

COUNTRY GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE OF GEORGIA



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABL	administrative boundary line
ACT	Analysis and Consulting Team
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AR	autonomous republic
ATIPFUND	State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking
AVNG	Anti-Violence Network of Georgia
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEDAW Committee	United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CGEP	Country Gender Equality Profile
CoE	Council of Europe
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Center
CSO	civil society organization
DV	domestic violence
DV Law	Law of Georgia on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence
EC	European Council
EU	European Union
Eurostat	European Statistical Office
FGM/C	female genital mutilation/cutting
GBSS	gender-biased sex selection
GBV	gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEC	Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia
GEL	Georgian lari
GEOSTAT	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GERHS10	Georgia Reproductive Health Survey 2010-2011
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
GID	Geneva International Discussions
GPS	Global Positioning System
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
GTUC	Georgian Trade Union Confederation
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HPV	human papillomavirus

HR NAP	Human Rights Strategy and National Action Plan
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	information and communications technology
IDP	internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Inter-Agency Commission	Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPRM	Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism
IPV	intimate partner violence
Istanbul Convention	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
IUD	intrauterine device
IZA	Institute of Labor Economics
LBT	lesbian, bisexual and transgender
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
MDF	Municipal Development Fund of Georgia
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMEIG	United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group
MMR	maternal mortality ratio
MoESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia
MoESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
MoIDPOTLHSA	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
MP	Member of Parliament
NAEC	National Assessment and Examinations Center of Georgia
NAP	National Action Plan
NCDC	National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEET	not in education, employment or training
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
p.p.	percentage points
PDO	Public Defender's Office of Georgia
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	purchasing power parity
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
SOGI	sexual orientation and gender identity

SOPs	standard operating procedures
SRB	sex ratio at birth
SRH	sexual and reproductive health
SRHR	sexual and reproductive health and rights
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STI	sexually transmitted infection
TFR	total fertility rate
TIAR	total induced abortion rate
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TSA	targeted social assistance
UHP	Universal Healthcare Programme of Georgia
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSRVAW	United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences
VAW	violence against women
VAWG/DV NAP	National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors)
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	women, peace and security
WPS NAP	National Action Plan for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) represents an important guide for UN Women and the UNCT as well as for the Georgian Government, civil society and other development partners to assess the existing situation regarding women's empowerment and gender equality. In producing the CGEP, it is UN Women's goal to develop a concise and comparative situation analysis. The CGEP describes and analyses the present situation mainly based on the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while at the same time considering the BPfA and CEDAW frameworks. The 12 critical areas of the BPfA are reviewed, including the following: women and poverty; the education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict/women, peace and security; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; women and the media; women in agriculture and the environment; and the girl child. The eleventh and twelfth areas – institutional mechanisms and the human rights of women – are considered cross-cutting for all 10 areas. In this CGEP, both quantitative and qualitative data are considered along with the country's existing legislation and policies addressing each of these areas. Each chapter opens with quantitative data, mainly according to the SDG and BPfA indicators, followed by highlights of the most important issues and ending with a policy implementation analysis, pointing to the main gaps in achieving gender equality in Georgia. It is worth mentioning that the CGEP was developed and finalized before the COVID-19 crisis. UN Women is considering including a special chapter on COVID-19 lessons learned once relevant and sufficient data become available.

Women, Poverty and Social Exclusion. Social exclusion in Georgia is multidimensional, encompassing socioeconomic, cultural and political dimensions, and it represents various forms of deprivation, such as the lack of access to basic services and/or a social safety net. The prevalence of poverty among female-headed households, widows, rural populations, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and ethnic minorities reflects the greater risk of poverty among

more marginalized groups and the need for an intersectional and holistic approach to a gender analysis of poverty and social exclusion. Women who belong to the aforementioned disadvantaged groups are more likely to live in rural areas, have low educational qualifications, have one or more children, take care of a disabled or elderly family member, are internally displaced or belong to an ethnic minority group. The dominance of subsistence farming and lack of wage employment opportunities is the main cause of financial hardships among women. Targeted social assistance is limited – in both scope and coverage. Despite the introduction of a “universal health-care system” in recent years, medical expenses remain one of the most significant risk factors for falling into poverty in Georgia. Notwithstanding this fact, the universal scope of the program has been narrowed down to targeted coverage. Georgia has a universal old-age pension and a social assistance package that includes assistance for persons with disabilities. The old-age pension contributes to poverty reduction; in many cases, households depend on the old-age pension recipient for their monetary income. The majority of old-age pension recipients are women because of their lower retirement age (age 60 for women, age 65 for men) and longer life expectancy. Social protection, in the form of unemployment insurance (passive labour market policy measures) or the State-run training and retraining schemes (active labour market policy measures), is absent in Georgia. The protection of pregnant women and young mothers, which is an essential component of policies to prevent and reduce poverty and vulnerability among younger women, remains a challenge. Women who are engaged in the informal economy are not covered by social protection schemes such as sick leave or maternity leave, nor are they entitled to any cash benefit in the case of childbirth or adoption.

Education and Training of Women. On average, female students outnumber and outperform male students at all levels of education in Georgia, and women hold the majority of academic and teaching positions. However, there is a sizeable horizon-

tal segregation in subject areas (with women being underrepresented in some STEM subjects such as engineering and technology) and a significant vertical segregation in academia. Gender is an important factor influencing access to education for students from underprivileged groups such as ethnic minorities (namely in the Azerbaijani community,¹ which is the only group with higher dropout/out-of-school rates for girls than for boys) and families with a lower socioeconomic status (the difference in achievement levels of the lowest and highest socioeconomic segments being considerably higher for girls than for boys). Even though there has been significant progress in recent years in introducing gender-relevant topics into school curricula, namely in the subjects of civic education and biology, the curricula of other subjects still lack consideration of gender issues; school textbooks are still far from being stereotype-free and balanced; and teachers' insufficient qualification for gender-responsive teaching still remains a challenge. Notwithstanding its international commitments, Georgia has not done much to move towards greater gender equality in all spheres of education, training and research. Gender inequality is not perceived as a serious concern for the Georgian education system since, on average, women's and girl's participation and attainment rates are higher. This generalized attitude overlooks how gender works in the context of various disadvantaged groups; it also overlooks the fact that gender differentially moderates a person's educational achievement and his or her employment opportunities, earnings, chances in life and other circumstances.

