absence of male family members who have migrated and work outside the country. Tensions among household members living in such conditions contribute to family conflicts which may escalate to domestic violence. In rural areas, the well-being of families commonly depends on agriculture and the remittances of migrant workers. Agriculture usually employs women informally, who make up more than 60 per cent of the total labour force. As the primary caregivers and performers of household duties, women have fewer employment opportunities outside the home, especially in large families with many children. Mothers in these families do not work, or they are employed in unskilled labour. They are economically dependent on men. Patriarchy in Tajikistan intersects with gerontocracy, i.e., the power system in extended households is built on seniority. Women usually acquire more power with age and use it to control younger family members. At the same time, a man retains his role of decision-maker and manager of the household. Mothers control the life choices of their sons and daughters, including arranging their marriages. Thus, sons are caught between social expectations; their obedience to their parents and the need to exercise authority over their wives. Daughters-in-law are the lowest rank of the hierarchy and deprived of many of their rights, including to education, freedom of movement, work and so on. They can only move up the power structure with age once they themselves become mothers-in-law. Their life-long suffering is then turned into a power demonstration and thus reproduction of subordination vis-à-vis the younger women in the family. When talking about GBV, mothers-in-law are another important perpetrator in addition to male partners.

There is a high tolerance of GBV, especially domestic violence, in society, including among women. According to the study conducted in 2016 by the CWFA in cooperation with Oxfam and the *Tahlil va Mashvarat* (Analytics and Consulting), LLC, in six districts of Tajikistan (400 respondents) 97 per cent of men and 72 per cent of women thought that a woman should tolerate violence to preserve the family.⁴⁶ The DHS findings correlate with these. Among the surveyed women, 63.6 per cent reported that a husband's hitting or beating of his wife is justified if the wife, for example, burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects children, or refuses to have sexual intercourse with him.⁴⁷

Not all forms of GBV are prohibited in Tajikistan. The Criminal Code, Family Code, Code on administrative offences, Law on Anti-trafficking, and Law on Prevention of Family Violence protect from trafficking, family violence, sexual violence, and harmful practices like early and forced marriage and polygamy. However, domestic violence, sexual harassment in public places and workplaces, and marital rape are not criminalised. The Law on Prevention of Family Violence defines family violence as an intentional wrongful act of physical, mental, sexual and economic character committed within the framework of family relations by one family

⁴² CEDAW Concluding Observations 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraph 27 (e).

⁴³ The CWFA (2021), Analysis of the Implementation of the National Strategy on Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020, Report on Findings.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ UNDP (2021), Analytical report, Assessment of the Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in Target Districts of the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 64.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch (2019), "Violence with Every Step", Weak State Response to Domestic Violence in Tajikistan, <https://www.hrw.org/ru/report/2019/09/19/333681>.

⁴⁷ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF (2018), Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, p. 245.

member to another which becomes a violation of his rights and freedoms, causing physical pain or harm to his health or a threat of causing such harm (Article 1). Such definition does not encompass intimate partner violence. This Law lists economical and psychological violence; however, there is no mechanism of bringing a perpetrator to responsibility if such violence is reported. The Law focuses on prevention; thus, it does not provide a comprehensive framework on prevention, protection and rehabilitation and does not require the establishment of a referral system and multi-sector response to domestic violence. Relevant legislation thus prosecutes harmful practices but its provisions are ineffective. For instance, in Tajikistan, the legal marriageable age is 18 years. Still, legislation entitles courts to reduce this by one year at its own discretion since no law establishes an exhaustive list of grounds upon which courts can base such a decision. Usually, forced, early, and polygamous marriages are registered through a religious ceremony, and there is no mechanism in place to identify and prosecute such cases. Cyber-violence against women and cyber-harassment of women are not legally prohibited in Tajikistan.

The response to GBV is weak in Tajikistan. Judges, police, lawyers, and prosecutors are not required to receive training on GBV, its prevention, and the protection of the survivors. Usually, staff of these bodies reproduce discriminatory gender stereotypes prevalent in society and victim-blaming behaviour. Such attitudes contribute to a culture of impunity of perpetrators of GBV and harmful practices in Tajikistan.⁴⁸ It also results in low trust of women in these bodies when cases of violence occur. According to findings of the DHS, among women who reported a previous experience of physical or sexual violence, 74.9 per cent never sought help or told anyone about it. The majority of those who sought help approached their own family or their husband's family, while only 10.8 per cent sought help from a lawyer and 5.9 per cent from the police.⁴⁹ With the support of international development partners (UNFPA, OSCE, Swiss-funded PDV project, EU-funded Project implemented by the Eurasia Foundation in Central Asia), multidisciplinary groups/councils on the prevention of family violence were established under local authorities. They unite representatives of all governmental departments, NGOs, and religious leaders at the local level. Currently, 25 groups were established in the Khatlon province. At the national level, instructions on preventing family violence were developed and adopted for the ministries of internal affairs, education, and health, the CWFA, and the committees on youth and sports, and on religious affairs. They outline the main duties of each of these bodies on the prevention of family violence. As to perpetrators, one pilot for correction of behaviour was opened in Levakant city in 2018 with the support of PDV.

There are very few state-funded services for victims of GBV. In the health sector, with the support of international development partners (UNFPA, Swiss-funded PDV project), 22 rooms/wards were opened in maternity and general hospitals across the country. Their purpose is to provide temporary shelter for women suffering from violence and medical and social rehabilitation services. There are 17 inspectors in the bodies of internal affairs that deal with the prevention of domestic violence.⁵⁰ These services are located in provincial and district centres, and they are not accessible for women from rural communities. Nor are they accessible for girls and women with disabilities and women living with HIV due to stigma and discrimination. The CWFA reports about 33 crisis centres and three shelters as additional services. These are run by NGOs with funding from international development partners. These centres do not have any common standards and typically provide legal, health and psychological services. Shelters establish restrictions on the provision of services for girls and women living with HIV, and they are not accessible for girls and women with disabilities. Further, these centres are located in district centres thus they are not accessible for rural women.

One of the most critical gaps in service provision is access to effective legal remedies. In addition to gaps in legislation, its enforcement and the attitude of law enforcement and court personnel mentioned above, women have restricted access to legal aid. In 2015, Tajikistan adopted a Concept document on the provision of free legal aid in Tajikistan, which envisaged the provision of free (state-funded) legal aid in criminal cases *inter alia* to victims of domestic violence. However, the Law on Legal Aid adopted in 2020 did not include victims of violence in the list of persons eligible to receive free (state-funded) legal aid in criminal cases. In line with the Concept document, the Government established a state institution in 2016 called the "Legal Aid Centre", and in 34 cities and districts, 37 state lawyers were hired to provide free legal aid. By 2023, the Law foresees a state lawyer in

⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch (2019), "Violence with Every Step", Weak State Response to Domestic Violence in Tajikistan, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/09/19/violence-every-step/weak-state-response-domestic-violence-tajikistan>.

⁴⁹ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF (2018), Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, pp. 229-230.

⁵⁰ The CWFA (2021), The Analysis of the Implementation of the National Programme on Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020, pp. 52-55.

all cities and districts of Tajikistan. However, these lawyers are based in district and city centres and not accessible for rural women. In practice, women survivors of domestic violence are not able to prosecute the perpetrator independently. According to the criminal procedure applicable to articles of the Criminal Code used in domestic violence cases, a woman bears the burden of proving violence, including hiring forensic expertise and submitting the case and evidence to courts. At the moment, legal aid is provided to these women by NGOs funded by international development partners.

4.2. Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights

The Health Code (2017), in Article 1, defines reproductive health and reproductive rights, with Chapter 13 explicitly dedicated to them. The Code explicitly prohibits forcing a woman into pregnancy and abortion and guarantees freedom from sexual exploitation and harassment. However, it does not define sexuality, sexual rights, sexual health, and sexual education. Persons with disabilities are treated only as patients requiring treatment and rehabilitation, but not as a group requiring special provisions for enjoying sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the right to information.⁵¹ In 2019, the State Programme on Reproductive Health for 2019-2022 was adopted with a total budget of USD 2,074,398.90. The main programme directions are the control of births at an early age; ensuring appropriate intervals between pregnancies, especially among young women, through increasing knowledge about contraception methods and services; rolling out the course “healthy lifestyle” for pupils of ninth grade; increasing access to quality family planning services, particularly for rural populations and young people; and improving obstetrics education so that graduates are capable of providing consultations on family planning and contraception methods.

The Health Code legally prescribes education on reproductive health and rights through the education system in Tajikistan (Article 88). Education programs on a healthy lifestyle that were developed and piloted in some schools did not fully cover sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, and they only targeted children above 12 years of age.⁵² Such limitations are primarily caused by cultural taboos prevalent among public officials and the general population as well as the lack of understanding about sexual and reproductive health education. Legislation and policies on reproductive health and rights do not reflect the needs of girls and women with disabilities. Due to their low enrolment in schools and, in general, inaccessible environment, they face particular difficulties accessing information about reproductive and sexual health and rights, including with the use of sign language and the Braille system. Women living with HIV and women and girls with disabilities experience discrimination in accessing sexual and reproductive health services. Health personnel discourage them from marriage and having children and propose medical sterilisation.⁵³

Tajikistan has made significant progress in the reduction of maternal mortality, reaching 15.4 per 100,000 live births in 2019⁵⁴ compared to 53 per 100,000 live births in 2000,⁵⁵ with 99 per cent of births attended by qualified personnel.⁵⁶ Since 2012, Tajikistan introduced a DHS (two cycles were conducted in 2012 and 2017) which provides internationally comparable indicators on reproductive health and rights and family planning, woman’s agency, the prevalence of intimate partner violence, and other data. However, the WHO concluded in 2020 that the health management information system in Tajikistan has several deficiencies. Specifically, the legislation requires improvement to ensure its effectiveness because the quality of data still does not meet international standards, the infrastructure for effective health management information system is poor, and available data is not used for decision-making and planning. As to SDGs, data on the following indicators is not collected: 3.5.1 Coverage of treatment for substance use disorders; 3.5.2 Alcohol consumption (in litres of pure alcohol, 15 years of age and above); 3.b.1 The proportion of the population with sustainable access to affordable medicines and vaccines; 3.b.2 Total net official development assistance for medical research and the main health sectors.⁵⁷

⁵¹ League of Women with Disabilities “Ishtirok” (2020), Inclusion of Sexual and Reproductive Rights to the National Laws, Plans, Policies and Strategies of the Republic of Tajikistan: Findings of Baseline Assessment, p. 14.

