

REPORT

CURRENT TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES IN GEORGIA WITH A FOCUS ON IDP, CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN



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Analytical report on the findings of Social Policy Mapping from a Gender Perspective by the Institute for Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA)

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UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEL	Georgian Lari
Geostat	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GWG	Gender Wage Gap
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(s)
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISSA	Institute for Social Studies and Analysis
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
MLHSA	Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MRA	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
TSA	Targeted Social Assistance
UHC	Universal Health Care
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNPSD	United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States Dollar
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WEPD	Women for Equality, Peace and Development in Georgia
WHO	World Health Organization

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This analytical report intends to inform the ongoing partnership of the Government of Georgia and UN Women within the framework of the project “Women for Equality, Peace and Development in Georgia” (WEPD II) for the enhancement of gender equality and reduction of feminized poverty, with a special focus on women representing internally displaced persons (IDPs), conflict-affected and ethnic minority groups.

In order to identify the progress made by the country, as well as the remaining challenges and priority recommendations vis-à-vis gender equality and social empowerment of women, UN Women commissioned a series of policy reviews and operational research through the Institute for Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA).

Section 1 of the report describes the background information on the WEPD II project, the methodology applied by ISSA’s social policy mapping from a gender perspective, and additional reference documents used for synthesizing this analytical report.

Section 2 summarizes the key findings from ISSA’s review, the Social Policy Mapping from a Gender Perspective, as well as an analysis of the legal framework in regards to overall trends in gender equality and the realization of political, economic and social rights of women in the country. The section continues with a description of the specific challenges faced by IDPs, conflict-affected and ethnic minority women interviewed within the scope of the ISSA study, as well as additional references from relevant community-based operational research.

Section 3 summarizes the recommendations for improving social protection policies and interventions for women based on the synthesis of the ISSA study findings. As the WEPD II project was operating at three levels (policy, institutional and grassroots), priority recommendations from the ISSA study are also summarized into macrolevel (policy), mesolevel (institutional) and microlevel (grassroots) interventions. Tables 4 through 7 provide a succinct summary of recommendations from the current review regarding how gender equality could be enhanced, as well

as what special measures are recommended for the social protection for women, especially among the IDP, conflict-affected and ethnic minority groups and towards the enhancement of gender equality.

Tables 4 through 7 also document that the vast majority of recommendations synthesized in this report are in line with the newly adopted 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the 2016-2020 UN Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD) framework in Georgia, and the latest 2014 observations and concluding recommendations from the CEDAW committee’s combined 4th and 5th periodic reports of Georgia.

The analysis highlights some of the most significant achievements made by the country vis-à-vis gender equality and the rights of women. Gender-equality provisions such as equality in social, economic, political and cultural lives, marriages, education, the right to vote, and the right to be elected to public office have been secured by the Constitution and across the national legislation hierarchy. Since 2006, Georgia has developed and further refined the legislative basis for stronger protection of women in cases of domestic violence, as well as social protection of IDPs and working women, and it has ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Due to consistent political commitments and evolving legislation at the level of legal and policy frameworks, women and men have a guaranteed right to equal access to basic social services, universal health-care entitlements, social allowance and social protection systems operating in the country.

However, despite the visible progress, Georgia still needs significant political and resource investments to achieve substantive gender equality, as the rights guaranteed to women through national laws and policies are not always adequately translated into actions. Women are still underrepresented at all political and decision-making levels; only 12% and 11.6% of elected members of the Parliament and municipality councils, respectively, are women. Labour-force participation for women remains substantially lower compared to men (55.8% versus 74.2%), and over a 13-year period (1999-2012), the country continued to be challenged by the low economic activity of women

and a persisting gender wage gap (GWG), constituting 34.8% in 2014. Traditional views with regards to gender roles and the gender division of labour remain strong; women's main function is considered to be raising children and taking care of the household.

Findings of the policy reviews and studies led to some of the highest priority recommendations at macro, meso and micro levels that can accelerate a reduction of gender disparities and facilitate the progressive realization of the rights of the most vulnerable groups of IDP, conflict-affected and ethnic minority women.

General recommendations for greater gender equality and social protection of women

- At the **macro level (national policy)**, Georgia is recommended to ensure regulations and special measures through public and private partnerships for greater political and economic empowerment of women, including mandatory quotas for political parties; promotion of women to senior decision-making positions in both public and private sectors; initiatives for reducing the GWG; ratification of the ILO maternity protection convention; and establishment of full-time Gender Advisers (with relevant decision-making power and resources) across all line ministries to facilitate gender mainstreaming in decision and policymaking processes.
- At the **meso level (institutional)**, Georgia needs to establish a comprehensive national mechanism on gender equality and women's empowerment in the executive branch of the Government and strengthen capacities at all levels to effectively design, implement and monitor evidence-based and gender-sensitive policies and programmes. Country-tailored solutions should be designed for stronger economic empowerment of women via improved employment opportunities and increased access to financial resources, education and training. Opportunities for vocational training, as well as credit and grant programmes, should be enhanced to stimulate women entrepreneurs. The gender parameter should be stronger positioned in social protection policies and programmes for the most vulnerable groups such as IDPs and ethnic minorities. A special focus should be made on strengthening measures to prevent violence

against women, and all victims and survivors of violence should have access to effective protection and assistance. Finally, institutional capacities should be strengthened for the provision of age-appropriate information and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, especially for adolescent girls and boys, young women, rural and ethnic minority women.

- Finally, at the **micro level (grassroots)**, country-tailored actions should be strengthened to address still prevailing stereotypical attitudes on the roles and responsibilities of women and men by raising awareness on the rights of women secured by the national legislation and on the importance of education and economic empowerment of women at both national and local levels. Civil society and media should be strengthened to ensure proper advocacy and oversight of gender equality and protection of the rights of the most vulnerable women.

Greater protection and progressive realization of the rights of IDP women calls for a number of additional actions at policy, institutional and community levels.

- At the **macro level**, Georgia is recommended to further scale up durable housing solution programmes for IDPs (with a special focus on women-headed households) and ensure that the settlements have relevant social infrastructure for IDPs living with disabilities. In view of the financial limitations to cover co-payments for the nationally operating Universal Health Care programme, the country is recommended to consider temporary special measures (e.g. additional diagnostic interventions or essential drug packages) for IDP families and IDP women in particular through municipal budgets or the programmes of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees (MRA).
- At the **meso level**, Georgia needs to ensure a periodic needs assessment of IDP women that can be used to refine gender-sensitive policies and programmes. However, as the economic status of the IDP families stands out as a priority challenge, the country has to consider temporary special measures through public and private partnerships to expand vocational edu-

cation and training (VET) and employment opportunities for IDP women.