Women and Health. Sexual and reproductive health services for women, including family planning, are not fully included at the primary health-care level. Despite the fact that State expenses have significantly increased since 2013, State-funded health insurance schemes often do not cover the most basic needs, and women from minority communities and rural and poor women face particular challenges in their access to health-care facilities and medical ser-

1 One of the reasons, although not fully explaining the gap, is the lack of knowledge of the Georgian language among Azerbaijani communities, which limits their access to higher education generally. The other factor is related to the prevailing gender stereotypes, which, however, are not limited to ethnic minority communities.

vices. There are currently no State funds oriented for family planning counselling or service delivery. Neither of these services is included in the State's benefit package or private insurance schemes. Modern contraceptives are not available for those most in need. Although the abortion rate is gradually decreasing in Georgia, it is still high as it is still seen as a family planning method by the general population. This is due to the lack of available family planning services and information in Georgia, especially in rural areas, as well as due to the lack of contraception counselling during abortion procedures and the lack of contraception provision after abortion. This means that women's access to information is not properly ensured, thereby violating their right to health and the principle of informed decision-making. As for the maternal mortality ratio, it is still high in Georgia due to a weak monitoring system and the low quality of services, which hinders women's access to quality health care, especially for women living in the regions. Accordingly, significant progress in the policies is not translated into practice, and measures taken by the Government do not meet the needs of the most marginalized people.

Violence against Women. Women and girls in Georgia suffer from various forms of gender-based violence (GBV); however, the numbers are underreported due to prevailing traditional gender norms and attitudes of non-disclosure, as well as the lack of social support and trust in law enforcement, health care and other relevant systems. Victims of GBV as well as women being stalked constitute a high-risk group for femicide. The problem of sexual harassment has recently gained some attention but is still not widely discussed in the media and on social networks; the population lacks awareness on this issue. Georgia has been a source, transit and destination country for sex trafficking of women and girls and forced labour of men, women and children. The State, with the active support of international donor organizations, has made serious progress in combating domestic violence and other forms of violence, and this progress is ongoing. The policy development in the area of domestic violence can be considered the most advanced among all areas considered in this report. Still, there is room for improvement. A coordinated response and access to justice is of utmost importance in cases

of violence, especially for women living in rural areas and for IDP, ethnic minority and LBT women.

Women and Armed Conflict / Women, Peace and Security. Women are severely underrepresented in the security sector in Georgia – both in general and in decision-making positions. Women are also underrepresented in official dialogue formats concerned with conflict resolution. Many internally displaced women live below the poverty line and face increased risk of violence. The problems they face include: unemployment and limited access to economic resources (including land); inadequate housing; limited access to education and health services (including reproductive services for women); the lack of care services such as kindergartens; underrepresentation in elections; and exclusion from consideration in development projects. Women living adjacent to the administrative boundary lines with Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia face problems with economic security, property rights, land registration, physical security, access to basic services like health care, freedom of movement and personal documentation. Even though the Georgian central government provides free health-care services and funds education for this population, new restrictions on documentation, the closing of specific checkpoints and bans on crossing for extended periods deprive the residents of these areas of access to health-care facilities and educational institutions or severely limits their access to them. In Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, it is impossible to systematically monitor and study the status of women's and children's rights, which presents a serious obstacle to addressing issues in this respect. Available data indicate a serious problem with domestic violence. The implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the achievement of the BPfA area E (Women and Armed Conflict) strategic objectives are also undermined by the lack of adequate budgeting, the lack of coordination between responsible agencies and the lack of gender sensitivity and knowledge of gender equality and WPS issues on the part of implementing officials (local as well as central); the low involvement of local civil society organizations (CSOs); and the insufficient involvement of IDP and conflict-affected women in the policy planning process and their insufficient inclusion in the official dialogue formats concerned with conflict resolution.

Women and the Economy. Structural factors such as the lack of investment in care and social protection, labour regulations that do not support the reconciliation of paid labour with domestic care and maternity, together with underdeveloped gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming in economic development policies, hinder women's economic participation and empowerment in Georgia. The gendered division of household labour negatively affects women's economic participation. Time allocated to unpaid work by women is three times higher than that of men in Georgia. The presence of children in the household is associated with a significant reduction in female labour force participation and increased male labour force participation. Therefore, the economic participation rate is lower for women aged 15-44 and increases for women aged 45 and older. The gender pay gap of 35.8 per cent (as of 2018) per month indicates the significant inequality among employed women and men that is further exacerbated by the gender gap in another area of economic activity – entrepreneurship.

Women in Decision-Making. Women are underrepresented in decision-making processes at all levels and in all spheres of public life – not exceeding 15 per cent in the Parliament of Georgia in 2019, decreasing in number from election to election in local self-governance bodies, less frequently found in managerial positions, and frequently subjected to horizontal and vertical segregation in all types of institutions. This problem is not adequately addressed by the Government: initiatives to introduce gender quotas in the Parliament have failed, while voluntary quotas introduced for political parties have not produced any tangible results. The existing institutional gender machinery is nascent and is not able and will not be able to address existing gender inequality and women's empowerment challenges because of the lack of human and financial resources.

Women and the Media. In Georgia, there are still limited media activities that would actively promote gender equality and the adequate portrayal of women. Media coverage of gender-related issues is incidental and reactive. The media is mainly focused on scandalous facts, and accordingly, the themes they choose to cover on women's rights are, in most cases, stereotypical and insensitive. Yet, in recent years, the quality of the gender-sensitive reporting has

improved, thanks to targeted trainings for journalists provided by various international organizations, including UN Women. Moreover, women's CSOs are promoting gender-sensitive journalism in the country.² Equal access to information and communications technology is another challenge in Georgia, as the lack of access to technology, especially in rural areas, hinders free access to information, thereby hindering the advancement of women's rights and women's empowerment in the country's periphery.

Women in Agriculture and the Environment.

The main problem for rural women as well as the rural population is the lack of work-related (and other) income and lack of income-generating activities. The non-systemic initiatives supported by the time-limited development projects aimed at including the rural population in income-generating activities and environmentally sustainable rural development, are not coordinated and frequently lack gender-specific targets. Women, especially in rural areas, are in a disadvantaged position because of their submissive role in families and societies, lacking a voice in decision-making processes in their own households and communities. SDG indicator 5.a.2 – the proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control – is insufficiently addressed in Georgia's national development priorities, and the existing legislative frameworks still tend to be "gender-blind".

The Girl Child. The sex ratio at birth (SRB), early marriages and lack of youth-friendly health-care services against the backdrop of economic hardships continue to remain a challenge for girls in Georgia. Despite the downward trend in the SRB, son preference is still prevalent in Georgia but varies across different groups. Early and child marriage also remains a persistent problem but varies by ethnic groups and by region. The socioeconomic and educational background of girls appears to be an important factor affecting the likelihood of early marriage. Women who married before the age of 19 were most likely to fall short of completing secondary or higher education, to be relatively poor and to live in rural areas. Although

there are amendments in the law with regard to child marriage, the enforcement of existing laws remains a challenge. The referral system does not function effectively to prevent child marriages, nor are there effective social protection systems and strategies to prevent and eliminate child labour.