⁵² Ketting, E and Ivanova, O (2018), Sexuality Education in Europe and Central Asia: State of the Art and Recent Developments, An Overview of 25 countries, p. 163.

⁵³ NGO Women living with HIV (2018), Draft Shadow Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in relation to women living with HIV; League of Women with Disabilities “Ishtirok” (2020), Inclusion of Reproductive and Sexual Rights of Persons with Disabilities to National Laws, Policies and Plans, findings of the baseline study.

⁵⁴ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 26.

⁵⁵ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2007), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 29.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ WHO European Regional Bureau (2020), SDGs related to health in Tajikistan: implementation of policies and measures on health and increase of wellbeing of population, pp. 69-70.

The birth rate of adolescents aged 15-19 has remained at seven per cent since 2012. In 2017, the DHS findings reported that 3.2 per cent gave birth to a child and 3.6 per cent were pregnant with their first child. The lowest adolescent birth rate was registered in GBAO (two per cent), and the highest in Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS) (nine per cent).⁵⁸ Progress in the proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) whose need in family planning with the use of modern methods was satisfied improved insignificantly from 51 per cent in 2012 to 52 per cent in 2017. The lowest rates registered were among young women of 15-19 years of age (17.6 per cent), women residing in DRS (45.9 per cent), and in the Khatlon province (47.4 per cent).⁵⁹ The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel increased from 87 per cent in 2012 to 95 per cent in 2017. The share of births attended by doctors also increased from 64 per cent to 83 per cent in the same period.⁶⁰

A woman's agency - especially young women - over her sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning is restricted by her husband and his relatives (mainly her mother-in-law). According to the DHS, just 45.7 per cent of women made decisions about their health alone or jointly with their husband and 14.1 per cent of young women aged 15-19 years and 23.3 per cent aged 20-24 made such decisions independently or with their husbands compared, for instance, with 61.8 per cent of women aged 35-39 years.⁶¹ Among married women, a quarter of women users of family planning and 35.5 per cent of non-users of family planning reported that decisions about family planning were made by themselves. In most cases, decisions of service users were made by the husband and wife together (57.4 per cent) or only the husband (16.7 per cent). Among non-users, 42.1 per cent made decisions jointly and 22.4 per cent reported that the husband made such decisions alone.⁶² A husband and his parents usually decide the number of children and when they should be born. Women have little opportunities to visit doctors and attend routine screenings in maternity hospitals because of the need to pay for services and transportation costs and accordingly low prioritisation of such a need by her husband and his family.⁶³

In 2020, women made up 35.4 per cent of the estimated 14,565 People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Tajikistan, but in recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of women among new HIV cases, from 20.5 per cent in 2010 to 41.4 per cent in 2019.⁶⁴ In 2019, 71.7 per cent of new cases of HIV were sexually transmitted.⁶⁵ Sexual activity remains the main transmission route of HIV in 93.3 per cent of cases for migrant workers. Accordingly, wives of migrant workers are at risk of contracting HIV from their husbands.⁶⁶ An increase in the number of newly registered HIV cases that had unknown transmission was seen mostly among children with HIV-negative parents, with a high probability of nosocomial transmission.⁶⁷ In 2017, only 20.8 per cent of surveyed women (aged 15-24) reported that they were ever HIV tested; 10.6 per cent of pregnant women received counselling on HIV and an HIV test during anti-natal care and results and 1.6 per cent used HIV self-test kit.⁶⁸

Mandatory medical check-ups prior to registration of marriages may restrict the right to marry, especially for HIV-infected people. In August 2016, rules of mandatory medical check-up were adopted by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 374. It is foreseen that medical check-ups should be conducted for free, and persons who intend to marry should inform each other about their health afterwards. The reason behind this development was to preserve healthy families and prevent HIV infections. The medical check-up should be conducted within one month of applying to register a marriage. In practice, young couples usually have medical

⁵⁸ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF (2018), Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, p. 80.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 105.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 138.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 244.

⁶² Ibid, p. 93.

⁶³ World Bank (2018), Tajikistan - Systematic country diagnostic: making the national development strategy 2030 a success - building the foundation for shared prosperity, p. 47, available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/680151528479302248/Tajikistan-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic-Making-the-National-Development-Strategy-2030-a-Success-Building-the-Foundation-for-Shared-Prosperity>.

⁶⁴ UNDP (2020), Funding Request Form Allocation Period for 2020-2022, The Global Fund, p. 3.

⁶⁵ UNDP (2020), Funding Request Form Allocation Period for 2020-2022, The Global Fund, p. 5.

⁶⁶ Sharifzoda, K (2019), Confronting Tajikistan's HIV Crisis, The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/confronting-tajikistans-hiv-crisis/>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF (2018), Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, p. 202.

check-ups a few days before marriage registration, but the period during which HIV infection can be detected requires more time. In this respect, such justification of mandatory medical check-ups is not practical to prevent HIV. Moreover, such requirements violate the confidentiality of HIV testing results, and couples can be denied marriage if one tests positive for HIV. For instance, in 2018, 58 of the 134,000 people checked before marriage were found HIV-positive. They were discouraged from registering their marriage by civil registration officials because “families must be healthy”.⁶⁹ As concluded by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women upon review of implementation of CEDAW by Tajikistan, such check-ups can be limited to virginity testing of women.⁷⁰

4.3. Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women

One of the areas where women lag behind men the most is economic and social rights. Policies of the government aimed at the empowerment of girls and women are ineffective as in some areas, women face more inequalities now than they did in the past or progress has stagnated. For instance, the gender gap between boys and girls with education at all levels is persistent in Tajikistan despite some improvements. The economic activity of women is reducing over time. Some trends, as per specific thematic objectives, are described below.

Tajikistan is included in the top ten countries with a rapid poverty reduction rate. However, 26.3 per cent of the population remain poor, and 10.7 per cent continue to live in extreme poverty. Sex-disaggregated data on poverty is not available. The rural population is poorer than the urban population (30.2 per cent compared to 18.4 per cent), and those residing in the Khatlon province and DRS (32.5 per cent and 32.8 per cent, respectively) are traditionally poorer than people in other areas of Tajikistan.⁷¹ The multidimensional poverty index (MPI)⁷² demonstrated that 64 per cent of the population were poor in 2017 in Tajikistan. This rate results from high levels of deprivations related to education and access to infrastructure for regions outside of Dushanbe. The most unequally distributed service in Tajikistan is access to piped water and sanitation. In rural areas, 26 per cent of rural households and 88 per cent of urban households had access to piped water⁷³, and 59 per cent of the urban population had access to a sewage system compared to 1.6 per cent in rural areas.⁷⁴ The shortage of water and sanitation puts a particular burden on women and girls under 15 years of age as the primary collectors of water and cleaners of the sanitation facilities in rural households.⁷⁵ Children under the age of five suffer from stunting and malnutrition due to a shortage of access to water and adequate sanitation, food insecurity, poor dietary diversity and childcare practices.⁷⁶

The land in Tajikistan belongs to the state but citizens have a right to acquire land plots for use. Amendments to the Land Code of Tajikistan (1996) in 2012 resulted in recognition of land use rights as a common property that can be divided in the event of divorce (Article 10). Previously, in the event of divorce, women could not claim a right to use the land acquired during the marriage.⁷⁷ Another amendment introduced a duty of local executive state bodies to ensure equal access of women and men to land plots when making decisions about the distribution of land plots (Article 7 of the Land Code).⁷⁸ While reliable statistics on the access of women to land

⁶⁹ Sharifzoda, K (2019), Confronting Tajikistan’s HIV Crisis, The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/confronting-tajikistans-hiv-crisis/>.

⁷⁰ CEDAW, Concluding observations on Tajikistan 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraph 45 (a).

⁷¹ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 21.

⁷² The variables used to create the MPI are: (i) demographics and labour (dependency ratio>1; both household heads are not employed); (ii) education (households with individuals (18+) who cannot read or write; at least one individual (20+) who has not completed secondary school; no household member has completed tertiary education); and (iii) services and infrastructure (no access to sewage system; no access to piped water; heating from oven, or heating is absent; no garbage disposal system; no toilet inside the house).

⁷³ Gyulumyan, G and Ziyaev, B (2017), Tajikistan Heightened Vulnerabilities Despite Sustained Growth Country Economic Update Fall 2017, WB Group, p. 11., available at:

<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/255561514558133917/Tajikistan-CEU-Fall-2017-eng.pdf>.

⁷⁴ World Bank Group (2017), Glass Half Full: Poverty Diagnostic of Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Conditions in Tajikistan, p. 15, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27830>.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 123.

⁷⁶ World Bank (2018), Tajikistan - Systematic country diagnostic: making the national development strategy 2030 a success - building the foundation for shared prosperity, pp. 46-48, available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/680151528479302248/Tajikistan-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic-Making-the-National-Development-Strategy-2030-a-Success-Building-the-Foundation-for-Shared-Prosperity>.