- Finally, at the **micro level**, Georgia should consider community-based health and social rehabilitation programmes for IDP women with a special focus on SRH and mental health services.

Although the ISSA review does not cover a situational analysis of **conflict-affected women in Abkhazia and South Ossetia** and communities across the dividing line, this report summarizes some of the main recommendations from other relevant studies and reviews that need to be taken into consideration by the Government of Georgia as well as by relevant public and private stakeholders.

- In general, solid evidence and data regarding the status of women in conflict-affected areas are extremely scarce. Therefore, at the **institutional level**, generating reliable and systemic evidence and data on the status of women and girls in conflict-affected areas and across borders is critical. Access to basic health services should be strengthened by integrating them for conflict-affected populations in the mainstream of national policies. In parallel, health service development should be supported in the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
- The leading **community-level recommendation** is to facilitate confidence-building initiatives through people-to-people communication by more active engagement of civil society and women organizations in the formal peacebuilding process dialogue.

Finally, social protection of **ethnic minority women** will require a greater focus on combating community-level attitudes and stereotypes vis-à-vis gender roles and responsibilities through a number of recommended national policy and institutional changes.

- Two main recommendations for **macrolevel (policy) interventions** include: (a) quota systems or other special temporary policy measures for stronger women representation in municipalities with a high number of ethnic minorities; and (b) strengthening legislation on early marriages, including safeguards for property and economic rights of girls and young women.

- One of the key **mesolevel (institutional) recommendations** for better social protection of ethnic minority women is to increase access to state-guaranteed health-care services (i.e. universal health care) by removing language barriers. Similar to IDP women, the country should ensure a periodic needs assessment and the design and refinement of policies and programmes tailored to ethnic minority women. Ethnic minority women should have greater access to family planning services and affordable contraceptive methods, including all modern forms of contraception. They should also be supported through temporary special measures such as targeted priority public health programmes (i.e. SRH commodities).

- **Microlevel** interventions or actions at the **community level** will be more critical to overcome as some cultural stereotypes impede the realization of the rights of ethnic minority women. Ethnic minority women have to be provided with greater education and professional training opportunities, as well as community support and understanding on the importance of the economic empowerment of women. The country is recommended to promote school attendance by girls belonging to ethnic minorities through information campaigns, especially in the region of Kvemo Kartli. In addition, awareness-raising efforts should be focused on developmental and health risks of early marriage practices for girls.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

The UN Women project “Women for Equality, Peace and Development in Georgia” (WEPD II) is intended to support the realization of gender equality and reduction of feminized poverty in the country by addressing the social, economic and political rights of women, with particular focus on IDP, conflict-affected and ethnic minority groups. In pursuit of the project goals and priorities, the WEPD II project has been working at three interdependent and mutually reinforcing levels:

- The macro level (national policy) to ensure that strategies, policies, plans and budgets are in line with CEDAW and UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (1325 (2000), et. al);
- The meso level (institutional) to strengthen national and local capacities to deliver better information and services for IDPs, conflict-affected and ethnic minority women; and
- The micro level (grassroots) by supporting IDPs, conflict-affected and ethnic minority women’s groups and communities to organize and participate actively and effectively in order to influence the policies and decisions that affect their lives.

In order to identify the progress made by the country, as well as the remaining challenges and the priority policy recommendations, UN Women, through the Institute for Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA), commissioned Social Policy Mapping from a Gender Perspective, as well as an analysis of the legal framework, to document trends in gender equality and the realization of political, social or cultural rights of women in the country.

The ISSA study’s methodology included a desk review and participatory qualitative analysis. The desk review envisaged secondary data analysis of existing government policies and programmes at central and local levels, as well as findings from studies and research related to the status of women, with a special focus on IDP, conflict-affected and ethnic minority groups. The desk review also included an analysis of regional development strategies and local government programmes within target municipalities of UN Women projects,¹ including the districts of Tetrtskaro, Marneuli, Gori, Samtredia, Zugdidi and Tianeti. The participatory qualitative assessment included fifteen key informant interviews, including representatives of eight line ministries and seven local self-government authorities (see Annex A). In addition, the study was built on the findings of five focus group discussions, which included ethnic minorities in Kvemo Kartli (Marneuli district) region, and conflict-affected and IDP women living in the regions of Shida Kartli (Gori district) and Samegrelo (Anaklia district).

This analytical review draws findings and recommendations from both ISSA studies and other key reference documents on gender equality and the social protection of women, such as the latest 2014 observations and concluding recommendations from the CEDAW committee’s combined 4th and 5th periodic reports of Georgia and the 2016-2020 UN Partnership for Sustainable Development framework in Georgia.

This report intends to inform a comprehensive strategic planning exercise towards the progressive realization of women’s rights, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs, conflict-affected and ethnic minority women.

1 The projects implemented by UN Women Georgia are “Women for Equality, Peace and Development in Georgia” and “Innovative Action for Gender Equality in Georgia”.

SECTION 2 – KEY FINDINGS

FROM ISSA’S SOCIAL

POLICY MAPPING FROM A

GENDER PERSPECTIVE

National legislation safeguards for gender equality

The legal and normative frameworks reviewed by ISSA for the social mapping exercise documented a consistent integration of gender equality principles, as well as provisions for the protection and fulfillment of women’s rights across the national legislative hierarchy.

Gender-equality provisions such as equality in social, economic, political and cultural lives, marriage, education, the right to vote, and the right to be elected to public office are secured throughout the Constitution, the supreme national law, and other core national laws and policies. The country has ratified relevant international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and has ensured the integration of core gender-equality provisions across the hierarchy of national legislation.

Since 2006, the country has refined the legislative basis for the protection of the most vulnerable women through the adoption of the national Law on Family Violence (2006); Criminal Code amendments (2012) declaring domestic violence as a criminal law violation; the Act on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (2014); the Act on protection of the rights and reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories of Georgia (2014); Amendments to the Labour Code, enhancing the

protection of the rights of women in the workplace (2013); Amendments to the Election Code (2011) and the Organization Act on the Political Unions of Citizens (2013), providing financial incentives to political parties to nominate at least 30% women among candidates; and the Act on Gender Equality (2010). Finally, Georgia ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014.