The current status of Georgia in the 12 critical areas of concern for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) is varied, depending on the initial conditions at the moment of the country's commitment to international obligations and the efforts made by the State, international organizations, CSOs and informal and grass-roots groups over the past 25 years, as well as the political and socioeconomic developments in the country and the whole region. In some areas, such as the education and training of women or women's economic participation, the independent Georgian State inherited from its predecessor a rather equitable status quo, when considered on the global scale. In other areas, such as women's political participation, a nearly complete absence of democratic culture was the background against which efforts towards greater gender equality were to be made; thus, progress has been very slow. Other areas like health, social security and violence were impacted by the drastic breakdown of the economic system followed by the State policy of deregulation and the neglect of socioeconomic rights that defined the backdrop against which the State's commitments to GEWE were to be fulfilled.

In terms of efforts, too, the situation is varied in different critical areas of concern. Due to both increased pressure and aid from international organizations (including UN agencies), the response to violence against women and domestic violence has been significant in recent years. In other areas, specifically those related to the social and economic rights of women (health, work, economic empowerment, social security), there have been some local interventions by international organizations and CSOs; however, State policy has been virtually non-existent until very recently (especially until committing to the EU-Georgia Association Agreement), and currently we observe the very first attempts by the State to ad-

2 Women's Fund in Georgia granted its 2019 Kato Mikeldaze Award to a journalist for her gender-sensitive reporting.

dress some of the issues in these areas. And, finally, for some areas in which the current situation may seem relatively less problematic through a gender lens (such as access to education), this is mainly due to the status quo inherited by the independent Georgian State from the Soviet Union, rather than to any efforts made by the State in response to its commitments to GEWE. In such areas, policies remain overwhelmingly gender-blind, and gender inequalities affecting specific underprivileged groups or specific dimensions of these areas remain neglected under the blanket of generalized appraisals.

It is necessary to ensure the competence and knowledge of the SDG methodology among the stakeholders in order to avoid misleading data that distort the picture and divert attention from the real issues. So far, insufficient efforts are being made to establish a functioning system of data collection on the SDG indicators. The lack of coordinated work between the governmental agencies towards the development of

a coherent and holistic approach to the data collection impedes the existence of efficient and functioning State machinery for the implementation of the SDG agenda.

Unlike the obligations under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, commitments to the SDGs are not mandatory and therefore provide less of an incentive to fulfil them. At the same time, the efforts for awareness-raising on the Association Agreement were much more effective than those for the SDGs. Considering the non-binding status of the SDGs, it is even more crucial to invest resources to ensure that all State agencies understand the SDG agenda and to devise incentives for pressing said agencies to adhere to these commitments. In addition, there still remain international instruments critical for GEWE concerns to which Georgia has not yet committed. The international community has to play an important role in driving Georgia to adopt these instruments and begin their implementation.

INTRODUCTION

The Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) represents an important guide for UN Women and the UNCT as well as for the Georgian Government, civil society and other development partners to assess the existing situation regarding women's empowerment and gender equality. In producing the CGEP, it is UN Women's goal to develop a concise and comparative situation analysis. Achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) was globally acknowledged as critical for creating more prosperous and stable societies in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.³ In 2020, a five-year milestone will be reached towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. Georgia joined the global 2030 Agenda in 2015 and nationalized the 17 SDGs in November 2019. SDG indicators are valuable and practical tools for describing and analysing the current situation in all spheres of public life as well as a solid basis for future interventions and development. Thus, SDG targets and indicators⁴ (both global as well as nationalized) to measure progress towards the SDGs were used as the starting point for the current analysis, specifically the gender-specific indicators not only of Goal 5 (Gender Equality) but also of all the other 16 SDGs.

Along with the SDG framework, the present report relies on two more international documents – the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), which defines 12 areas of concern in respect of the achievement of GEWE, adopted by UN Member States at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in force since 1981. In the framework of the BPfA, Georgia took on the obligation of ensuring progress in all 12 areas of concern, while the ratification of CEDAW

without reservations in 1994 obliged the country to nationalize and implement its provisions. The CEDAW concluding observations on Georgia⁵ call on the State to ensure the effective implementation of its laws on gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and to take measures to enhance the implementation of gender equality laws and policies through effective enforcement mechanisms.⁶ We have used a combination of the above-mentioned three main instruments that complement and enrich one another and enable us to analyse the gender equality situation in the country in a deep, comprehensive and critical way.

The 12 critical areas of the BPfA have been reviewed, including the following: women and poverty; the education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict/women, peace and security; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; women and the media; women in agriculture and the environment; and the girl child. The eleventh and twelfth areas – institutional mechanisms and the human rights of women – are considered cross-cutting for all 10 areas. For the purposes of Georgia's CGEP, we consider both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as the country's existing legislative packages and policies addressing each of these areas. The Constitution of Georgia, the Anti-Discrimination Law of Georgia (2014)⁷ and the Gender Equality Law of Georgia (2010)⁸ have been considered umbrella local documents covering gender equality concerns together with the above-mentioned three international instruments.

The Constitution declares Georgia a "social state" and underlines the principles of social justice, social equality and social solidarity within society.⁹ Un-

3 United Nations, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).
4 United Nations, "Global SDG Indicators Database", 2017. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>.
5 CEDAW Committee, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia* (24 July 2014). CEDAW/C/Geo/CO/4-5.

6 *Ibid.*, para. 11(a).
7 Georgia, *Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination* (2014).
8 Georgia, *Law of Georgia on Gender Equality* (2010).
9 Georgia, *Constitution of Georgia* (1995), art. 5.2. Available at <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/30346?publication=35>.

der Article 11, the Constitution ensures the right to equality of all persons and prohibits discrimination based on sex and gender. Moreover, it obliges the State to provide equal rights and opportunities for men and women, as well as to take special measures to ensure the essential equality of men and women and to eliminate inequality.¹⁰

The Anti-Discrimination Law adopted in 2014 introduced the prohibition of discrimination in Georgia and resulted in important changes in other national laws in Georgia, by including the principles of equality and anti-discrimination in the specific and relevant normative acts. In 2019, under the amendments of the Anti-Discrimination Law, the law enforcement mechanisms were strengthened by expanding the mandate of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia (PDO). In addition, the Gender Equality Law set the equality principles between men and women in political, economic, social and cultural life. In accordance with the law, the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia (GEC) was converted into a Standing Body responsible for developing the legislative base in the sphere of gender equality and for providing the respective strategy for consideration and endorsement.