⁷⁷ The Government of Tajikistan (2015), The National Review of the Republic of Tajikistan on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Outcome Documents of the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly in the Context of the 20th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Situation of Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2015, p. 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

and assets are missing, the study on gender indicators of production activities of *dekhkan* farms revealed that the number of women-headed *dekhkan* farms increased from 13 per cent in 2014 to 22.1 per cent in 2019, but the share of arable lands used by them remained at the same level of 10.2 per cent.⁷⁹ The DHS revealed that just 1.8 per cent of surveyed women owned land alone in 2012.⁸⁰ The proportion of women who own a house alone or jointly with someone else declined sharply from 53 per cent in 2012 to 36 per cent in 2017.⁸¹ Only one per cent of surveyed women owned a bank account,⁸² whilst the Organisation on Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) report specified that 42 per cent of women owned a bank account in 2014.⁸³ This figure should be treated with caution. The ADB study on time use conducted in Jayhun and Khuroson districts revealed that 25.5 per cent of surveyed women and 21.7 per cent of surveyed men had bank accounts. The difference in numbers is that bank accounts are generally owned by women over 58 years of age who need one for receipt of a pension. Compared to young women, more young men had bank accounts.⁸⁴

The low percentage of ownership of assets among women results in limited economic opportunities for women. They end up in small and medium businesses as they have no collateral to receive loans or attract investments to open or expand into large businesses. Sex-disaggregated data on different loans is not available. The available sex-disaggregated data on micro-loans demonstrated that 37 per cent of all micro-loans were taken by women in 2019.⁸⁵ Women's entrepreneurship is mostly survival; they are mainly individual entrepreneurs working under certificate and patent. In 2019, 26.9 per cent of patent holders and 23.5 per cent of certificate holders were women.⁸⁶ In 2019, rules on taxation of individual entrepreneurs were amended to exempt women individual entrepreneurs from taxes during maternity leave and enable free registration of individual business at home.⁸⁷ The CWFA manages Presidential grants promoting women's entrepreneurship with a total allocated budget of two million Tajik Somoni on a bi-annual basis. These grants are awarded *inter alia* to women living with HIV/AIDS, women with disabilities, and women ex-prisoners to open small businesses.

Tajikistan is a country with a high share of the young population compared to other post-Soviet republics. With an annual average of 2.1 per cent population growth rate, about 60 per cent of the population are of working age, with youth (aged 15-29 years) making up 27.3 per cent of the total population in 2019, including women who made up 49.2 per cent of all young people.⁸⁸ Young women are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. The proportion of young women of 15-24 years of age who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is seven times higher than men. In 2016, 49.3 per cent of all NEET were young women compared to 7.2 per cent of men. There is high regional disparity. Young women residing in Dushanbe (52.2 per cent) and the DRS (60.5 per cent of all young women) are particularly disadvantaged.

Unemployment affects women, especially young women, disproportionately. Officially, only 2.2 per cent of the population are unemployed as registered in the employment service. In 2019, women made up 44.7 per cent of all unemployed.⁸⁹ The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2016 estimated that 7.9 per cent of all economically active men and 5.5 per cent of all economically active women were unemployed. While the percentage of unemployed women is lower, they more often than men could not find jobs just after graduating the secondary school and professional education (vocational and higher education). Unemployed women had higher levels of education compared to unemployed men.⁹⁰ Due to their higher social status and unrestricted mobility, men resort to

⁷⁹ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2019), Gender Indicators of Production Activity of *Dekhkan* Farms for 2014-2019, pp. 53, 63.

⁸⁰ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health, and ICF International (2013), Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012.

⁸¹ Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF (2018), Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, p. 234.

⁸² Ibid, p. 235.

⁸³ OECD (2019), Roadmap for a National Strategy for Financial Education in Tajikistan, p. 9, <https://www.oecd.org/education/financial-education-cis.htm>.

⁸⁴ ADB (2020), Women's Time Use in Rural Tajikistan, p. 30.

⁸⁵ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 14.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 451 "On Approval of Rules of taxation of individual entrepreneurs working under patent or certificate" adopted on 31 August 2012 with amendments in 2013, 2017, 2018, 2010.

⁸⁸ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan.

⁸⁹ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 126.

⁹⁰ Ibid; (Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), p. 63.

migrating outside Tajikistan to look for jobs.⁹¹ Such an alternative is not available for women because males and senior family members restrict their freedom to move. Women also lack the financial resources to pay for a foreign passport and travel costs as well as lack the networks in countries of destination to find jobs and settle there. They usually migrate with men as members of their families. Only a small number of women can migrate for work independently, and generally they are divorced or widowed. In Tajikistan, their main strategy is to engage in low-skilled, informal employment or remain economically inactive and depend on migrant workers' remittances.⁹²

Women bear a high burden of unpaid care work, resulting in their low participation in the labour force and employment. Overall, the economic participation of women and men of any age reduced from 58.6 per cent in 2004 to 42.4 per cent in 2016. The economic activity of women reduced from 55.4 per cent in 2004 to 32.6 per cent in 2016, and for men it declined from 77.8 to 52.9 per cent.⁹³ Women's employment decreased from 46.6 per cent in 2004 to 40.5 per cent of all employed in 2016. In comparison, employment of men increased from 53.4 per cent of all employed to 59.5 per cent in the same period.⁹⁴ This disparity results from a high concentration of women's labour in the agricultural sector, which employs 60.8 per cent of all women and where informal employment is widespread,⁹⁵ women's high engagement in unpaid work related to childcare and care after sick and disabled members of the families, and their concentration on household duties. Regardless of their economic activity and employment status, women made up the majority (82.7 per cent of all population of working age (15-75 years)) of people engaged in unpaid work related to household duties (in the yard, at home).⁹⁶ Women also bear the main burden of care after sick and disabled members of the families (including disabled children), and spent on average 40.7 hours per week on this compared to 20.4 hours per week by men.⁹⁷

Women's labour is concentrated in the sectors of agriculture (60.8 per cent of all employed women), education (10.7 per cent) and health (7 per cent).⁹⁸ As to the proportion of employed women by sector, the highest concentration of women's labour is in the health and social services sector (70.1 per cent of all employed in this sector) followed by education (53.7 per cent) and, finally, agriculture (53.9 per cent).⁹⁹ Among the 15 most common occupations of all employed people, women were working in those that did not require any qualifications or required low qualification. Women made up 97.3 per cent of cleaners and maids in hotels and other institutions; 95.6 per cent of sewers, embroiders and related workers; and 63.6 per cent of unskilled workers.¹⁰⁰ In these occupations, women are likely to be employed informally, thus they are denied of social security related to maternity, childcare, and high pensions.¹⁰¹

Some improvements were tracked in narrowing the gender wage gap. Since 2000, the gender wage gap narrowed from 43.2 per cent to 64 percent of a man's average monthly wage in 2019.¹⁰² The gender wage gap is a result of the vertical and horizontal segregation of women in the labour market. Women work in low-paid

⁹¹ UNESCAP (2018), Examining Women's Economic Empowerment in SPECA Countries, p. 24.

⁹² Ibid, p. 22.

⁹³ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), pp. 87-88.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ While LFS-2016 did not capture informal employment in agriculture, the disaggregation of all employed by type of economic activity demonstrates that 45.5 per cent of all employed in agriculture were self-employed, own-account workers and working in their own private households; 8.5 per cent of all employed in agriculture were helping members of the family. These are employed informally. (Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), p. 156).

⁹⁶ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), p. 94; 96.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 95.

⁹⁸ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), p. 154.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 153.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁰¹ While LFS did not include sectors where such occupations are found, the assessment of informality in the labour market confirmed that sectors like hotels and restaurants and service sectors are where informal employment is prevalent. (Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), p. 56).

¹⁰² Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 134.

unskilled jobs and, even in the education and health sectors where women make up a majority of workers, they occupy low- or mid-level positions.¹⁰³

The shortage of affordable and quality childcare institutions, especially in rural areas, is one of the main impediments to improving the economic opportunities of women. Two-thirds of 662 pre-school institutions or 65.2 per cent are located in urban areas.¹⁰⁴ The shortage is particularly acute for children below the age of three. Despite some progress in enrolling children (3-6 years) in pre-school education, it remains low and accounted for 10.5 per cent in 2019, with boys outnumbering girls (10.9 for boys and 9.7 for girls). National statistics do not provide data on the enrolment of children with disabilities in pre-school education, because total number of children with disabilities of the pre-school age is not available. But it specifies only the number of children with disabilities attending pre-school education. In 2020, 578 children with disabilities attended pre-school education. Of them, 40.6 per cent were girls with disabilities and most (38 per cent) attended pre-school facilities in Dushanbe or the DRS (34 per cent).¹⁰⁵

Gender inequality at the school level remains persistent despite some improvements over the years. Tajikistan reached universal enrolment in primary education (grades 1-4), where boys' enrolment rate was 103.8 per cent and girls' 104 per cent in 2019. Since 2013, Tajikistan improved the enrolment of girls and boys to basic education (grades 5-9), reaching 100.2 per cent enrolment for boys in 2019 compared to 98.8 per cent in 2013, and 99.9 per cent enrolment rate for girls in 2019 compared to 95.9 per cent in 2013.¹⁰⁶ However, the gap in enrolment of boys and girls widens after completion of mandatory basic education. There is a general reduction in enrolment of boys and girls in secondary education (grades 10-11). For instance, in 2019, about 20 per cent of schoolchildren discontinued their education before entering 10th grade, with girls making up 55 per cent of all discontinuing. Respectively, the enrolment rate was lower for girls than boys. In 2019, the enrolment rate for girls was 71.5 per cent and 78.4 per cent for boys.¹⁰⁷ There is an urban/rural divide among boys and girls not continuing their education. In rural areas, the proportion of schoolchildren not continuing education after 9th grade was 17.7 per cent compared to 19.8 per cent in urban areas in 2019. However, in rural areas, the proportion of girls not continuing education is higher than in urban areas. In 2019, 57.1 per cent of rural girls compared to 52.5 per cent of urban girls did not continue education after they graduated from 9th grade or mandatory education.¹⁰⁸ The reasons for the dropout of girls at this stage requires further study. In 2018, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women concluded that there was a lack of reliable data on indicators of dropout of girls at the level of secondary and higher education due to early marriage, pregnancy or discriminatory gender stereotypes.¹⁰⁹ The World Bank (WB) concluded that poor conditions of schools, especially concerning menstruation hygiene, may have particularly impacted girls' absenteeism and dropouts.¹¹⁰

Professional education is male-dominated in Tajikistan, except for in secondary vocational education where women made up 64.9 per cent of all students in the 2019/2020 academic year. Yet this is due to their high enrolment in pedagogical (73.9 per cent of all students) and medical (77.1 per cent) secondary vocational schools. Women pursue their education in secondary vocational institutions while men proceed to higher professional education. In higher professional education, Tajikistan has made significant progress by increasing the proportion of girls enrolling from 29.1 per cent in 2013 to 37.7 per cent in 2019.¹¹¹ To remedy gender inequality in education, in 1997, Tajikistan introduced a Presidential quota for the enrolment of girls residing in rural and remote areas. Since 2010, this quota also covers boys. In total, 7,401 students were enrolled in higher education, with girls making up 50.3 per cent of those.¹¹² There is a persistent trend of women selecting

¹⁰³ The CWFA (2021), Analysis of Implementation of the National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020, Report on Findings.