However, despite a strong legislative and policy framework that consistently integrates gender equality, many of the policy guarantees still have not been translated into practice. As a result, women in Georgia continue to experience high levels of political, economic and social vulnerability.

Political rights

While national legislation guarantees women the equal right to vote, to be eligible for election, to hold public office, and to represent the government at national and international levels, women are still consistently underrepresented at all levels of policy- and decision-making positions.

It is commendable that the 2012 general elections resulted in the highest historic level of female representation, moving Georgia up to the 108th position in the rankings of the Inter-Parliamentary Unit (IPU).² However, still only 12% of Parliament (18 out of 150 members) are women.³ Gender inequality in Georgia remains high as the country ranks 81st in the world’s gender inequality index among 187 countries.

2 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010515.htm>

3 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/98399?download=true>

Local elections in 2014 resulted in a similar level (11.6%) of women representation, with only 242 women⁴ elected among 2,083 city council members. Mayors of all 12 self-governing cities (townships) are male. Among 69 governors countrywide, only two are women (in Tbilisi Didube district and Tianeti municipality). Almost half of the council township members in Ozurgeti (47%) are women, and at least one fifth of the members are women in Sighnaghi (24%), Tbilisi (22%), Kharagauli (21%) and Sachkhere (21%). Less than 5% of council representatives are women in Khulo, Ninotsminda, Ambrolauri, Akhalkalaki and Marneuli.

Women hold key ministerial positions in the Ministries of Justice, Defense and Education, as well as lead the National Security Council and the Central Election Committee of Georgia. However, women are still underrepresented in the executive branches of the Government.

Gender-mainstreaming in policies, programmes and budgets

The Government of Georgia has taken a number of promising steps to advance gender-sensitive policymaking at central and local levels. The Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia has led two development cycles of National Action Plans for Gender Equality. In 2013, the Government established two special positions: (1) an Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues; and (2) a Gender Adviser at the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI). In addition, through the joint effort of the Ministry and civil society partners, 35 gender advisers were appointed at the local government level.

However, the ISSA study reveals that the advisers do not have substantive opportunities to move the gender agenda forward. Central and local government institutions rarely have a gender strategy, and there is no common vision around the principles of gender-based policy and programming. Municipalities often initiate small-scale, fragmented projects (e.g. assis-

tance to mothers with extended families, provision of medications) with no long-term vision for sustainable economic and social empowerment of women. It is promising that the MRDI plans infrastructure projects in all five target regions of the WEPD II project (Kvemo Kartli, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Shida Kartli, Imereti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti). These projects include the rehabilitation and construction of roads, drainage systems, stadiums, parks, and outdoor lighting, which ultimately play a critical role in the social and economic empowerment of women.

The absence of an earmarked budget line and the lack of a comprehensive government strategy for consistent integration of gender programming are critical impediments towards effective gender mainstreaming at central and local levels. In addition, gender advisers are simultaneously responsible for other programme or service portfolios and do not have relevant capacities or training to substantively advance the gender agenda. As a result, only two districts (Zugdidi and Marneuli) within the five target regions of the WEPD II project had put in place multi-year development plans that addressed gender disparities.

Finally, Georgian state institutions rarely process information from a gender perspective, and gender needs are almost never integrated into budgetary processes. The only exception was in the Zugdidi Municipality, where in 2013 the gender adviser facilitated a revision of the budget from a gender perspective; despite limited resources, the budget integrated a response to domestic violence, assistance to socially vulnerable women, and other interventions.

Economic rights

Over the last decade, Georgia benefited from economic growth reflected in improved economic indicators. GDP per capita was 3,605 USD in 2013, compared to 2,613 USD in 2010,⁵ and the poverty rate has been reduced from 20.9% in 2010 to 14.8% in 2012. However, this economic growth had no significant impact on the economic activity among women.

4 The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) (2014), "Gender Monitoring of Local Government Organs and Enhancement of Women's Participation in Political Life", www.scribd.com

5 World Bank, 2015. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

Even if the Constitution and relevant national policies and laws imply equality principles for men and women in regards to their rights to jobs, selection of employment, benefits, vocational training, equal pay for work of equal value, and social security, female labour-force participation in Georgia remains substantially lower compared to male participation. Still, women continue to experience increased economic vulnerability due to a persistent gender wage gap (GWG), unemployment and low economic activity.

The average monthly wage for women has increased during the past several years, although men's wages grew even faster, resulting in a more significant gender wage differential. In 2012, the average monthly salary for women was GEL 517.9, or GEL 341.7 less than the GEL 859.6 average earned by men. In none of the occupation fields did women's average monthly wage exceed or equal their male counterparts (see table 1). Women have lower income across various directions of economic activity, except in real estate renting; pensions, stipends, and benefits; received remittances from abroad; and real estate sales.

A UN Women study⁶ reveals a higher GWG in rural (34.5%) versus urban (33.5%) settings. The gender wage difference is smaller in Tbilisi (28.3%) compared to the regions (29.5%), while the GWG is minor (2.3%) in favour of women who have university degrees.

Families with the highest average monthly income (GEL 1,071.5) live in Tbilisi, while those with the lowest income (GEL 727.5) live in Shida Kartli, one of the regions affected by armed conflict.

Even if the official statistics indicate lower unemployment rates among women compared to men (12.3% versus 16.5%, respectively), the female employment rate for economically active women is only 49.8% compared to 64.5% among men. One of the explanations for this observed difference is the fact that economically active women often declare themselves as "housewives" rather than "unemployed".

Another concerning trend is that the female economic activity index and female unemployment rate has not changed since 1998 (see table 2). The low economic activity affects women's economic independence, their income-earning power and, as a result, their level of freedom. Almost half (47%) of unemployed women have a higher education (versus 39.9% among men), 28.5% have a secondary education (versus 42% among men) and 20.1% have a secondary vocational education (versus 15.8% among men). Finally, female-headed households are more likely to fall below the poverty line, including single mothers⁷.

The study respondents identified a number of factors that affect women's employment opportunities, such as a lack of appropriate infrastructure in the regions (i.e. kindergartens); prevailing stereotypes that women's social role should be limited to caring for the family; and discriminatory attitudes of employers towards women because of their "obligations" as mothers and responsibility for family care. Such social attitudes may ultimately affect the realization of women's right to employment and promotion. In both public and private sectors, women are rarely promoted to senior- or executive-level positions, further impeding the efforts to close the existing gender wage gap and to raise the low economic activity of women.