Apart from the national legislation, the Government of Georgia adopted the 2014-2020 Human Rights Strategy and the short-term Action Plans (HR NAP) for the periods 2014-2016, 2016-2017 and 2018-2020, each of which includes the main activities and results in the different critical areas of human rights, including gender equality (as a separate chapter). The HR NAP makes references to the National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors) (VAWG/DV NAP) and the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS NAP), which are stand-alone national action plans. The 2018-2020 HR

NAP was approved with a commitment that Chapter 15 of the Action Plan, focusing on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), would be adopted by the end of 2018. However, the commitment was not upheld, and the above-mentioned chapter was only just adopted on 17 February 2020.¹¹ Chapter 15 aims to combat hate-motivated crimes by raising awareness on SOGI and improving SOGI-specific social and health-care services. As the implementation deadline for Chapter 15 of the HR NAP must coincide with the implementation period of other chapters (in 2020), it will be a challenge to effectively address the issues of SOGI-based inequality in Georgia.

The analysis carried out in the CGEP allows us to conclude that despite all the positive efforts, the implementation of the normative acts and policy documents are insufficient, and this hinders the achievement of substantive – that is, lived – equality for women and girls.¹² Combating discriminatory practices using specific legal actions is possible to a limited extent only; additional measures are necessary to ensure that women fully exercise their freedoms and human rights. Women's empowerment implies their access to education and professional development; their ability to participate in political and social life and in the labour market with equal rights and opportunities; and their control over productive resources, income and assets both in the household and in formal institutions.¹³ All these aspects still remain a challenge in Georgia.

Thus, the present analysis addresses the issues connected to women's rights in different critical areas as adopted in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). It attempts to identify existing gaps across legal and policy efforts by critically assessing the available data under each area and provides recommendations for the national and international agencies to better address women's human rights' violations and the existent gender inequality.

10 Ibid., art. 11.3.

11 Georgia, *Resolution N116 of the Government of Georgia on the changes in Resolution N182 of the Government of Georgia of 17 April 2018*.

12 SDG indicator 5.1.1: Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

13 UNDP and the GEC, *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations* (2018), vol. 2, p. 22.

WOMEN, POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

National Context

Indicator	Data
Proportion of population below the international poverty line (\$1.90/day, 2011 PPP; GEL 1.90 in 2018),¹⁴ by sex (SDG indicator 1.1.1)	In 2018, the proportion of the Georgian population living below the international poverty line amounted to 4.5 per cent, with 4.6 per cent of women and 4.5 per cent of men. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.¹⁵
Proportion of population living below the national poverty line (absolute poverty line in Georgia), by sex (SDG indicator 1.2.1)	The absolute poverty measures are expenditure-based. The poverty line is estimated using the cost of basic needs method in Georgia. In 2018, the proportion of the population living below the absolute poverty line amounted to 20.1 per cent, with 20.2 per cent of women and 20.0 per cent of men. The absolute poverty line is 18.0 per cent in urban Georgia and 23.1 per cent in rural Georgia. The relative poverty line is set at 60 per cent of the national median consumption in Georgia. In 2018, the proportion of people living below 60 per cent of the median consumption was 20.5 per cent, with 20.5 per cent of women and 20.6 per cent of men; and 17.2 per cent in urban Georgia and 25.4 per cent in rural Georgia. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.¹⁶
Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income (or consumption), by age, sex and persons with disabilities (SDG indicator 10.2.1)	In 2018, the proportion of people living below 50 per cent of the median consumption in Georgia was 13.6 per cent, with 13.4 per cent of women and 13.8 per cent of men. 0-17 age group: 17.9 per cent 18-65 age group: 13.0 per cent 65+ age group: 9.4 per cent Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.¹⁷
Proportion of population below the lower middle-income international poverty line (\$3.20/day, 2011 PPP; GEL 3.2), by sex	In 2017, the proportion of the population living below the lower middle-income international poverty line amounted to 16.3 per cent. No sex-disaggregated data is available. Source: World Bank, 2017.¹⁸

14 To measure the poverty of a country, the international poverty line at PPP is converted to local currencies at the 2011 price and is then converted to the prices prevailing at the time of the relevant household survey.

15 GEOSTAT, "Household income and expenditure survey (HIES)", 2018; and GEOSTAT, Letter #7-249, 29 January 2020.

16 GEOSTAT, "Household income and expenditure survey (HIES): Proportion of Population living below the poverty line", 2018. Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/192/tskhovrebis-done>; and GEOSTAT, "Household income and expenditure survey (HIES): Proportion of people living below 60 per cent", 2018. Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/192/tskhovrebis-done>.

17 GEOSTAT, "Household income and expenditure survey (HIES)"; and GEOSTAT, Letter #7-249.

18 World Bank Group, Poverty & Equity Brief: Georgia (2019). Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/328091559890248187/pdf/Georgia-Poverty-and-Equity-Brief-Spring-2019.pdf>.

Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex (SDG indicator 5.b.1)	<p>Overall, 84.8 per cent of the total population (aged 6+) owned a mobile phone in Georgia in 2019, with 88.8 per cent in urban Georgia and 78.9 per cent in rural Georgia.</p> <p>In 2019, 84.1 per cent of women and 85.6 per cent of men owned a mobile phone. Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.¹⁹</p>
Economic inactivity rate, by sex	<p>In 2018, 36.1 per cent of the total population (aged 15+) were economically inactive, with 44.4 per cent of women and 26.4 per cent of men. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁰</p>
Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services (SDG indicator 1.4.1)	<p>In 2018, 96.5 per cent of households had access to basic drinking water services. However, 30.8 per cent of households' drinking water was contaminated by E. coli.</p> <p>In 2018, 92 per cent of all households had access to basic sanitation services; and 93.9 per cent of households had a handwashing facility where water and soap or detergent were present. Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.²¹</p>
GINI index	<p>Inequality fell from a peak of 39.6 per cent in 2011 to 36.5 per cent in 2015. Since 2015, however, inequality has continued to rise and fall, reaching 37.9 per cent in 2017 and again falling to 36.4 per cent in 2018. Source: World Bank.²²</p>
<p>Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable (SDG indicator 1.3.1)</p> <p>Adopted/national indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of people receiving a subsistence allowance ✓ Number of people receiving a social package ✓ Number of people receiving an old-age pension 	<p>In 2018, the number of people receiving a subsistence allowance amounted to 435,450, with women constituting 55 per cent (239,095) and men constituting 45 per cent (196,355) of the total.</p> <p>Overall, 165,012 people received a social package in 2018, with women constituting 37 per cent (61,487) and men constituting 63 per cent (103,525) of the total.</p> <p>In 2018, 745,001 persons received their old-age pension, with women constituting 71 per cent (529,705) and men constituting 29 per cent (215,296) of the total. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²³</p>
Proportion of total government spending on essential services: education, health and social protection (SDG indicator 1.a.2)	<p>Government spending on education constituted 12.7 per cent of the State budget.</p> <p>Government spending on health constituted 9.9 per cent of the State budget.</p> <p>Government spending on social protection amounted to 23.6 per cent of the State budget. Source: Ministry of Finance of Georgia, 2018.²⁴</p>

19 GEOSTAT, *Survey on Information and Communication Technologies Usage in Households* (2019).

20 GEOSTAT, *Labour Force Survey 2018*; and GEOSTAT, Letter #7-3382, 15 November 2019.

21 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018, Survey Findings Report* (Tbilisi, 2019). Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/media/29405/SFR---2018-Georgia-MICS---Eng.pdf>.