¹⁰⁴ The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan (2020), Statistical Book of the Education Sector, Vol. 1., p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 116.

¹⁰⁶ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 16.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ CEDAW Concluding observations 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraph 35 (c).

¹¹⁰ World Bank Group (2017), Glass Half Full: Poverty Diagnostic of Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Conditions in Tajikistan, p. 15, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27830>.

¹¹¹ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 34.

¹¹² The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan (2020), Statistical Book of the Education Sector, Vol. 2, p. 195.

traditional subjects of study like education, health and social care and being poorly represented in areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). For instance, in the 2019/2020 academic year, women made up 55.8 per cent of all students studying education; 47.6 per cent of all students studying humanities; just 4.6 per cent of all students studying architecture and constructions; and 12.3 per cent of all students studying technics and technology.¹¹³ In 2021, the government adopted a Strategy of Study and Development of STEM disciplines in education and science until 2030.¹¹⁴ It does not include any measures aimed at increasing the number of women studying STEM.

4.4. Promoting equal participation and leadership

The environment for the participation of women in decision-making is not conducive. Participation of women in the representative, executive and judicial branches remain low. After the 2020 election, the share of women among members of parliament reached 23.8 per cent. Currently, two of the nine committees of the lower chamber of Parliament are chaired by women.¹¹⁵ One of the three deputy chairmen of the lower chamber of Parliament is a woman. There are no special measures to promote women candidates in political parties. In Tajikistan, there is no women's fraction or coalition of women members of Parliament.¹¹⁶ A woman was recently appointed Deputy Prime Minister responsible for social affairs. Among 18 ministers, two posts are occupied by women: the Minister of Labour, Employment and Migration, and the Minister of Culture. A woman occupies the post of the Head of the Presidential Administration.

In the civil service, the share of women among civil servants decreased from 35.2 per cent in 2013 to 23.8 per cent in 2019.¹¹⁷ Women hold 19.1 per cent of all management positions in the civil service as of 2020. At the local level, women made up 26.7 per cent of all civil servants. As to management positions at the local level, women made up 21.5 per cent of all managers. In 2020, just three women were chairpersons of the district. Since independence, a woman has never occupied the posts of President, Prime-Minister, or Chairs of Provinces. Further, women were not appointed to the posts of ambassadors or representatives of Tajikistan to international bodies.¹¹⁸ Data on the share of women in law enforcement bodies (office of the Prosecutor General, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, Agency on Anti-Corruption and Financial Control, Drug Control Agency, State Committee on National Security, Customs Service) is not available because staffing data is classified information. These bodies provide data on the number of women, but not the proportion, and without specifying their positions (management or not) and ranks. Women have not been appointed to the positions of Ministers or Chairpersons of these bodies in Tajikistan.¹¹⁹ Since 2015, only one of the seven posts of judges is occupied by a woman in the Constitutional Court. In the economic courts, women make up 15.8 per cent of all judges (38 judges), including two women holding high-level positions as Chairpersons of the Supreme Economic Court and Economic Court of Dushanbe city. In the courts of general jurisdiction, women hold 19 per cent of all posts of a judge. As to management positions, eight women chair district and city courts and six women are deputy chairs of the city and districts courts.¹²⁰

Against this background, the legislation of Tajikistan does not provide for temporary special measures to advance gender equality.¹²¹ Thus, they are not applied in practice to improve participation of women in politics and decision-making despite numerous recommendations to introduce and apply temporary measures *inter alia* in political and public life.¹²² The Constitution stipulates that any citizen age of 18 or above has a right to participate in the political life and administration of the state, directly or through representatives, including the right to vote and be elected upon reaching the eligible age (Article 27). Similar equality guarantees are provided

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 110.

¹¹⁴ Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 165 adopted on 30 April 2021.

¹¹⁵ Both women MPs head the traditional women areas: one of the two committees deals with education, health, culture and youth policy, and another focuses on social issues, family, and protection of health, <https://parlament.tj/ru/kumitaho>.

¹¹⁶ Mamadazimov, A and Kuvatova, A (2011), Political Party Regulations and Women's Participation in Political Life of Tajikistan, National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan, p. 46.

¹¹⁷ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 136.

¹¹⁸ The CWFA (2021), Monitoring of Implementation of the National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020: report on findings, p. 16.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Supreme Economic Court of the Republic of Tajikistan: <https://soi.tj/>; The Committee on Women's and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan (2021), Monitoring of the Implementation of the National Strategy on Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020: report on findings, p. 18.

¹²¹ CEDAW Concluding observations 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraphs 21 (b), (c); 32 (a).

¹²² Ibid, paragraph 22 (a).

in constitutional laws and laws establishing a right to participate in elections to parliament and local municipalities, civil service, and the judiciary. In 2017, an amendment was introduced to the Decree of the President on Procedure of Competitive Recruitment for the Positions of Civil Service. With this amendment, women competing for recruitment in civil service for the first time will receive an additional the scores during exams.¹²³ This measure aims to encourage young women to enter the civil service. However, an assessment of the impact of this measure has not been conducted as yet.

Gender-neutral election legislation indirectly discriminates against women. The Constitutional Law on Elections to *Majlisi Oli* (the High Assembly) ensures the right to vote regardless of ethnicity, race, sex, language, beliefs, political convictions, social status, education, and property (Article 4). There are two requirements to run for elections: 1) an election deposit to be paid by candidates during the registration process. The deposit is returned if the candidate fails to obtain 10 per cent of the votes. The deposit shall be paid through the candidates' personal means and it equals ten units used for calculation (in 2020, the deposit amount was 5800 Tajik Somoni or USD 600); and 2) that they have qualified from higher education.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women recommended withdrawing the deposit fee for women to increase their political participation.¹²⁴ In general, the deposit fee is too high given Tajikistan's economic situation and poverty levels, especially for women¹²⁵ whose economic activity is much lower than men's and the gender wage gap. The higher education eligibility criteria for becoming a member of the lower chamber of the Parliament is regarded by the OSCE to be overly restrictive and it recommends its removal for both male and female candidates. In Tajikistan, where women have restricted access to higher education, such a requirement places women in a more disadvantaged position than men.¹²⁶

The Criminal Code, in Article 143, envisages criminal responsibility for violation of the equality of citizens. However, there are no statistics on the number of complaints registered under this Article. In general, there is a lack of statistics on incidences of discrimination against women, especially girls and women with disabilities, rural women, girls, and women living with HIV, and other disadvantaged groups.

Civil servants and staff working for public institutions have low levels of awareness about gender equality. Systematic education on gender equality was not introduced in Tajikistan. Few examples of gender equality education exist. The Institute for the Improvement of Qualification of Education's staff introduced a two-hour course on gender issues. The departments of theory and foundations of management of the education system and science, within the framework of the course program for directors of educational work and in cooperation with heads of student organisations and teachers at boarding schools, allocated four hours to study gender issues (gender and violence). In 2010, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced a new training course, "Domestic violence", which lasts for 20 academic hours (with support of the OSCE). This Academy has introduced a separate subject, "Prevention of Domestic Violence", which lasts for 48 academic hours and upon its completion, Academy cadets must pass exams. In the Law faculty of the Tajik State National University, a special course on family law was introduced for students in their fourth year dedicated to challenges related to the rights of children and women. The Public Service Academy has a special course on preventing violence against women at work, in the family and in society. Compulsory courses on gender education have not been introduced in other universities and educational institutions, and gender expertise of training courses and teaching materials is not carried out on a systematic basis to eliminate gender stereotypes and traditional ideas about the roles of men and women.¹²⁷ These courses also do not target high-level civil servants who are making decisions on gender equality policies. Such a situation results in low understanding of the international commitments of Tajikistan on gender equality by civil servants, and staff often express discriminatory and stereotypical perceptions about the roles of women and men and demonstrate high resistance to the adoption of progressive policies to advance gender equality in Tajikistan. Understanding of the situation of disadvantaged

¹²³ European Union (2018), European Union – Tajikistan Civil Society Seminar on Practical Implementation of the Gender Equality Principles in Tajikistan, Seminar Report, p. 17.

¹²⁴ CEDAW, Concluding observations on Tajikistan 2007, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/3, paragraph 26.

¹²⁵ OSCE ODIHR (2020), Republic of Tajikistan Parliamentary Elections, 1 March 2020, ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report, p. 7, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/9/443983.pdf>.

¹²⁶ OSCE ODIHR (2015), Republic of Tajikistan Parliamentary Elections, 1 March 2015, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report p. 11, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/6/158081.pdf>.

¹²⁷ The CWFA (2021), The Analysis of the Implementation of the National Programme on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020.

groups is particularly low in Tajikistan. For instance, problems of persons with disabilities are solved using a medical but not human rights based approach. The Health Code of Tajikistan mainly regards persons with disabilities as 'patients' in need of rehabilitation instead of a group that should enjoy, for example, reproductive and sexual rights and use of services. Girls and women living with HIV/AIDS suffer stigma the most from staff of the health and law enforcement bodies. The staff of law enforcement bodies have low awareness about HIV/AIDS, its transmission and treatment. Women's HIV status is often disclosed without their agreement, and their personal data can be transferred from health facilities to law enforcement for their prosecution and surveillance.

Following a reform of the bar (*advokatura*), the number of lawyers decreased tremendously. There are about 800 lawyers in the country, with women making up 20 per cent of all lawyers. It is estimated that there is one lawyer per 12,000 people.¹²⁸ The Union of Lawyers of Tajikistan (bar association) management does not have any women, and there is no sex-disaggregated data on the total number of lawyers in Tajikistan. The Union of Lawyers does not conduct any special education on gender equality issues and women's rights. Any training on these matters takes place outside the Union of Lawyers and is usually conducted by NGOs with the support of international development partners. Girls and women living with HIV/AIDS suffer from a severe shortage of legal aid due to the stigma of defence lawyers about HIV/AIDS; lawyers are unwilling to take their cases even on a fee-basis.