In terms of the access to and the availability of pre-school institutions as one of the preconditions for women's employment, it is noteworthy that the establishment and maintenance of preschool educational institutions fall under the competence of local self-government in Georgia (Organic Law on Local Self-Government, Art. 16/2"o"). As per the legislative amendment of 12 July 2013, it is prohibited to charge parents any payment for preschool educational institutions (Art. 46¹); thus, all public kindergartens are now free of charge. However, due to an insufficient number of kindergartens, there are queues for children to get into already crowded public kindergartens.

6 Technical cooperation between UN Women and the National Statistics Office of Georgia on the Gender Wage Gap in Georgia.

7 Op. cit.

Table 1
Average monthly wages in Georgia by gender
(GEL)

Year	Women	Men	Difference between the wages of men and women
2000	52.1	95.9	43.8
2001	63.5	125.2	61.7
2002	75.7	150.1	74.4
2003	85.7	163.0	77.3
2004	108.3	200.8	92.5
2005	131.1	167.9	36.8
2006	177.6	362.0	184.4
2007	240.2	475.6	235.4
2008	367.7	678.4	310.7
2009	398.3	690.8	292.5
2010	426.6	742.8	316.2
2011	460.2	771.1	310.9
2012	517.9	859.6	341.7
2013	585.0	920.3	335.3
2014	618	980	362

Table 2⁸
Distribution of women and men (aged 15 years and older) by economic activity, 1998-2014
(Percentage)

		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Unemployment level	Women	12.2	11.1	9.7	10.7	11.0	11.5	11.8	12.6	11.7	12.6	16.1	15.4	14.5	13.1	13.8	12.3	6
	Men	12.6	14.0	11.0	11.6	14.0	11.5	13.4	14.8	15.2	13.9	16.8	18.1	17.9	16.7	16.1	16.5	11
Activity level	Women	56.8	56.0	57.2	58.3	56.0	57.7	56.9	55.9	53.6	55.0	53.5	54.3	55.5	55.8	57.4	56.8	57
	Men	66.2	63.4	66.8	67.1	65.1	67.5	64.3	62.6	61.2	63.1	61.1	61.1	61.2	63.7	65.6	64.5	77

8 Data obtained from the National Statistics Office of Georgia webpage. See www.geostat.ge.

Education

Georgian legislation and policies provide equal provisions for access to study, achieving diplomas, scholarships and grants, and participation of women at all levels of education programmes, as well as employment. The country has a strong tradition of education, with almost universal primary school enrolment rates nationwide (96-100%) since 2000 and a gender parity index of 1.03 as of 2011.

However, early marriage practices, especially among rural households and ethnic minorities, have impeded young women from realizing their right to education and development. The average age for women to marry is 27.2 years, compared to 30.7 for men. In 2013, 12.7% of young women established families between the ages of 16 and 19, compared to only 2.7% among young men. Based on the Public Defender's report from October 2011 through January 2013, 7,367 girls discontinued their education in Georgia's public and private schools; in most cases, the reason was an early marriage. The school drop-out rate due to early marriage is the highest in the region of Kvemo Kartli, where an Azeri ethnic minority population resides.⁹

Finally, access to information on health education and family planning has not been consistently integrated into the national education curricula, thereby impeding the realization of the rights of girls and young women, especially among the most vulnerable groups.

Women and men are almost equally involved in professional education programmes. In 2013, public and private education institutions reported 51% female and 49% male graduates among 10,250 students. Business administration and health-care training are the two leading professional education programmes where the number of women among students and graduates significantly exceeds enrolment rates for men.

Social protection

The introduction and continued expansion of social protection schemes provided a safety net for the most vulnerable population groups, including families living under poverty, old-age pensioners and people with disabilities.

In 2012, a total of 501,445 persons were receiving state-funded targeted social assistance (TSA), and 54.9% of the TSA recipients were women. This statistic correlates with the higher social vulnerability of women in the country and can be considered as a proxy indicator that the right to equal access to social protection for women has been realized.

The retirement age for men and women is differentiated in Georgia. Women are allowed to retire and receive an old-age pension (a flat rate of GEL 150, equivalent to USD 91) from age 60. The respective age for men is 65. As per 2012 data, 26% of all female pensioners belong to the age group 60-64. There is no study on the impact of this uneven pension-age policy on women and men. As per 2015 data, there are 42% more female than male pensioners (492,000 women and 205,000 men).¹⁰

Gender parameters are included in child adoption procedures, childcare and child protection programmes, providing mothers a better social package. Since January 2014, working women have been entitled to longer maternity leaves and increased remuneration. Official leave during pregnancy, childbirth and childcare increased from 477 to 730 calendar days, of which paid leave increased from 126 to 183 calendar days. In addition, the state compensation for all 183 paid calendar days has increased to GEL 1,000 (USD 625), compared to GEL 600 (USD 375) earned for the previous 126 paid calendar days.

Additionally, a number of programmes focus on socially vulnerable mothers. "Shelters for Mothers and Children" in Tbilisi and Kutaisi provides single moth-

9 The Public Defender of Georgia, "Annual Report of the Public Defender of Georgia: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia", 2013. Available from <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/1/1563.pdf> (Georgian language version).

10 National Statistics Office of Georgia, *Women and men in Georgia: Statistical Publication*, Tbilisi: 2015, 31.

ers with a shelter and, in parallel, supports their professional training to facilitate their longer-term economic empowerment.

However, even if women are more often the recipients of TSA, women remain less economically active and more socially vulnerable due to higher levels of unemployment. Therefore, the TSA programme needs to take into account gender dimensions that would make women more eligible to existing social protection schemes and facilitate their elevation from poverty.

Health care

In 2013, the Government of Georgia launched its flagship programme of Universal Health Care (UHC), which ensures that every citizen of Georgia, both men and women, has a basic package of out-patient, in-patient and emergency health services. In addition, 17 vertical programmes targeting specific communicable and non-communicable diseases (e.g. immunizations, diabetes) are implemented with equal accessibility and coverage for women and men. The Government has also secured special temporary measures for speeding up the implementation of women's rights in health care, through maternal and child health-care programmes.

The country has also attained a number of gains through a reduction of the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) from 49.2 in 2000 to 27.7 by 2013; a reduction of abortion rates from 3.7 in 2000 to 1.6 in 2010; and an increase in the total contraceptive prevalence rate among married women from 20% to 53%. However, despite this progress, Georgia has not met the MDG target for Maternal Mortality. Further significant reduction in maternal deaths will remain a priority through strengthening MCH services and SRH education among young girls and women.