22 World Bank, "GINI index (World Bank estimate) - Georgia". Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=GE>.

23 GEOSTAT, data of the MoIDPOTLHSA and the Social Service Agency, 2018.

24 Ministry of Finance of Georgia, *Expenditure by Functions of Government of Georgia* (2018). Available at <https://mof.ge/en/4886>.

Issue Highlights from the Data

Poverty in Georgia is still relatively high (20.1 per cent measured by the national absolute poverty line), although it has decreased from 26.2 per cent in 2013.²⁵ According to the 2018 World Bank Systematic Country Diagnostic report, almost half of the Georgian population was at risk of falling into poverty, which implies that even small shocks can push many households into poverty.²⁶ There are urban/rural (18 per cent and 23.1 per cent, respectively)²⁷ and intra-regional disparities in the prevalence of poverty. The rural areas (including those densely populated by ethnic minorities) are those with the highest concentrations of the poor.²⁸

In Georgia, half of female-headed households do not have a labour income earner in the household, which only occurs in one third of male-headed households.²⁹ The absolute poverty rate is highest (32 per cent) among households with no labour income earners.³⁰ These households largely depend upon income from agricultural activities, pensions and social assistance. Households where both spouses earn a labour income are less likely to be poor when compared to households where only one spouse works.³¹ Widows constitute the majority of female-headed households and are more likely than widowers to be poor.³² A lower labour participation rate among women, higher rates of informal and unprotected employment, a significant share of employment in low-productive industries and lower wages are pivotal factors in the relationship between labour and poverty among women. Female-headed households, which are overrepresented among the poor, benefit more from pensions due to the much larger number of female pensioners and the higher life expectancy of women.³³ Overall, pensions and social assistance

have a strong impact on reducing poverty rates, especially among the elderly. In comparison to the general population, the non-contributory old-age pension provides higher income replacement for lower-income groups.³⁴

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the Azerbaijani minority have poorer living standards than the rest of the population. There are approximately 283,271 officially registered IDPs in Georgia.³⁵ Women comprise 53 per cent of the IDP population; men, 47 per cent.³⁶ Fewer than 40 per cent of IDPs own their own homes; about 22 per cent live in new buildings and cottage settlements; and 38 per cent still inhabit collective centres.³⁷ The living conditions in most of these areas are substandard and overcrowded. Overall, the poverty level among IDPs is higher than in the general population, especially in urban areas (3 per cent higher than the urban average). Among Azerbaijani households, the absolute poverty rate stands at 37 per cent, which is greater than the national average.³⁸

The disadvantaged people in Georgia face not only economic insecurity but also health insecurity. High out-of-pocket expenditures on health keep many Georgians in poverty. Despite the “Universal Healthcare Programme of Georgia” (UHP), which was adopted in 2013, some households’ out-of-pocket expenditures on medical services and medicine turned out to threaten their livelihood; for instance, due to out-of-pocket expenditures, 6.6 per cent of Georgian households fell into poverty in 2015.³⁹ However, the UHP turned out to be effective in decreasing the barriers to accessing health services. If in 2015, 43.1 per cent of all households included at least one person who needed medical services that the household could

25 GEOSTAT, “Household income and expenditure survey (HIES): Proportion of Population living below the poverty line”, 2018. Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/192/tskhovrebis-done>.

26 World Bank Group, *Georgia: From Reformer to Performer – A Systematic Country Diagnostic* (2018).

27 GEOSTAT, “Household income and expenditure survey (HIES): Proportion of Population living below the poverty line”.

28 IMF, *Georgia: Selected Issues* (Washington, D.C., 2018). IMF Country Report No. 18/199.

29 World Bank Group, *Georgia: From Reformer to Performer*.

30 Ibid., p. 13.

31 Ibid.

32 World Bank Group, *Georgia Country Gender Assessment: Poverty and Equity Global Practice* (2016).

33 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*. Available at https://www.geostat.ge/media/27546/W%26M-ENG_2019.pdf.

34 Ibid., p. 16.

35 MoDPOTLHSA, “IDP Statistics”, 2019. Available at <https://www.moh.gov.ge/uploads/files/2019/Failebi/27.03.2019-51.pdf>.

36 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*.

37 World Bank Group, *Georgia: From Reformer to Performer*.

38 Ibid.

39 World Bank, “Out-of-pocket expenditure (% of current health expenditure) - Georgia”, 2016. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.OOPC.CH.ZS?locations=GE>.

not afford, then in 2017 the figure decreased to 22.3 per cent.⁴⁰ However, the limited access to health care is still one of the factors forcing Georgians to migrate and seek shelter in EU countries [interview with IOM representative]. The amendments made in 2017 to the UHP undermined its universal approach by overly narrowing its focus on the targeted groups [interview with social policy expert]. Overall, social protection coverage (excluding health) is also incomplete and remains one of the lowest in Europe and Central Asia. For example, only less than half of the population (28.6 per cent) is covered by at least one social protection benefit in an area other than health care.⁴¹

Subjective poverty is based on people's personal assessments. In 2017, 33.7 per cent of households were subjectively poor, which reveals that all groups (except children) assess their situation as worse than the monetary poverty rates show.⁴² The 2017 Welfare Monitoring Survey reveals that in households with children, the issue of unemployment is especially pertinent, while in households without children, the purchase of medicine is a pressing issue.⁴³

Social exclusion in Georgia is multidimensional, encompassing socioeconomic, cultural and political dimensions. Social exclusion is understood simultaneously as the cause and result of poverty. The prevalence of poverty among female-headed households, widows, rural populations, IDPs and ethnic minorities reflects the greater risk of poverty among more marginalized groups and the need for an intersectional and holistic approach to women's emancipation. The disadvantaged groups are more likely to live in a rural area, have low educational qualifications, have one or more children, have a disabled family member or be internally displaced or an ethnic minority. The vulnerability to poverty is pervasive in Georgia; for instance, a UNICEF report reveals that 70 per cent of Georgian households were found to be in poverty at least once over the preceding eight years.⁴⁴ The dominance of

subsistence farming and lack of wage employment opportunities is the main cause of financial hardships among targeted social assistance (TSA) programme beneficiaries, suggesting that wage employment and self-employment have very different effects on household welfare.⁴⁵ In addition, medical expenses remain one of the most significant risk factors for falling into poverty in Georgia. These developments indicate the need for systemic changes in terms of the politics of employment, rural development and inclusive social policies.