4.5. Integrating the women, peace and security agenda

Tajikistan committed to implementing UN SCR 1325 and related WPS resolutions. For this purpose, it adopted two NAPs: the NAP on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) No. 1325 and No. 2122 for 2014-2019, and the NAP on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions No. 1325 and No. 2242 for 2019-2022. Both NAPs were adopted by the First Deputy Prime Minister, who is also chairing a Commission on the implementation of international human rights obligations. However, the first NAP did not have any mechanisms for implementation as it did not specify any key agency/minister responsible. As to the second NAP, the special Task Force was established under the Executive office of the President of Tajikistan to coordinate its implementation across the line ministries and agencies. Content-wise, both NAPs do not fully reflect the content and approaches of the UN SCR on WPS. For instance, the 2014 NAP did not include specific activities aimed at implementing the WPS agenda but included measures that were already integrated into existing gender equality policies and programmes. In 2019, UN Women facilitated the participatory process of drafting the second NAP. The NAP for 2019-2022 has four pillars: 1) prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual abuse; 2) strengthening the role of women in the prevention of terrorism and extremism; 3) strengthening the role of women in security decision-making; and 4) strengthening peacebuilding in the field of mediation, training and border cooperation. However, the main emphasis of the UN SCR on increased participation of women in decision-making, including through active participation of civil society, is not reflected in the NAP.

4.6. Climate change and environment, digitalisation

Sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis in this thematic area barely exist in Tajikistan. A few qualitative gender analyses have been conducted by UN Women, FAO, ADB, and UNICEF on areas such as gender assessments of floods and disasters, climate change and its impact on agriculture, feminization of agriculture, access of schools and ICT. However, these are not sufficient for informed decisions in making policies and legislation.

Women are at higher risk of the effects of climate change due to the gender inequality in Tajikistan outlined in the previous chapters, including unequal access of women to education, health, decent jobs, social protection, decision-making on public and private matters, assets; restricted mobility of women; and low status in the family. Their capacity to adapt to climate change and respond to disasters is weak due to control over their lives exercised by men or senior family members, restricted mobility, lack of access to social networking, and low access to information about climate change and education on disaster preparedness and response.¹²⁹ One area generally neglected is women and sports. Girls and women are not encouraged to do sports because of gender

¹²⁸ Lemaitre, R (2019), The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders Their Last Stand? How Human Rights Defenders are Being Squeezed out in Tajikistan, Mission Report, OMCT and FIDH, p. 26, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/report_tajikistan_eng_web.pdf.

¹²⁹ Ismailova, D (2018), Gender issues in climate change, presentation on the Central Asian Conference on Climate Change, 24-25 June 2018, Almaty, Kazakhstan, <http://ca-climate.org/eng/news/gendernye-voprosy-v-izmenenii-klimata/>.

stereotypes, tight sports clothes that are not welcomed by parents, and contact with boys and men while doing sports. Girls often skip sports classes in school. Thus, girls are not physically resistant to escape disaster and respond to climate change. Some parochial practices, like asking permission of a man or senior member of the family to leave home and avoiding contact with men, prevent women from escaping disasters independently. Many development projects on climate change and disaster preparedness focus on addressing the practical needs of women by easing their burden of unpaid care and household work. Women's strategic needs like access to decision-making, information about climate change adaptation measures, assets and new technologies are neglected.

Women make up the majority of the labour force in agriculture. However, they have limited knowledge about agriculture and farming, new technologies, new crops, fertilisers and their utilisation. In general, women's participation in sectors, public bodies and education related to climate change, environment and digitalisation is low. In the 2019/2020 academic year, in higher education, the share of women studying subjects relevant to this thematic area was low. In the subject of natural science, women made up 39 per cent of all students. Women made up 36 per cent of students studying ecological studies. In agriculture and forestry studies, women made up just 8 per cent. And women made up 12.3 per cent of all students studying technics and technology.¹³⁰ In the same academic year at vocational secondary educational institutions, the share of women studying similar subjects was slightly higher. In the natural science subject, women made up 70.5 per cent of all students. Women made up 15 per cent of all students studying technics and technology. As to agriculture and forestry, women made up 21 per cent of all students.¹³¹ Employment of women in such sectors as fishery; energy, gas and water supply; transport, storage and communications was low in 2019. Only in agriculture women made up 46 per cent of all employed workers. The lowest share of working women was in the fishery sector – 11 per cent. In energy, gas and water supply jobs, women made up 32 per cent of all employed, and in the sector of transport, storage and communication, women represented 26 per cent.¹³²

In 2019, Tajikistan adopted a National Strategy of Climate Change Adaptation until 2030.¹³³ This Strategy treats gender as a cross-cutting issue. Some gender analysis of climate change and its impact on girls and women is provided in the discussion of the impact of climate change on education and health. One short section describes particular gender issues, and one table assesses gaps in capacities related to gender issues. This Programme aims to outline priorities for Government and develop investment partners for reducing vulnerability to climate change and extreme climate and to increase adaptation capacity of the population of Tajikistan. It offers several options for adaptation to climate change and investment projects, which will help mitigate climate impact. The Committee on Environmental Protection and Hydrometeorology Agency oversee the implementation of this Strategy. The CWFA is one of the bodies identified at the national level involved in implementation. This Strategy will be implemented in conjunction with the State Programme of Studying and Preservation of Glaciers of the RT for the period of 2010-2030, the Programme on Reform of the Agricultural Sector for 2012-2020, and the National Strategy of the RT on Disaster Risk Reduction for 2019-2030. All of them include measures aimed at adaptation of climate change. The Strategy listed three adaptation projects targeting women: 1) women for survival in the conditions of climate change; 2) climate change: women, employment and development; and 3) raising awareness of vulnerable groups, namely women, heads of households and families of migrants, on climate change and its consequences.

Nationwide studies on the digital skills of women and men and their access to mobile and the Internet were not conducted in Tajikistan. However, few representative sample studies provide some data confirming women have more restricted access to these. For instance, the DHS revealed that 53.7 per cent of surveyed women owned a mobile phone and 9 percent of them used it for financial operations, but only 21.4 per cent of young women aged 15-19 owned a mobile phone. In general, young women, especially newly made daughters-in-law, cannot own a mobile phone. A national study of adolescents' needs conducted by the Strategic Research Centre under the President of Tajikistan with the support of UNICEF and ILO revealed that 53.6 per cent did not use a computer because 68.4 per cent of them did not have one and 18 per cent did not have the skills to use them. Of the surveyed adolescents, 8.3 per cent attended computer courses and 64 per cent did not use the Internet.

¹³⁰ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), *Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan*, p. 109.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 106.

¹³² *Ibid*, pp. 120-121.

¹³³ Approved by the Resolution of the Government No. 482 on 2 October 2019.

The majority of those who used the Internet (89.6 per cent) access it via a mobile phone. Girls clearly have more restricted access to the Internet with 80 per cent reporting that they did not use it.¹³⁴ The ADB study on time use in the Jayhun and Khuroson districts of the Khatlon province concluded that men tend to have far better access to the Internet and mobile phone than women. Only one in ten women have access to the Internet, while for men, the proportion is one out of four. Almost all men (93.4 per cent) owned a mobile phone. For women, the percentage was 40 per cent.¹³⁵ Tajikistan has adopted a Concept of Digital Economy in the RT,¹³⁶ Concept of Electronic Government in the RT,¹³⁷ and the State Programme on the Introduction of ICT to General Educational Institutions of the RT for 2018-2022.¹³⁸ These documents focus on infrastructural and technological aspects with marginal attention paid to human capital issues, especially this digital divide. They do not take into account the high costs of the Internet and restricted Internet freedoms. Additionally, they are gender-blind.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Despite having a relatively good legal and policy framework on gender equality and its ratification of key international human rights treaties related to gender equality, women in Tajikistan still do not enjoy all the prescribed rights and state guarantees of gender equality on equal footing with men. In fact, the status of girls and women in the family, society, and public area is lowering, and current state efforts on empowerment of girls and women are not effective. As to significant achievements, some progress is evident in the representation of women in Parliament, the narrowing of gender disparities in education, and the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates. However, prevalent stereotypes about the roles of women and men, and traditional and religious beliefs about subordinated positions are deeply rooted in society and cut across the government, legislation and policies, thereby hindering such progress in Tajikistan in political, economic and social spheres.

Strengthening policy dialogue with the Government of Tajikistan on gender equality

Implementation of gender equality policies, legislation and relevant international human rights commitments largely depends on international development partners in Tajikistan; the majority of programmatic measures are implemented with external support. The EU - a key donor - is perceived by other development partners and NGOs as a strong advocate with powerful leverage to promote more effective and result-oriented gender equality reforms, particularly with the EU-Tajikistan Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy for 2021-2024 and the EU-UN Spotlight initiative. In terms of non-financial instruments, the EU should strengthen the political dialogue on gender equality in one voice with the UN and other donors and follow-up on recommendations developed after the EU-Tajikistan civil society seminars on gender equality (in 2018 and 2020). A common policy dialogue roadmap on gender equality for international development partners can be developed to list all key gender equality concerns and challenges and propose solutions with responsibilities assigned to each development partner to engage in policy dialogue with the government on their thematic areas/priorities. Shared messages and standpoints can be developed and used by all development partners during regular communication with the government and high-level visits in all forums and occasions. The Government of Tajikistan is keen to expand economic cooperation, and to attract investments in energy, transport, water, digitalisation and other “hard” sectors. The “soft” component of gender equality can be added to any negotiations around “hard” components.