Disparities continue to be observed in health outcomes and access to basic services among geographic, ethnic and income groups. While UHC has ensured universal coverage for the population, communities in conflict-affected areas still suffer from a lack of access to basic health-care services.

While women in Georgia continue to face substantial challenges in reproductive health, and as abortion still remains among the leading family planning methods, the Government has yet to design a pro-

gramme for affordable access to modern contraception for women, at both national and local levels.

Finally, the availability of reliable data and the quality of health data analysis for enhanced evidence-based policymaking remain a challenge, with over 40% of death cases registered with unknown causes.

2.1. IDP and conflict-affected women

The 2013 study "Access to Justice for Internally Displaced and Ethnic Minority Women"¹¹ conducted among 500 IDP women in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Rustavi and Gori revealed three main challenges towards social and economic empowerment of internally displaced women, including (a) inadequate living conditions; (b) inadequate employment and professional training opportunities; and (c) economic hardship on families.

Inadequate living conditions. As of March 2015, 263,598 internally displaced persons were officially registered in Georgia, 54% of whom are women (see table 3). The majority of IDPs live in Tbilisi (100,944 persons) and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (85,188 persons). While more than 60% of the families lived in so-called private residencies as of 2012, 39.3% of IDP households remained in so-called collective settlements¹² that frequently have limited space for the families and have no social infrastructure, such as technical facilities for people with disabilities. IDP women identify long-term housing as the main challenge. The Government has taken significant steps to provide durable housing to internally displaced families and only since 2013 has ensured over 2,500 IDP families with housing.¹³ However, the durable housing needs of a significant number of IDP families are still to be met.

Lack of employment and professional training opportunities. Among the 500 IDP women interviewed, only 18.5% were employed, 3% were self-employed and over half were unemployed. Clearly unemployment is one of the major challenges faced by IDP women. Roughly one third of IDP women had a

11 Institute of Social Studies and Analysis, "Access to Justice for Internally Displaced and Ethnic Minority Women", Tbilisi, 2013.

12 Data provided by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia.

13 Ibid.

higher education and one third had completed high school, while the remaining 35.8% had no profession, highlighting the need for vocational education and training. IDP women with a profession are mostly

teachers, medical practitioners or economists. IDP women residing in cities have better employment options and better working conditions than those living in collective settlements in villages.

Table 3
Number of officially registered IDPs as of 5 March 2015¹⁴

Region	IDPs	Men	Women
Adjara	6,622	3,134	3,488
Guria	497	229	268
Tbilisi	100,944	46,154	54,790
Imereti	25,228	11,493	13,735
Kakheti	1,477	685	792
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	10,956	5,379	5,577
Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti	834	405	429
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	85,188	39,567	45,621
Samtskhe-Javakheti	2,333	1,075	1,258
Kvemo Kartli	12,691	6,031	6,660
Shida Kartli	16,828	8,231	8,597
Total	263,598	122,383	141,215

Economic hardship, with family incomes mainly depending on government allowances. The majority of IDP families remain on government assistance, including allowances for IDPs (116,225 women and 98,909 men), old-age pensions (41,911 persons), pensions for disability (3,964 women and 5,775 men) and targeted social assistance (14,211 IDP women and 11,687 men).¹⁵ Until 2014, the IDP allowance in locations of compact collective settlement was GEL 22, while the IDP allowance in private housing was GEL 28, as IDPs living in collective settlements were receiving subsidies for electricity and other utilities. Since March 2014, based on the new Law on IDPs, all internally displaced persons, irrespective of their place of residence, receive an increased monthly allowance of GEL 45. While the new regulation significantly improves the financial allowance rate, IDP families that do not have individual electric meters may find the equal allowance challenging.¹⁶ The Min-

istry also initiated a one-time financial assistance programme for extremely poor IDP families that benefited 2,589 families from 2013 to 2014, as well as one-time winter vouchers (GEL 200 subsidy for electricity and natural gas) to 23,000 IDP families with social status ratings lower than a score of 70,001.¹⁷

Despite the existing social support programmes and an improved cash allowance for internally displaced families, IDP women remain one of the most vulnerable groups in Georgia. The average monthly income for IDP families was GEL 364.23, with half of the families living on less than GEL 300 and only 18.2% of families earning more than GEL 500. One third of IDP women interviewed noted that they had income to buy food but not clothes, while 10.2% of respondents considered the economic condition of their families as average (i.e. their income provides food and clothes but is insufficient to buy expensive things).

15 Data provided by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons.

16 The Public Defender of Georgia, "Annual Report of the Public Defender of Georgia".

17 Ibid.

Only 0.4% of IDP women indicated that their income meets both the basic family needs and affords them the ability to buy relatively expensive products with long-term payment options. Within the study, 34.8% of the families interviewed were recipients of TSA, while 20.8% were planning to apply for social assistance. The majority of IDP women viewed themselves as socially vulnerable and in need of social benefits to survive.

IDP women, just like other Georgian citizens, are eligible for UHC and other state-funded health-care programmes. However, study respondents noted that IDP women rarely visit a doctor because UHC cannot reimburse costs for some of the more expensive procedures. Furthermore, IDPs in general and IDP women in particular do not comprise a special target group for any of the state-funded programmes, while internally displaced women consider themselves in need of focused disease control as well as mental health programmes. As an example, 30.5% of the 500 IDP women reported to suffer from a chronic disease during the preceding 12-month period (2013).

2.2. Ethnic minority women

Geostat reports that 16.2% of Georgia's citizens and residents are ethnic minorities. The largest minority groups include ethnic Azeris (284,761 or 6.6%) and ethnic Armenians (248,929 or 5.7%) mostly residing in the regions of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, respectively.

The low level of integration into Georgian society is one of the main challenges faced by ethnic minorities, due to insufficient knowledge of the Georgian language and compact settlement of ethnic minority families in different villages. As an example, a 2013 study¹⁸ conducted among 200 ethnic Azeri women in Marneuli revealed that up to 80% could not speak, write, read or understand Georgian, and only 20.9% could understand Georgian.

The same study documented that 45% of the women had extended families with four or five members, and every third (29.5%) family consisted of six or more members (29.5%). The average size of families among ethnic Azeri groups in Marneuli was 4.6, sub-

stantially higher compared to Georgia's national average of 3.6. The majority of the respondents were married, with a substantial percentage (41.5%) married early between 14 and 18 years of age.