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

Apart from CEDAW, Georgia ratified the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1994. According to the Covenant, member countries recognize the right of each individual to an adequate standard of living, including basic income, food, housing, water, sanitation and clothing.⁴⁶ Georgia has not ratified the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157). Consequently, Georgia has not upheld the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). Georgia has also made reservations on the important obligations enshrined under the relevant articles of the European Social Charter.⁴⁷ In addition, Georgia has committed to implementing all 17 SDGs, including SDG 1 (Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work) and SDG 10 (Inequalities), and to achieve the nationalized targets with relevant gender-specific indicators.

The Constitution of Georgia, which was amended in 2017 and 2018, recognizes the social state principle and highlights the aspiration to establish a social and just state. According to Article 5, "the State shall take care of human health care and social protection, ensuring the subsistence minimum and decent housing, and protecting the welfare of the family. The

40 UNICEF and ACT, *The Well-Being of Children and Their Families in Georgia: Georgia Welfare Monitoring Survey Fifth Stage 2017* (Tbilisi, 2018).

41 ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2017-19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals* (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2017), figure 6.33. Available at https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_604882/lang-en/index.htm.

42 UNICEF and ACT, *The Well-Being of Children and Their Families in Georgia*.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966), art. 11, para. 1.

47 Council of Europe, "Georgia and the European Social Charter: Table of Accepted Provisions". Available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-social-charter/georgia-and-the-european-social-charter>.

State shall promote the employment of citizens. Conditions for providing the subsistence minimum shall be determined by law.”⁴⁸ The Constitutional Court elaborates that the “social state” implies the recognition of social rights and provision of basic means for subsistence.⁴⁹ The 2018-2020 HR NAP contains sections related to vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities (section 19), IDPs (section 21), migrants and refugees (section 22) and environmental migrants (section 23).⁵⁰

The social security system of Georgia covers social assistance schemes, the old-age scheme, social services, the social safety net and social compensation schemes. The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MoIDPOTLHSA) provides direct financial assistance through the following programmes: pension; regression pension (monetary compensation for work-related health injuries); state compensation (a monetary allowance paid to persons for the implementation of special services, after their retirement from work, for their disability status or due to the death of a family member or breadwinner); subsistence allowance; social assistance package (a monthly monetary allowance given to targeted groups, e.g. persons with disabilities, persons who lost a breadwinner, victims of political repressions, etc.); one-time compensation paid during maternity leave in case of pregnancy, childbirth and childcare, as well as during the adoption of a newborn child for the employed women; the State programme for the improvement of the demographic situation; household subsidy (a type of monetary assistance issued to certain groups such as war veterans); reintegration allowance (monetary assistance paid to the biological families of the persons living in specialized institutions in order to support reintegration with their biological families); and IDP allowance. In addition, the central government authorities provide indirect financial aid (subsidies) through 13 programmes and 17 services, including childcare programmes and day-care centres.⁵¹

48 Georgia, *Constitution of Georgia*.

49 Anano Tsintsabadze and Tatuli Chubabria, *Homelessness: Analysis of State Policies* (Tbilisi, Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center, 2016), pp. 13-14. Available at <https://emc.org.ge/uploads/products/pdf/Homelessness.pdf>.

50 Georgia, *National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights* (2018-2020). Available at <http://myrights.gov.ge/en/plan/Human%20Rights%20Action%20Plan%20for%202018-2020>.

Monetary compensation for childbirth is available only for formally employed women as part of the regulations on maternity leave. Women who are economically inactive or unemployed, or engaged in atypical work in the informal sector, are not entitled to any cash benefit in cases of childbirth or adoption. Public servants and those holding a political office are fully compensated for 183 days (200 in the case of twins or a complicated pregnancy and 90 in the case of adopting a child younger than 1 year old) under the Law on Public Service. Employees in the private sector and those in the public sector that are not covered by the Law on Public Service are entitled to a one-time compensation (cash benefit) for the same number of days up to GEL 1,000 during pregnancy, childbirth, childcare or during the adoption process. According to the ILO, in 2017, only 24 per cent of women in employment were covered by maternity cash benefit schemes, despite existing social insurance schemes.⁵²

According to the joint order by the Minister of Justice of Georgia and the Minister of the IDPOTLHSA, as well as the Civil Code of Georgia, a single mother is an individual who is unmarried and has a biological or adopted child under the age of 18 whose father's name is not listed on the birth certificate.⁵³ This creates an obstacle for many single mothers who are unmarried and raising their children alone without any help from the father, whose name is indeed listed on the birth certificate [interview with UNICEF representative]. The status of single parent is revoked when the child reaches the age of 18. Although the law suggests that Georgian legislation should determine the social and legal guarantees of single parents, there is no specific social assistance scheme covering single mothers; the only concession available to them is exemption from taxes if their annual salary is less than GEL 3,000.

Disadvantaged persons who cannot escape poverty are covered by TSA schemes (the social safety net). Such assistance is based on a needs assessment of the household. The Government of Georgia offers a

51 UNICEF, *Social Assistance Description and Recommendations* (UNICEF and the European Union, 2018).

52 ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2017-19*, figure 6.35.

53 Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Order №79/№01-18/6 “On Establishing the Status of Single Parent and On Approving the Rules for Producing the Data on the Relevant Persons” (2015). Available at <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2875417?publication=0>; and Parliament of Georgia, Civil Code of Georgia (2014), art. 1191¹. Available at <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2629299?publication=1>.

service that lists vacancies by sector and region to facilitate matching labour demand and supply. Those receiving social security assistance are required to register for this service. The old-age scheme (pension) is an important element in poverty reduction, since it is universal and non-contributory. The minimum age constitutes 60 for women and 65 for men. Since 1 January 2020, the pension amount has increased up to GEL 220, slightly above the subsistence minimum. Provided that women constitute 71 per cent of pension recipients, increasing the pension amount would have a significant positive effect on the welfare of elderly women.⁵⁴

In 2018, Georgia approved a law for an accumulative pension system, which will function alongside the universal basic non-contributory pension. Non-contributory pensions can play a key role in ensuring women's access to at least a basic pension, yet it is insufficient to fully meet their needs, nor do such pensions compensate for the lack of contributory coverage.⁵⁵ Since women are more likely than men to be economically inactive and paid relatively poorly (if employed), the accumulative pension system stimulates the gap in old-age income between men and women. On the contrary, the non-contributory pensions as a source of old-age income, especially in low- and lower-middle income countries, help bridge the coverage gap between men and women.⁵⁶ According to an ILO report, the establishment of large-scale non-contributory pension schemes in many countries has expanded effective coverage and reduced inequalities, both between women and men and between the rural and urban populations.⁵⁷

Poverty overtly and tacitly manifests itself among women, but existing measures and strategies have proved to be ineffective against social and economic vulnerability. Social protection, in the form of unemployment insurance, is absent in Georgia, while maternity protection, which is an essential component of policies to prevent and reduce poverty and vulnerability among women, remains a challenge. Women who are economically inactive or unemployed, or engaged in atypical work in the informal sector, are not entitled to any cash benefit in cases of childbirth or

adoption. Extending paid maternity leave provisions and non-contributory maternity cash benefits to all women is crucial for improving income security, particularly for women living in poverty. As for TSA programmes, they only aim at minimizing the effects of poverty by contributing to poverty alleviation but do little for its eradication, which requires more comprehensive structural transformation.