Strengthening gender mainstreaming in all programmes funded by the EU

Many development partners and NGOs noted weak mainstreaming of gender in the EU programmes in the sectors of the previous MIP. Quantitative indicators were the main method of tracking progress, and less attention was paid to qualitative changes and transformation leading to more gender-equal roles and relations between women and men resulting from interventions funded by the EU in the given sector. In this respect, it is recommended to strengthen gender mainstreaming using several approaches:

- Apply a more holistic approach in mainstreaming gender by conducting sector-/project-specific gender analysis, promoting the adoption of a gender equality strategy with governmental partners involved. Such strategies should cover institutional aspects, like increasing the share of women working in the sector; setting strategies to promote women to higher positions; introducing rules on the prohibition

¹³⁴ Strategic Research Centre (2018), National Study on Adolescents and Youth Assessment of Needs and Interests, pp. 6, 20.

¹³⁵ ADB (2020), Women’s Time Use in Rural Tajikistan, p. 30.

¹³⁶ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 642 on 30 December 2019.

¹³⁷ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 643 on 30 December 2011.

¹³⁸ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 443 on 29 September 2017.

of gender discrimination, violence and harassment, including sexual harassment in the workplace; and addressing gender inequality in the given sector through implementing targeted measures.

- Raise awareness of implementing partners about EU GAP III commitments and encourage them to provide awareness-raising sessions to their partners about the EU's and Tajikistan's commitments on gender equality, focusing on gender inequality in the given sectors.
- Establish a strong monitoring and evaluation system that includes quantitative as well as qualitative indicators and changes on gender equality in the EU Programmes, and hold joint partner meetings/forums once a year to brief about the progress of mainstreaming gender and further actions required to strengthen progress of EU-funded programmes in Tajikistan.

Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence

Social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and contribute to a culture of tolerance to GBV and impunity of perpetrators are still prevalent in Tajikistan. Efforts to transform these social norms are fragmented and not systematic. Even now, not all forms of GBV are prohibited by legislation and no comprehensive policy to address all forms of GBV exists. Legal aid is not provided to victims of GBV. Women from disadvantaged groups like girls and women with disabilities, girls and women living with HIV/AIDS, rural women and poor women face particular challenges in accessing services and protection in cases of GBV. In general, there is not much research on the prevalence of GBV against these groups. The majority of services function in urban areas, provincial and districts centres and are not accessible for rural women in their communities. Several actors implemented projects on the prevention of GBV and developed various models of response and support services to survivors of violence. However, evidence-based research on GBV is not conducted to understand which approaches, methodologies and models prove effective. The following recommendation are proposed:

- Support evidence-based research using sound theoretical frameworks to study existing approaches, methodologies and models on the prevention and response to GBV and protection of GBV survivors with a focus on communities to identify good practices which lead to a transformation of social norms and change the culture of tolerance of GBV.
- Introduce gender expertise of curricular, education and training materials and books in the education system of Tajikistan and pilot gender expertise of materials on STEM subjects. In the long-run, gender expertise will help eliminate gender stereotypes from the education system and ensure that gender stereotypes are not reproduced through the education system.
- Support research on violence against girls and women with disabilities and girls and women living with HIV/AIDS, and mainstream support services for these groups of women to existing support services for survivors of GBV.
- Support training of lawyers on the provision of legal aid to victims of GBV using national and international standards of protection of survivors of GBV.
- Support initiatives on the improvement of protection from violence and workplace harassment, including sexual harassment through promoting ratification of ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment; reform of national legislation; and the introduction of codes of conduct on the prevention of gender discrimination, sexual exploitation and harassment in the public and private sector.
- Support reforms aimed at protecting girls and women from sexual violence against women online and developing guidelines and training on detection of such crimes, prosecution of perpetrators, and holding them responsible.

Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights

Universally accessible education on sexual and reproductive health and rights is not available in Tajikistan. To promote factual understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights, NGOs can inform parents about the content of sexual and reproductive health and rights and encourage them to transfer this knowledge to their children outside the education system. Peer-to-peer learning using the Internet and online platforms and tools can be supported to disseminate knowledge among young girls and boys on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Special programmes on ensuring access of girls and women with disabilities and their parents including children and adolescents with mental disabilities, to education about sexual and reproductive health and right should be developed.

Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women

Considering the persistent gender inequality in access to education in Tajikistan, the EU with one of its priority area "education" is well placed to commission a study on girls' education to understand the reasons for their

low participation in education, including dropouts and develop respective recommendations. Women do not select STEM subjects and end up in low-paid sectors which traditionally employ women. In this respect, interventions to encourage girls to select to study STEM and link them with prospective employers can be supported.

Promoting equal participation and leadership

In this area, intervention directly with the government and parliament to increase participation of women is challenging as such initiatives are not welcomed. Support in this area should focus on establishing mechanisms of public participation in decision-making through women's NGOs. Actions should aim to build the capacity of women's NGOs on public policy analysis of gender equality policies, strengthen their advocacy skills, and support the development of formal mechanisms of public participation on gender equality. These projects could be tailored to MIP priority areas where women's NGOs can bring gender expertise and support the mainstreaming of gender in the sectors targeted by the MIP.

Integrating the women, peace and security agenda

UN Women and the OSCE mainly implement projects aimed at implementing the UN SCR on WPS. However, at the national level, the implementation of NAPs was weak. Implementing the NAP and ensuring the participation of civil society in their implementation can be one of area of support.

Climate change and environment, digitalisation

This area requires considerable support in mainstreaming gender in climate change and environment and digitalisation. Critical statistical data on the access of women and men to land, water resources, "green" loans, the impact of climate change on women and men, women and men victims of disaster, their coping strategies, and more is missing in Tajikistan. As to digitalisation, the current legal and policy framework is gender-blind. The following recommendations are proposed:

- Support a gender assessment of the digitalisation sector and mainstream gender in the policy and legal framework in this area, specifically addressing the digital divide, increasing the number of girls studying IT and supporting them in their career path in IT, and improving participation of women as employees, managers and decision-makers in the sectors relevant to digitalisation.
- Institutionalize gender in public bodies like the Committee on Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agency on Land Reclamation and Irrigation, the Committee on Emergency, and other relevant bodies by gender reviewing these institutions, developing and adopting internal gender equality strategies and supporting their implementation, including capacity-building on understanding the link between gender and climate change.
- Support the establishment of a knowledge hub on gender aspects of climate change, collection of sex-disaggregated data, and adaptation strategies specific to women and men, taking into account their gender roles.

Annexes

Annex 1. List of people met

Name	Designation, Agency
Dilshod Djuraev	Consultant, International Commission of Jurists
Nargis Zokirova	Director, NGO Bureau on Human Rights and Rule of Law
Nurmahmad Khalilov	Director, NGO Human Rights Center
Subkhiya Mastonshoeva	Independent gender expert
Gulnora Kholova	Gender Consultant, ADB
Aziza Khamidova	Programme Specialist, UN Women Programme Presence in Tajikistan
Nilufar Bahromzoda	GBV Programme Analyst, UNFPA
Asomiddin Atoev	Regional expert in IT and digitalisation
Violeta Velkoska	Gender and Anti-trafficking Office, OSCE
Mahbuba Mamadatokhonova	National Gender Officer, OSCE
Friederike Behr	Human Rights Officer, OSCE
Sitora Sanginova	Programme Assistant, OSCE
Guljahob Bobosadykova	Chairperson, Coalition of NGO from Equality De-Jure to Equality De-Facto
Tatiana Bozrikova,	Gender Expert, Coalition of NGO from Equality De-Jure to Equality De-Facto
Saida Inoyatova	Director, NGO League of Women with Disabilities “Ishtirok”
Tahmina Khaidarova	NGO Tajikistan’s Network of Women living with HIV
Tahmina Saidova	Director, NGO Public Health and Human Rights
Shuhrat Saidov	Staff, NGO Public Health and Human Rights
Yulia Petrova	Gender Expert, NGO Public Health and Human Rights
Firuz Mirzoeva	Psychologist, NGO Public Health and Human Rights
Shodiboy Djabborov	National Programme Officer on Climate Change and DRR/Gender focal point, Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan
Farangis Zikriyoeva	Founder, Legal Clinic De-Jure
Nargis Saidova	Director, NGO Gender and Development
Masuda Saidova	Project Manager, UN FAO
Sitora Shokamolova	Communications for Development officer (social and behaviour change), UNICEF
Zamira Komilova	Child Protection Officer, UNICEF

Annex 2. List of ratified international human rights treaties and ILO Conventions

UN international treaties:

Treaty	Ratification date
<i>Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</i>	11 Jan 1995 (a)
<i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</i>	04 Jan 1999 (a)
<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>	26 Oct 1993 (a)
<i>International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i>	11 Jan 1995 (a)
<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>	04 Jan 1999 (a)
<i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families</i>	08 Jan 2002
<i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	26 Oct 1993 (a)
<i>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict</i>	05 Aug 2002 (a)
<i>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography</i>	05 Aug 2002 (a)
<i>United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</i>	8 Jul 2002
<i>Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</i>	8 Jul 2002 a
<i>Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</i>	8 Jul 2002 a

ILO Conventions ratified by Tajikistan

Convention	Ratification date
Fundamental Conventions:	
<i>C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>P029 - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930</i>	24 Jan 2020
<i>C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)</i>	23 Sep 1999
<i>C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)</i>	26 Nov 1993
Minimum age specified: 16 years	
<i>C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)</i>	08 Jun 2005
Governance (Priority)	
<i>C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)</i>	21 Oct 2009
<i>C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)</i>	
<i>C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144)</i>	23 Jan 2014
Technical	
<i>C011 - Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C014 - Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C016 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921 (No. 16)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C023 - Repatriation of Seamen Convention, 1926 (No. 23)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C027 - Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels) Convention, 1929 (No. 27)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C032 - Protection against Accidents (Dockers) Convention (Revised), 1932 (No. 32)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C045 - Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C047 - Forty-Hour Week Convention, 1935 (No. 47)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C052 - Holidays with Pay Convention, 1936 (No. 52)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C069 - Certification of Ships' Cooks Convention, 1946 (No. 69)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C073 - Medical Examination (Seafarers) Convention, 1946 (No. 73)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C077 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946 (No. 77)</i>	26 Nov 1993