Nine out of ten ethnic minority women are unemployed (10.5% employed), although the official unemployment rate is only 25.7%, as many women might be identifying themselves as "housewives". The majority of ethnic minority women do not identify themselves as "unemployed" and are not currently looking for jobs or thinking about starting work. Out of the 134 women interviewed, 37.8% had not completed their secondary education, and 74.6% of ethnic minority women do not have a profession. The current data is considerably higher compared to the national average for the same indicators.

Respondents cited wages (60%), pensions (45%) or agricultural products that they produce (14.5%) as the main sources of their family income. Almost half (49.5%) of ethnic minority families have an income lower than GEL 300, while 19.5% earn between GEL 301 and GEL 500, and 30% earn between GEL 501 and GEL 1,000. The average income for ethnic minority women is GEL 409.71. Although half of the families interviewed are poor, only 15% of the women respondents consider their economic condition as dire, while 27.5% and 45%, respectively, think their family condition is either bad or average.

In addition, 34.2% of families from ethnic minorities think their family is socially vulnerable and should be receiving a subsistence allowance. However, a study of 200 ethnic minority women¹⁹ revealed that only 2.5% of ethnic minority families were receiving TSA and that an additional 3% had applied for the social assistance.

Due to the language barrier, representatives of ethnic minorities have limited access to not only information but also different government programmes and state-funded services. The study confirmed that ethnic minority women rarely visit specialists and almost never visit doctors for preventative care or check-ups, exemplified by the discovery that ethnic minority women in Marneuli often face reproductive health problems.

18 Institute of Social Studies and Analysis, "Access to Justice".

19 Ibid.

SECTION 3 –

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the WEPD II project was operating at three levels (policy, institutional and grassroots), priority recommendations from the ISSA review for enhancement of gender equality and women's rights were also summarized into macrolevel (policy), mesolevel (institutional) and microlevel (grassroots) interventions.

Tables 4 through 7 provide a succinct summary of recommendations from the current review regarding how gender equality could be enhanced, as well as what specific measures are recommended for greater social protection of women, especially among IDP, conflict-affected and ethnic minority groups.

It is notable that the vast majority of recommendations synthesized in this report are in line with the newly adopted 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2016-2020 UN Partnership for Sustainable Development framework in Georgia, and the latest 2014 observations and concluding recommendations from the CEDAW committee's combined periodic reports for Georgia.

Below is a short summary of recommendations both as general measures to enhance the realization of political, economic and social rights of women in Georgia and as specific observations for IDP, conflict-affected and ethnic minority groups.

3.1. General recommendations to enhance gender equality and women empowerment

- At the **macro level (national policy)**, Georgia is recommended to ensure regulations and special measures through public and private partnerships for greater political and economic empowerment of women, including mandatory quotas for political parties; promotion of women to senior decision-making positions in both public and private sectors; initiatives for reducing the GWG; ratification of the ILO maternity protection convention; and establishment of full-time Gender Advisers (with relevant decision-making power and resources) across all line ministries to facilitate gender mainstreaming in decision and policymaking processes.
- At the **meso level (institutional)**, Georgia needs to establish a comprehensive national mechanism on gender equality and women's empowerment in the executive branch of the Government and strengthen capacities at all levels to effectively design, implement and monitor evidence-based and gender-sensitive policies and programmes. Country-tailored solutions should be designed for stronger economic empowerment of women via improved employment opportunities and increased access to financial resources, education and training. Opportunities for vocational training, as well as credit and grant programmes, should be enhanced to stimulate women entrepreneurs. The gender parameter should be stronger positioned in social protection policies and programmes for the most vulnerable groups such as IDPs and ethnic minorities. A special focus should be made on strengthening measures to prevent violence against women, and all victims and survivors of violence should have access to effective protection and assistance. Finally, institutional capacities should be strengthened for the provision of age-appropriate information and SRH services, especially for adolescent girls, young women, rural and ethnic minority women.
- Finally, at the **micro level (grassroots)**, country-tailored actions should be strengthened to address still prevailing stereotypical attitudes on the roles and responsibilities of women and men by raising awareness on the rights of women secured by the national legislation and on the importance of education and economic empowerment of women at both national and local levels. Civil society and media should be strengthened to ensure proper advocacy and oversight of gender equality and protection of the rights of the most vulnerable women.

Table 4**Recommended interventions at macro, meso and micro levels**

Recommendations	In line with Sustainable Development Goal (If yes, which SDG Target)	In line with 2016-2020 UNPSD for Georgia	Highlighted in CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations (July 2014)	Key counterparts for implementation of the recommendation
MACRO – POLICY LEVEL				
Introduce mandatory quotas for political parties to significantly increase the representation of women in national (Parliament) and local legislative bodies	5.3. and 5.c	✓	✓	Parliament, Central and Local Governments, CSOs, Media
Develop adequate regulations and targeted programmes for promotion of women into senior positions, in both public and private sectors, especially for women-headed households. As an example, a new EU initiative aims to introduce quotas in business to increase the percentage of women in senior positions	5.3. and 5.c	✓	✓	Parliament, MLHSA, MOJ, MESD, Business Associations
Develop adequate regulations and targeted programmes to reduce the gender wage gap (GWG)	5.c and 8.5	✓	✓	Parliament, MLHSA, MESD, Business Associations
Take into account a gender parameter in social protection policies and programming for the most vulnerable groups such as IDPs and ethnic minorities	1.b; 1.2 and 1.3	✓	✓	MLHSA
Ratify the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to facilitate reconciliation of professional and private life for women and men, including by expanding the number of childcare facilities and encouraging men to participate equally in family responsibilities	8.5		✓	Parliament, MLHSA
Establish full-time Gender Adviser positions across all line ministries as part of strengthening executive capacities for gender-sensitive policy making	5.c	✓	✓	PM Office, Line Ministries
MESO – INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL				
Establish a comprehensive national mechanism within the executive branch to coordinate, effectively implement and monitor gender equality policies with adequate human, technical and financial resources	5.c	✓	✓	Government of Georgia
Find country-tailored solutions for stronger economic empowerment of women through innovative public-private partnerships that provide both better employment opportunities and increased access to financial resources, education and training	1.4 and 5.c	✓	✓	MLHSA, MESD, Business Associations
Strengthen national and local capacities in generating, analyzing and using high-quality, timely and reliable gender-disaggregated data for evidence-based policy-making	17.18	✓	✓	Geostat, Line Ministries, Local Governments
Build capacity of line ministries and local governments (gender advisers), state statistics office and academia in designing and monitoring evidence-based policies and programmes that address gender aspects and the most vulnerable women	17.18	✓	✓	Parliament, Line Ministries, Local Governments, Geostat