Recommendations

- ✓ Increase the non-contributory universal pension to the subsistence minimum level to reduce the effects of differentiated career patterns on old-age income security in the future, by the Government of Georgia and the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Reduce the financial burden of health expenditures for households, especially those vulnerable to poverty, by expanding the target groups covered by the UHP and by including medically necessary drugs in the coverage, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Ratify and comply with the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157) and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202), by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Avail those single mothers receiving social assistance by removing the requirement of having the absent father documented on the child's birth certificate.
- ✓ Collect sex-disaggregated data on poverty (all its aspects) at the individual level rather than at the household level, as well as sex-disaggregated data on all aspects of economic activity, by the National Statistics Office of Georgia (GEOSTAT).
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive national strategy for improving health and social services so that men and women of all ages, including those who are socially excluded or living in poverty, have full access to such services, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Develop strategies to integrate women living in poverty and IDP women into the formal economy and employment (decent work), by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and the MoIDPOTLHSA.

54 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*.

55 ILO, *World Social Protection Report 2017-19*, p. 87.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

National Context

Indicator	Data
<p><i>Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex (SDG indicator 4.1.1)</i></p> <p>National indicators in: (a) Grade 4 (b) Grade 6 (c) Grade 9</p>	<p>(a) Grade 4 (aged 9) Reading: In PIRLS 2016, the average score was 498 for girls and 479 for boys (the international average: 500). At least a minimum proficiency level (intermediate or above) was achieved by 60 per cent of both sexes. The report does not provide sex-disaggregated data on achievement levels. Source: NAEC, 2019.⁵⁸</p> <p>Mathematics: In TIMSS 2015, the average score was 465 for girls and 461 for boys (the international average: 505). At least a minimum proficiency level (intermediate or above) was achieved by 47 per cent of both sexes. The report does not provide sex-disaggregated data on achievement levels. Source: NAEC, 2017.⁵⁹</p> <p>(b) Grade 6 No data available</p> <p>(c) Grade 8 (aged 15) (No data are available for grade 9) Reading: In PISA 2018, 44.0 per cent of girls and 27.9 per cent of boys achieved at least a minimum proficiency level (level 2 or above). Mathematics: In PISA 2018, 39.7 per cent of girls and 38.2 per cent of boys achieved at least a minimum proficiency level (level 2 or above). Source: PISA, 2018.⁶⁰</p> <p>NB: Socioeconomic status significantly affects results in PISA tests in general; however, it differentially affects sexes, especially in reading: in the lowest wealth quarter, 84.3 per cent of boys and 73.6 per cent of girls did not achieve level 2 (minimum proficiency), while in the top quarter, these figures were 73.6 per cent for boys and 32.6 per cent for girls. Thus, the difference between top and bottom quarters in low achievers for boys was 26.7 per cent, while for girls it was 41 per cent. The same trend was observed in mathematics (and science too) but less pronounced. Source: PISA, 2018.⁶¹</p>
<p><i>Children and adolescents of primary and lower secondary school age who are not receiving formal education and training (country-specific indicator 4.1.2)</i></p>	<p>Primary school-age children out of school (not attending either kindergarten or school): 1.2 per cent overall, 1.6 per cent of males, 0.9 per cent of females</p> <p>Lower secondary school-age children out of school: 1.2 per cent overall, 1.5 per cent of males, 0.8 per cent of females</p> <p>Upper secondary school-age children and adolescents out of school: 11.3 per cent overall, 13.6 per cent of males, 8.2 per cent of females</p> <p>NB: While girls are generally less likely to be out of school than boys, this is reversed at the upper secondary level for the households with an Azerbaijani head (which is the group with the highest rate for both sexes): 39.2 per cent of girls and 27.6 per cent of boys. Children and adolescents in rural areas are more likely to be out of school. The urban/rural difference increases in the upper secondary and reaches 1.9 per cent for girls and 2.5 per cent for boys, (compared to 0.1 per cent for girls and 0.2 per cent for boys at lower secondary). Children from lower wealth quintiles are more likely to be out of school. At the upper secondary level, the difference between the richest and poorest quintiles reaches 15.7 per cent overall, 17.3 per cent for girls and 14.5 per cent for boys. Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.⁶²</p>

58 NAEC, PIRLS 2016 National Report (2019), pp. 19, 97.

59 NAEC, TIMSS 2007-2015 National Report (2017), pp. 75, 119.

60 OECD, Georgia: Student performance, PISA 2018. Available at <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?plotter=h5&primaryCountry=GEO&treshold=5&topic=PI>.

61 Ibid.

62 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 213-218, 222-224.

<p>Dropout rates for primary and secondary levels of education, by sex (country-specific indicator 4.1.3)</p>	<p>Recent data on dropout rates are not available. Dropout rates for 2015: 1.9 per cent of children aged 5-17 (11,200 children); no sex-disaggregated data available. Source: ILO and GEOSTAT, 2015.⁶³</p> <p>Dropout numbers in 2018/19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Secondary schools in general: 4,908 girls and 7,141 boys ✓ The end of lower secondary (compulsory; highest dropouts compared to other grades): 1,857 girls and 3,260 boys ✓ Grade 10 (first year of upper secondary): 519 girls and 702 boys <p>NB: Compared to 2017/18, dropout numbers decreased in 2018/19 for boys (-388 in general, -363 at the end of lower secondary) but increased for girls (+139 in general, +31 at the end of lower secondary). Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁶⁴</p>
<p>Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex (SDG indicator 4.2.1)</p>	<p>Children aged 3-4 developmentally on track in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Literacy and numeracy: 24.8 per cent of boys and 26.0 per cent of girls ✓ Physical well-being: 99.6 per cent of boys and 98.6 per cent of girls ✓ Social and emotional well-being: 89.9 per cent of boys and 88.4 per cent of girls ✓ Learning: 98.3 per cent of boys and 99.0 per cent of girls <p>Early childhood development index scores: 90.8 for boys, 88.5 for girls Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.⁶⁵</p>
<p>Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex (SDG indicator 4.2.2)</p>	<p>Kindergarten attended by: 87.5 per cent of boys and 92.2 per cent of girls among children 5 years of age (the official primary entry age is 6)</p> <p>School readiness (percentage of children attending first grade of primary school who attended kindergarten the previous year): 89.4 per cent for boys, 84.9 per cent for girls</p> <p>Factors affecting pre-primary participation in organized learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The likelihood increases in wealthier quintiles, the difference between the richest and poorest quintiles being 19.1 per cent. ✓ The likelihood is lower for rural than urban areas (a 14.2 per cent difference). ✓ The likelihood varies with the ethnicity of the household head: 93.5 per cent for Georgian, 76.1 per cent for Armenian and 48 per cent for Azerbaijani. <p>Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.⁶⁶</p>
<p>Kindergarten enrolment, by sex</p>	<p>Kindergarten attendance: 76.5 per cent of boys and 79.3 per cent of girls among children aged 36-59 months</p> <p>Factors affecting kindergarten enrolment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enrolment increases in wealthier quintiles, the difference between the richest and poorest quintiles being 25.8 per cent. ✓ Enrolment is lower for rural than urban areas (a 16.5 per cent difference). ✓ The difference in enrolment is biggest by the ethnicity of the household head: 83.0 per cent for Georgian and 29.4 per cent for Azerbaijani. <p>Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.⁶⁷</p>
<p>Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex (SDG indicator 4.3.1)</p> <p>National indicator: age group 25-64</p>	<p>No direct data available.</p> <p>Lifelong learning indicator (participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the preceding four weeks): 1.6 per cent. No sex-disaggregated data available. Source: National SDG Document.⁶⁸</p>