<i>C078 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 (No. 78)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C079 - Night Work of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 (No. 79)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C090 - Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 90)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C092 - Accommodation of Crews Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 92)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)</i>	10 Apr 2007
<i>C103 - Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C106 - Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C108 - Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C113 - Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No. 113)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C115 - Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C116 - Final Articles Revision Convention, 1961 (No. 116)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C119 - Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 (No. 119)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C120 - Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C124 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No. 124)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C126 - Accommodation of Crews (Fishermen) Convention, 1966 (No. 126)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C133 - Accommodation of Crews (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1970 (No. 133)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C134 - Prevention of Accidents (Seafarers) Convention, 1970 (No. 134)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C142 - Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)</i>	10 Apr 2007
<i>C147 - Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 147)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C148 - Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C149 - Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977 (No. 149)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)</i>	21 Oct 2009
<i>C159 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159)</i>	26 Nov 1993
<i>C160 - Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160)</i>	26 Nov 1993
Acceptance of Articles 7 to 10 has been specified pursuant to Article 16, paragraph 2, of the Convention.	
<i>C177 - Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177)</i>	29 May 2012

Annex 3. Mapping of key actors on gender equality in Tajikistan

UN Women

UN Women programme presence in Tajikistan is supported by the Regional office of the UN Women for Eastern Europe and Central Asia based in Istanbul, Turkey. In Tajikistan, UN Women implements several projects jointly with other UN agencies and individually. In 2019, UN Women facilitated the participatory development of the NAP on the Implementation of the UN SCR 1325, which was adopted in 2020. It was foreseen that UN Women would support the NAP with robust monitoring and evaluation, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the development of the NAP was delayed and thus, so too is its implementation. UN Women is one of the implementing agencies of the EU-funded Spotlight initiative jointly with UNDP and UNICEF. UN Women will participate in the implementation of all pillars of the Spotlight Initiative with a comprehensive approach in addressing violence against women in Tajikistan. There are two joint projects of UN Women, UNDP and UNICEF pending approval of the Government of Tajikistan. One of them is aimed at the prevention of extremism among youth. UN Women's focus is on the engagement of women athletes and women religious leaders in preventing extremism among the youth and building their leadership skills. Another joint project aims to reform the funding mechanism and achievement of SDGs. UN Women will promote the integration of gender budgeting in the education sector and integrate training courses on gender budgeting in the curricula of public servants in cooperation with the Academy of public service. UN Women, jointly with FAO, UNICEF and IOM, plans to implement a project on labour migration. The focus of UN Women will be families and wives of migrant workers left behind, specifically, providing services on GBV, piloting gender budgeting at district levels, and women's empowerment. It is expected that this project will develop several policy examples that can be replicated in other districts. This project is also pending approval by the Government. Building the capacity of women living with HIV/AIDS is another focus areas of UN Women in Tajikistan. UN Women supports the inclusion of the interests of women in the National Programme on HIV/AIDS, the provision of economic empowerment for women living with HIV/AIDS, and capacity-building of organisations of women living with HIV/AIDS on advocacy and communication tools and strategies.

UNFPA

UNFPA operates under the fourth country programme for 2016-2020, which was extended for another year because the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Tajikistan was also extended for an additional year.¹³⁹ In the framework of this country programme, UNFPA focuses on promoting universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and employs three main strategies: 1) advocacy and policy dialogue and advice; 2) knowledge management; and 3) capacity development. A stated outcome is gender equality and women's empowerment, and UNFPA aims to support efforts to (a) formulate and operationalize the monitoring and evaluation framework for gender equality obligations, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health and gender equality obligations in the area of health; (b) increase public awareness in issues of gender equality, non-discrimination, GBV and harmful practices, including engaging with men and boys; and (c) build an integrated health system response to GBV in emergencies.¹⁴⁰ In the area of GBV, UNFPA focuses on reviewing legislation on early marriages in cooperation with the CWFA and training judges and prosecutors on the consequences of early marriages; building a multi-stakeholder response to GBV; developing and introducing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the provision of support to victims of GBV for health personnel and possibly the personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; introducing protocols in cases of rapes for health professionals; supporting the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in open dedicated rooms (22 at present) in maternity hospitals and hospitals for women suffering from violence. In the area of gender equality, UNFPA actively works with youth on preventing GBV, fighting gender stereotypes, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and preventing early marriages. In cooperation with the Committee on Religion, UNFPA developed handbooks for religious clerics on GBV, reproductive and sexual health and rights, family planning, and HIV/AIDS, which provide information on international standards and Islamic norms. In cooperation with the Federation of Taekwondo of Tajikistan, UNFPA works on the involvement of girls and women in sports, including women and girls with disabilities and promoting Stepping the Stone Guidelines on engaging boys and men to prevent GBV.

UNICEF

UNICEF programming follows the life cycle of a child from 0 to 18 years of age, and recently UNICEF also added youth up to 24 years of age into its programming. In the early years of a child from conception to 6 years of age,

¹³⁹ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/en.DP_FPA_2020.10 - CPEExt.eng_0_7.pdf.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations Population Fund (2015) Country programme document for Tajikistan.

UNICEF is focusing on the prevention of early pregnancies; reduction of maternal mortality; access of women to antenatal health services; reduction of child mortality; and breastfeeding. In the area of education of children of 6 to 16 years of age, UNICEF works on safe learning environments from the perspective of reduction of the impact of climate change and disasters; the transition of girls from mandatory to secondary education; and development of an early warning system on dropout of girls from education and awareness-raising among communities and parents on the importance of girls' education. In the area of adolescents' development and participation (from 10 to 18 years of age and also youth until 24 years of age), UNICEF is focusing on the mental health of adolescents; provision of youth-friendly services (21 centres were opened), specifically for girls where each adolescent can receive information on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and rights, mental health; and upskilling adolescents' labs operating in adult education centres where they can learn vocational and soft skills. To establish a protective environment which cuts across all age groups, UNICEF works to establish conditions for the development of vulnerable children, especially those staying in closed and semi-closed institutions (children in conflict with the law, children with disabilities, orphans, etc.). To the same end, UNICEF is working with families to prevent child placement in these institutions and improve the juvenile justice system in Tajikistan. In 2020, the UNICEF office in Tajikistan underwent a gender review which concluded that UNICEF needs to build the capacity of service providers to deliver services in a gender-responsive manner; demonstrate an explicit link between GBV and violence against children; focus more on preventing violence through the behavioural change of adult people; and strengthen the inclusion of disabled children.

FAO

In Tajikistan, the FAO operates in the framework of the FAO Country Programming Framework for 2019-2021, which has three priority areas: 1) enhancing national food and nutritional security and safety, including a focus on the governance of food security, nutrition and food safety issues and the provision of technical and managerial support to value chain actors; 2) supporting the sustainable management of natural resources and improved resilience to climate change, including efforts to strengthen the policy-enabling environment and promote innovative and multisectoral approaches and gender-sensitive practices and technologies; and 3) boosting sustainable agricultural productivity and competitiveness across livestock, crop, fisheries and aquaculture subsectors.¹⁴¹ The FAO mainstreams gender across all priority areas. For instance, gender priorities were mainstreamed in the implementation of the programme on agrarian reform. A new set-up of the Ministry of Agriculture and investment plan were developed, and gender was applied as a cross-cutting issue. The FAO also conducted an analysis of the national budget from a gender perspective and revealed that just 0.3 per cent of the national budget is spent on gender priorities. The FAO supported the opening the cooperative on the improvement of seed funds and ensured that from 15 to 30 per cent of all cooperatives are set up by women. The FAO trains women as land cultivators on the use and utilisation of pesticides and chemicals based on its findings of gender analysis. The FAO helps women use remittances to open small agricultural businesses by matching 50 per cent of remittances with grants.

ADB

The ADB is in the process of finalising the Country Partnership Strategy for 2021-2025. The following key programmatic areas are already identified: transport, energy, public sector management, health and education, agriculture, natural resources, and rural development, water and other urban infrastructure and services.¹⁴² There is a general ADB strategy until 2030 with seven priorities, gender equity being the second. In addition, there is a general Gender Operational Plan which outlines the ADB's approach to gender mainstreaming and all country offices use that as a guideline for mainstreaming gender in all the ADB's interventions. The ADB has taken a stronger stand in ensuring that all its projects mainstream gender, including those focused on infrastructure. The current requirement that 75 per cent of all projects should have a rating of "gender mainstreamed" and 50% of all projects should have a rating of "at least some gender mainstreamed". The ADB has a special fund of regional technical assistance which funds gender-related research relevant to countries. Through this, the ADB funded several gender-related studies such as the Time-Use Survey in selected regions of Tajikistan, gender assessment of the CAREC programme, and others. These studies are used to draft gender action plans for relevant projects and programmes and to mainstream gender.

¹⁴¹ FAO (2019), Tajikistan and FAO Partnering to Achieve Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security and Increased Resilience, p. 1, <http://www.fao.org/3/av025e/AV025E.pdf>.

¹⁴² ADB (2020), Country Operations Business Plan Tajikistan 2021-2023, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/632721/cobp-taj-2021-2023.pdf>.

SDC

The SDC in Tajikistan operates under the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Central Asia for 2017-2021 and is currently in the process of developing a new cooperation strategy. Since 2008, the SDC supported the Project on Prevention of Domestic Violence, to which it allocated about 16 million Swiss francs. The current phase of this project is the final one. Previously, the SDC provided support to the health sector in Tajikistan, but in the current year, SDC decided to phase out. Together with the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the SDC will focus on the following priorities areas in Tajikistan: water, infrastructure and climate change; governance, institutions and decentralisation; employment and economic development; disaster risk reduction; and arts and culture. Gender in the SDC is treated as a cross-cutting issue. In addition to the gender strategy, the SDC also implements a policy on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Given the absence of gender-targeted intervention, the SDC will mainstream gender in all its interventions in the upcoming programming. It will ensure gender from its own organisational standpoint as well as that of its implementing partners.