Recommendations	In line with Sustainable Development Goal (If yes, which SDG Target)	In line with 2016-2020 UNPSD for Georgia	Highlighted in CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations (July 2014)	Key counterparts for implementation of the recommendation
Increase opportunities for vocational training for women to prepare them for the labour market, as well as credit and grant programmes to stimulate women entrepreneurs	4.3	✓	✓	MES, MLHSA, MESD, Business Sector
Strengthen measures to prevent and combat sexual harassment of women in the workplace by establishing labour inspectorates for effective labour law reporting and enforcement mechanisms	5.2; 5.c and 8.5		✓	MLHSA
Ensure that all women who are victims of violence have access to effective protection and assistance, including state-funded shelters, and improve cooperation with relevant non-governmental organizations in this respect	5.2 and 16.1	✓	✓	National Prevention Mechanism, MLHSA
Introduce age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health and rights education. This includes education on responsible sexual behavior, which should be in line with recommended standards of UNESCO and WHO, as well as Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) and European Network of Health Promoting Schools (ENHPS)	3.7 and 5.6	✓	✓	MES, MLHSA
Increase access to family planning services and affordable contraceptive methods, including all modern forms of contraception, especially for adolescent girls, young women, rural and ethnic minority women by training medical personnel and through the provision of commodities	3.7 and 5.6	✓	✓	MLHSA, Municipal Councils
Scale up accessibility and coverage of special social support programmes such as "Shelters for Mothers and Children" at the subnational level	1.b	✓	✓	MLHSA, International Development Partners, CSOs
MICRO – COMMUNITY LEVEL				
Strengthen efforts to overcome stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society by promoting the substantive equality of women	5.c	✓	✓	Civil Society, Media, Women's Associations
Raise awareness on the importance of female participation in policy- and decision-making in both public and private sectors	5.3. and 5.c	✓	✓	Civil Society, Media, Women's Associations
Raise awareness on the importance of economic empowerment of women with a focus on the most vulnerable groups such as IDPs and ethnic minorities	5.c	✓		Civil Society, Media, Women's Associations
Encourage women to report acts of gender-based discrimination and sexual and domestic violence to relevant judicial and quasi-judicial bodies by raising awareness about the criminal nature of such acts and building trust towards its institutions	5.2 and 16.1	✓	✓	MOJ, MLHSA, civil society, media, women's associations
Raise awareness on the provisions of legislation on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and gender equality among the public, in particular among women	5.c	✓	✓	Civil Society, Media, Women's Associations
Strengthen capacity of society and media at national and local levels to ensure proper advocacy and oversight of gender equality and protection of rights of the most vulnerable women	5.c	✓	✓	Civil Society, Media, Academia, Women's Associations
Raise awareness on human rights, ethical and health-related consequences vis-à-vis sex-selective abortion practices	3.1 and 3.7	✓	✓	MLHSA, International Development Partners, CSOs

3.2. Recommendations for improving social protection policies for IDP and conflict-affected women

- In addition to the general, cross-cutting recommendations summarized in section 3.1, greater protection and progressing realization of the rights of IDP women calls for a number of **macro-level (national policy) decisions**. Georgia is recommended to further scale up durable housing solution programmes for IDPs (with a special focus on women-headed households) and ensure that the housing has relevant social infrastructure for IDPs living with disabilities. In view of the financial limitations to cover co-payments for the nationally operating Universal Health Care programme, the country is recommended to consider temporary special measures (e.g. additional diagnostic interventions or essential drug packages) for IDP families and IDP women in particular through municipal budgets or MRA programmes.
- At the **meso (institutional) level**, Georgia needs to ensure a periodic needs assessment of IDP women that can be used to refine gender-sensitive policies and programmes. However, as the economic status of the IDP families stands out as a priority challenge, the country has to consider temporary special measures through public and private partnerships to expand VET and employment opportunities for IDP women.
- Finally, at the **micro (grassroots) level**, Georgia should consider community-based health and social rehabilitation programmes for IDP women with a special focus on SRH and mental health services.

Table 5
Recommended interventions for IDP women

Recommendations	In line with Sustainable Development Goal (If yes, which SDG Target)	In line with 2016-2020 UNPSD for Georgia	Highlighted in CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations (July 2014)	Key counterparts for implementation of the recommendation
MACRO – POLICY LEVEL				
In view of the persisting social vulnerability among IDP women, consider increased social benefits for IDP families in general, with special consideration for women and their children	1.b; 1.2 and 1.3	✓	✓	MLHSA, Local Municipalities/Councils
Scale up durable housing solution programmes for IDPs, with special focus on women-headed households	1.2 and 1.3	✓		MRA
Establish policies and measures for improving social infrastructure for IDP settlements, with focus on the infrastructure support for IDPs living with disabilities	1.2 and 1.3	✓		MRA
In view of the financial limitations to cover co-payments for the nationally operating Universal Health Care programme, consider temporary special measures (e.g. additional diagnostic interventions or essential drug packages) to be covered through the municipal budget or through the MRA for IDP families and IDP women in particular to alleviate existing financial barriers	3.8	✓		MLHSA, Local Municipalities/Councils, International Development Partners

Recommendations	In line with Sustainable Development Goal (If yes, which SDG Target)	In line with 2016-2020 UNPSD for Georgia	Highlighted in CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations (July 2014)	Key counterparts for implementation of the recommendation
MESO – INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL				
Ensure a periodic needs assessment and design/implementation of policies and programmes tailored to IDP women	17.18	√		MRA, International Development Partners, CSOs
Support elaboration of gender-sensitive state policies and programmes, including temporary special measures, to enable the totality of IDPs and especially women to sustain themselves and have access to vocational education and training and employment	4.3	√	√	MRA, MLHSA, MESD, Local Municipalities/Councils, Business Sector
MICRO – COMMUNITY LEVEL				
Elaborate community-based health and social rehabilitation programmes for IDP women, with focus on reproductive health as well as mental health	3.7; 5.6 and 3.8	√		MLHSA, Local Municipalities/Councils, International Development Partners

The ISSA review includes a limited reference on findings regarding conflict-affected women in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as bordering areas of the conflict-affected territories of Georgia. The recommendations are mainly drawn from additional references, including the 2016-2020 UNPSD document. In general, solid evidence and data on the status of women in conflict-affected areas is extremely scarce. Therefore, generating baselines for prioritization and targeting of interventions will be critical.