OSCE

The OSCE in Tajikistan implements several interventions on gender equality and mainstreams gender in all its projects and programmes. In the women's political participation project, the OSCE builds leadership skills among young girls and helps to build women's coalitions or women's alliances in Parliament. In the past, the OSCE supported political parties in the adoption of gender equality strategies; however, there is currently no up-to-date data on their adoption and implementation. The OSCE has for many years supported police reform and mainstreams gender in police reform. An association of women in the police is foreseen, but at this stage, the approval of the Minister of Internal Affairs has not been solicited. The OSCE supports 14 women's resource centres in the GBAO, Khatlon and Sugd provinces and Rasht valley. The OSCE supports the establishment of multi-disciplinary referral mechanisms at the district and provincial levels to respond to GBV and domestic violence cases. The OSCE is one of the two organisations (with UN Women) supporting the implementation of the UN SCR on WPS in Tajikistan through the OSCE Secretariat, which facilitates intranational consultations on localisation of UN SCR on WPS and trainings of national authorities and partners.

The Coalition of NGOs from Equality De-Jure to Equality De-Facto

This Coalition is an informal association of NGOs and gender activists. Previously, the Coalition united about 100 NGOs working at the national and local levels. However, in 2017 when the Coalition initiated the adoption of a new memorandum of cooperation, many NGOs and former members were either closed or dissolved. Currently, the Coalition unites 42 NGOs. Its main thematic areas are drafting shadow reports to CEDAW and under the BPfA; implementing CEDAW, the BPfA and UN SCR on WPS at the national level and advocating for reforms to bring national legislation in compliance with these international standards; and monitoring and evaluating SDGs. The Coalition members are also united in several groups that work on thematic areas, such as women's political participation, gender, and disaster risk reductions. Members of the Coalition in the regions may also unite local organisations around the Coalition's thematic areas and activities. The Coalition faces problems with funding because it is not a legal entity, and it is challenging to fundraise for large projects. It mainly relies on the expertise and networking of its individual members in advocacy and drafting of reports. Since 2017, the Coalition prepared the following reports: a shadow report on the implementation of CEDAW in 2018; a report on gender aspects of the implementation of SDGs in parallel with a submission of the voluntary national review of SDGs' implementation submitted by Tajikistan in 2018; and a report on the implementation of the Law on Prevention of Family Violence at the local levels in 2019. Main donors: UN Women.

NGO Gender and Development

The NGO Gender and Development is a successor of the Women in Development Bureau founded in 1995 by the Government of Tajikistan with the financial support of UNDP. This Bureau was registered as an NGO in 2000 and named Gender and Development. The main objective of the NGO is to develop capacities of government and NGOs on a wide range of gender equality issues, including gender statistics, legislation, population issues, reproductive health and rights, women's entrepreneurship, the fight against gender stereotypes, prevention of violence against women and others. The NGO is an implementing partner of UNFPA in the following three directions: 1) prevention of GBV and gender discrimination (building capacity of the CWFA in gender equality policy implementation); 2) access of girls and women with disabilities to reproductive health services (established five rooms accessible for girls and women with disabilities in the Rudaki district, Bohtar, Kulyab, Khudjand and Dushanbe in 2020 and five more rooms to be opened in Bohtar, Dushanbe, Penjikent, Khudjand and Khorog); 3) prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases among critical populations

(commercial sex-workers among girls and women with disabilities, migrant workers and young people). The NGO Gender and Development is a national partner NGO of the Regional EU-funded Project “Cross border and Cross-sector Dialogue for Tolerance and Peace in Central Asia”. In the framework of the project, it is foreseen to open a Centre for Peacebuilding, Good Neighbourhood and Tolerance in the University and target youth. Such Centres were opened in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan but in Tajikistan, this project is pending approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the framework of the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative, Gender and Development will implement a Project “School of Gender Advocates”. This NGO also works on the prevention of stigma and discrimination of Tuberculosis (TB) patients and overcoming legal and gender barriers in access to services. Main donors: UNFPA, UN Women, the EU, Canada.

NGO Tajikistan’s Network of Women Living with HIV/AIDS

This NGO was founded by women living with HIV/AIDS and it supports women and girls living with HIV/AIDS and members of their families. The main activities of the NGO are to advocate for the inclusion of rights and problems of women and girls living with HIV/AIDS to policies and laws, eliminate discriminatory provisions in Tajik legislation, and ensure women and girls living with HIV/AIDS enjoy and can exercise all rights established by legislation on equal footing with other people. The NGO implemented several projects during the pandemic to ensure access of girls and women living with HIV/AIDS to antiretroviral therapy and provide vulnerable families who lost their income with food packets and women with HIV/AIDS with nutrition for children to substitute breastfeeding. This NGO suffers from a shortage of funding for undertaking sustainable projects and advocacy campaigns.

NGO League of Women with Disabilities “Ishtirok”

This NGO deals with promoting rights and interests of women and girls with disabilities, education on their rights, including reproductive health and rights, and development of leadership skills among girls and women with disabilities. Ishtirok is a partner of the Abilis Foundations and helps to build the capacity of grass-root organisations of persons with disabilities. Ishtirok established a network of NGOs for women and girls with disabilities, and in recent years, it also includes NGOs established by young men with disabilities. The capacity building approach is based on peer-to-peer learning, and many NGOs established by persons with disabilities were supported by the NGO Ishtirok. The NGO also works with parents of persons with disabilities to change their opinions about their children and ensure they do not prevent them accessing their rights and services and development. NGO Ishtirok operates at the local level to raise awareness of local authorities about the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the NAP on ratification of the CRPD, and the recently adopted Programme on an accessible environment for 2021-2025. Another project of NGO Ishtirok is the inclusion of girls and women with disabilities in policies and services on reproductive health and rights. To this end, Ishtirok advocates for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in health policies and laws and trains girls and women with disabilities and their parents on reproductive health and rights. Main donors: Kynnys (Threshold Association, Finland), Abilis Foundation (Finland).

Legal Clinic “De-Facto”

Two lawyers founded this informal group of lawyers in 2020 with the focus on the implementation of Article 92 of the Constitution of Tajikistan, which speaks about guarantees of provision of legal aid and the role of defence lawyers. This group aims to: provide training to law students, young lawyers, and lawyers on various legal issues and the provision of quality legal aid; improve the welfare of lawyers; increase gender balance among lawyers and overcome gender bias in the legal profession; and increase the analytical skills of lawyers. The group is in the process of registering its status. Currently, this group provides a wide range of trainings to help young legal professionals, especially women, become lawyers. This includes supporting qualification, providing free space to run an office and building their capacity to interact with clients. In the area of gender equality, the group plans to expand the number of women human rights defenders, especially among the young generation of legal professionals.

NGO Public Health and Human Rights

The NGO was founded in 2014 to provide legal and psychological support to various groups of women and promote women’s rights and gender equality. It is a member of the Coalition of NGOs against torture and impunity. Since 2019, the NGO started a project on art activism focusing on feminism and women’s rights. This initiative targets artists, painters, sculptors, designers, architects, photographers, choreographers, and other art professionals to build their understanding of feminism, focusing on intersectionality and women’s rights and encouraging them to express problems with which women, LGBTQI face through art and culture. The main

objective of this initiative is to change perceptions about gender equality and women's rights through art and culture. The project supports the production of relevant art objects upon the training, which will be exhibited at the end of the project. In the future, it intends to train bloggers, activists and journalists on feminist writing and build their capacity in writing about women's problems from a feminist perspective. The NGO plans to expand its network of national and regional (Central Asian) activists and NGOs and speak about feminist and women's rights as a common voice and undertake joint advocacy campaigns. Main donors: Rosa Luxembourg Foundation.

NGO Bureau on Human Rights and the Rule of Law

The Bureau on Human Rights and the Rule of Law focuses on the following: 1) monitoring the implementation of international human rights obligations in Tajikistan, including UPR, ICCPR, ICESCR and CAT; 2) protecting rights of vulnerable groups in the population, including ex-prisoners and women human rights defenders; 3) promoting social entrepreneurship in Tajikistan through policy development and setting policy examples. In 2021, the NGO started a new initiative on the protection of personal data and ensuring compliance of legislation with international standards on this. The Bureau on Human Rights and the Rule of Law also focuses on freedom of speech and builds the capacity of lawyers on defamation laws and how to provide legal aid in defamation cases against journalists regarding sexual harassment stories. Main donors: the EU, Internews, OSI.

NGO Human Rights Centre

The Human Rights Centre works in three directions: 1) access to justice and reform of the judiciary, focusing on access to justice and the provision of legal aid in cases against women living with HIV/AIDS and victims of domestic violence; 2) prison reform, including mainstreaming gender and introducing UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders ("the Bangkok Rules"); and 3) protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families. It is a member of the Coalition of NGOs against Torture and Impunity. In the framework of the first direction, the NGO advocates for reform of Article 125 of the Criminal Code, which punishes people living with HIV/AIDS for spreading HIV. It also provides free legal aid to those people who are prosecuted under this Article. This direction includes the provision of capacity building of law enforcement bodies and courts on eliminating stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, and mainstreaming relevant training in the regular curricular of institutions tasked with improving qualifications of the staff of law enforcement bodies and courts. At this stage, the most problematic cooperation is with the office of the Prosecutor General, which has high resistance towards de-criminalisation of persons with HIV/AIDS and capacity building. In the framework of the second direction, the Human Rights Centre provides capacity building on the Bangkok rules to prison staff. In the framework of the third direction, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Human Rights Centre provided food packets to families of migrant workers deported and jobless in Tajikistan or who were not able to send remittances to families left behind. The primary focus of this NGO is the labour migration strategy that was under development. However, women migrant workers and families of migrant workers, especially those left behind, are overlooked by the strategy. Main donors: UNDP, the EU.

NGO Rights and Prosperity

This NGO works to provide legal assistance and support to various groups of the population, especially stateless persons, refugees, orphans, and women. There are three key projects of the NGO. One project focuses on the prevention and reduction of statelessness in Tajikistan in target districts. The main beneficiaries of this project (about 67 per cent) are women and girls who are either in a situation of statelessness or at-risk of statelessness. The NGO identifies stateless persons or persons at risk of statelessness and provides legal support in obtaining identity documents such as birth certificates, passports, certificates of statelessness, and permanent residence permits, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan at the national and local levels. Another similar project focuses only on children and helps them to receive birth certificates and passports. About 50 per cent of beneficiaries are girls. The organisation also works on providing legal support to victims of domestic and GBV and their families if the victim was killed by the abuser(s). Main donors: UNHCR, UNICEF, Canada.

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