- At the **meso level**, Georgia should consider supporting institutional and CSO initiatives to generate more reliable and systemic evidence and data on the status of women and girls in

conflict-affected areas and across the bordering lines, such as needs assessment, operational research, etc. Access to basic health services should be strengthened by integrating them for conflict-affected populations in the mainstream of national policies. In parallel, health service development should be supported in the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

- The leading **microlevel recommendation** is to facilitate confidence-building initiatives through people-to-people communication by more active engagement of civil society and women organizations in the formal peacebuilding process dialogue.

Table 6**Recommended interventions for conflict-affected women**

Recommendations	In line with Sustainable Development Goal (If yes, which SDG Target)	In line with 2016-2020 UNPSD for Georgia	Highlighted in CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations (July 2014)	Key counterparts for implementation of the recommendation
MESO – INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL				
The area is largely deficient of solid evidence and data; thus, generating evidence and baselines for prioritization and targeting of interventions will be a critical element. Support institutional and civil society initiatives to generate more reliable and systemic evidence/data on the status of women and girls in conflict-affected areas and across the bordering lines (e.g. needs assessment, operational research)	17.18	✓		International Development Partners, CSOs
Coordinate policy development and service delivery processes for conflict-affected populations through engagement of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees (MRA), line ministries and government agencies in health and education sectors	16.1	✓	✓	Coordination Mechanisms
Ensure access of conflict-affected women to basic health services. Support MLHSA in integrating health services (e.g. immunization, MCH, HIV, TB) for conflict-affected populations in the mainstream of national policies and, in parallel, support health service development on the ground in Abkhazia and South Ossetia	3.1; 3.7; 5.6 and 3.8	✓	✓	MLHSA, De Facto Authorities, International Development Partners, CSOs
MICRO – COMMUNITY LEVEL				
Facilitate confidence-building initiatives through people-to-people communication by more active engagement of civil society and women organizations, capacity-building of relevant CSOs, and facilitating dialogue mechanisms between women CSOs and formal peacebuilding processes	16.1	✓		International Development Partners, CSOs

3.3. Recommendations for improving the social protection policies for ethnic minority women

- The two main recommendations for macrolevel (policy) interventions include: (a) quota systems or other special temporary policy measures for stronger women representation in municipalities with a high number of ethnic minorities; and (b) strengthening legislation on early marriages, including safeguards for property and economic rights of girls and young women.
- One of the key mesolevel (institutional) recommendations for better social protection of ethnic minority women is to increase access to state-guaranteed health-care services (i.e. universal health care) by removing language barriers. Similar to IDP women, the country should ensure a periodic needs assessment as well as the design and refinement of policies and programmes tailored to ethnic minority women. Ethnic minority women should have greater access to family

planning services and affordable contraceptive methods, including all modern forms of contraception. They should also be supported through temporary special measures such as a targeted priority public health programmes (i.e. SRH commodities).

- Microlevel interventions or actions at the community level will be more critical to overcome as some cultural stereotypes impede the realization of the rights of ethnic minority women. Ethnic minority women have to be provided with greater education and professional training opportunities, as well as community support and understanding on the importance of the economic empowerment of women. The country is recommended to promote school attendance by girls belonging to ethnic minorities through information campaigns, especially in the region of Kvemo Kartli. In addition, awareness-raising efforts should be focused on developmental and health risks of early marriage practices for girls.

Table 7
Recommended interventions for ethnic minority women

Recommendations	In line with Sustainable Development Goal (If yes, which SDG Target)	In line with 2016-2020 UNPSD for Georgia	Highlighted in CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations (July 2014)	Key counterparts for implementation of the recommendation
MACRO – POLICY LEVEL				
Ensure stronger women representation and participation in municipal city councils with high numbers of ethnic minorities, through quota or other special temporary policy measures	1.4; 5.3 and 5.5	✓	✓	Parliament, Local Municipality Councils
Strengthen the legislation on early marriages and, if the early marriage occurs, safeguard property and economic rights of girls and young women	5.3		✓	Parliament, Local MOJ
MESO – INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL				
Facilitate greater access of women belonging to ethnic minorities to state health-care services (i.e. UHC programme) by removing the language barrier; ensure development and dissemination of relevant information and facilitate service provision in relevant languages of the minority groups	3.8	✓	✓	MLHSA, CSOs
Ensure a periodic needs assessment and design/implementation of policies and programmes tailored to ethnic minority women	17.18	✓	✓	Local Municipalities, International Development Partners, CSOs
Consider temporary special measures such as targeted priority public health programmes (i.e. SRH commodities) for ethnic minority women	3.7 and 5.6	✓	✓	Local Municipalities, MLHSA
MICRO – COMMUNITY LEVEL				
Promote school attendance by girls belonging to ethnic minorities through information campaigns, especially in the region of Kvemo Kartli	4.1. and 5.3	✓	✓	CSO, Media, Local Municipalities
Raise awareness on developmental and health risks of early marriage practices for the girls	5.3	✓	✓	CSO, Media, Local Municipalities
Provide access to family planning services and affordable contraceptive methods, including all modern forms of contraception	3.7 and 5.6	✓	✓	MLHSA, Local Municipalities, International Development Partners
Raise awareness and promote education and professional training for women of ethnic minority groups	4.3	✓	✓	CSO, Media, Local Municipalities

ANNEX A – LIST OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INTERVIEWED BY ISSA

Representatives of Ministries	First Deputy Minister Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
	Deputy Minister Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia
	Deputy Minister Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance of Georgia
	Head, Department of Health Protection Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
	Head, Department of Social Protection Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
	Head, Department of Employment Programmes Social Service Agency, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
	Head, Social Programmes Division; Head, Division of Guardianship-Care Social Service Agency, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
	Head, Division of Health Protection Programmes Social Service Agency, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
Representatives of local self-government	Head, Division of Public Relations of Zugdidi Municipality
	Member of the team working on gender-sensitive budgetary issues of the Gamgeoba city council and local executive governance body, Samtredia Municipality (Samtredia)
	Member of the team working on gender-sensitive budgetary issues of city council and local executive governance body (Gamgeoba) of Samtredia Municipality (Samtredia)
	Adviser on gender issues to the Head of the Marneuli local executive governance body (Gamgebeli)
	Representative of Gamgeoba local executive governance body of Tetrtskaro (Tetrtskaro)
	Chairman of Dusheti City Council (Dusheti)
	Adviser on gender issues to the Head of the Gori local executive governance body (Gamgeoba) (Gori)



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