63 ILO and GEOSTAT, *Georgia National Child Labour Survey 2015: Analytical Report* (Tbilisi, 2016), pp. 85-86.

64 GEOSTAT, "General Education". Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/59/zogadi-ganatlaba> (accessed in March 2020).

65 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, p. 200.

66 Ibid., pp. 207-208, 211.

67 Ibid., p. 205.

68 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia* (2019).

<p>Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill, by sex (SDG indicator 4.4.1) (Nationalized indicator does not require sex disaggregation)</p>	<p>The National SDG Document provides GEOSTAT data (from 2017) on the type of skills but without sex disaggregation.</p> <p>Frequency of computer use among population aged 15 and older:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Every day or almost every day: 79 per cent of women, 81 per cent of men ✓ At least once a week (but not every day): 13 per cent of women, 13 per cent of men ✓ Less than once a week: 8 per cent of women, 6 per cent of men <p>Frequency of Internet use among population aged 15 and older:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Every day or almost every day: 89 per cent of women, 90 per cent of men ✓ At least once a week (but not every day): 9 per cent of women, 9 per cent of men ✓ Less than once a week: 2 per cent of women, 1 per cent of men <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁶⁹</p>
<p>Participation in vocational education, by sex (related to SDG indicators 4.3.1, 4.4.1, 4.5.1)</p>	<p>Participation rates are not available.</p> <p>Students in vocational education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2018/19: 11,955 students, 50 per cent women ✓ 2016/17: 9,943 students, 47 per cent women <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁷⁰</p> <p>Employment rate among graduates of vocational education institutions: 51.2 per cent of women, 71.0 per cent of men Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.⁷¹</p> <p>Monthly incomes of employed graduates of vocational schools:⁷²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ GEL 901 or more: 7 per cent of women, 23 per cent of men ✓ GEL 300 or less: 32 per cent of women, 9 per cent of men <p>Disparities in specializations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Graduates in engineering: 83 per cent men ✓ Graduates in business administration: 76 per cent women <p>Source: The Thematic Survey of the Parliament of Georgia.⁷³</p>
<p>Participation in tertiary education, by sex (related to SDG indicators 4.3.1, 4.5.1)</p>	<p>Participation rates by sex are not available.</p> <p>2018/19: 53 per cent of youth aged 19-20 enrolled at higher education institutions Source: Chakhaia, 2019.⁷⁴</p> <p>Number of BA and MA students in 2018/19: 72,765 women (50.2 per cent), 72,233 men (49.8 per cent) (almost evenly split) Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁷⁵</p>
<p>Graduation from tertiary education, by sex (related to SDG indicator 4.3.1, 4.5.1)</p>	<p>2018/19: 13,929 women and 10,346 men (57 per cent women) Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁷⁶</p>
<p>Areas of study at the tertiary level, by sex (Women in STEM)</p>	<p>Disparity in enrolments in specific study areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engineering, manufacturing and construction: lowest share of female students (12 per cent) ✓ Education programmes: lowest share of male students (8 per cent) ✓ Areas closest to gender parity: science (49 per cent women); social sciences, business and law (53 per cent women) <p>Disparity in graduation in specific study areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engineering, manufacturing and construction: lowest share of female graduates (15 per cent) ✓ Education programmes: lowest share of male graduates (4 per cent) ✓ Areas closest to gender parity: science graduates (53 per cent women); social sciences, business and law graduates (60 per cent women) <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁷⁷</p>

69 GEOSTAT, “Gender Statistics: ICT”. Available at <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=ICT> (accessed in March 2020).

70 GEOSTAT, “Professional Education”. Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/60/profesiuli-ganatleba> (accessed in March 2020).

71 GEOSTAT, *Labour Force Survey 2018*. GEOSTAT’s calculation.

72 These and the following figures on vocational education are taken from a different source (see the next footnote), according to which the proportion of women in vocational education between 2018 and 2019 was 43 per cent, thus differing from the GEOSTAT data cited above.

73 Parliament of Georgia, *Thematic Inquiry on Accessibility of Vocational Education for Women’s Economic Empowerment* (2019), pp. 18-19.

74 L. Chakhaia, “Education”, in *Assessment of Democracy in Georgia* (International IDEA, forthcoming in spring 2020).

75 GEOSTAT, “Gender Statistics: Education”. Available at <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=Education> (accessed in March 2020).

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

<p>Enrolment in and admission to PhD programmes, by sex and area of study (related to SDG indicator 4.5.1)</p>	<p>Total number of doctoral students: 1,875 women and 1,637 men (53 per cent women)</p> <p>Disparity in subject areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Education: 91 per cent women ✓ Engineering, manufacturing and construction: 27 per cent women ✓ Services: 21 per cent women <p>PhD admissions in 2018: 556 women and 550 men</p> <p>Disparity in subject areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Education: 100 per cent women ✓ Engineering, manufacturing and construction: 21 per cent women ✓ Services: 13 per cent women <p>NB: The comparison of enrolments to graduation from master's programmes reveals a significant "glass ceiling" effect. In recent years, women have constituted 64 to 65 per cent of graduates from master's programmes, while they have constituted 50 to 54 per cent of applicants admitted to PhD programmes.</p> <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁷⁸</p>
<p>Graduation from PhD programmes, by sex and area of study (related to SDG indicator 4.5.1)</p>	<p>New PhDs in 2018: 295 women and 190 men (61 per cent women)</p> <p>Disparity in subject areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Education: 86 per cent women ✓ Engineering, manufacturing and construction: 38 per cent women <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁷⁹</p>
<p>Professors and researchers</p>	<p>Professors and instructors of higher education institutions: 58 per cent women (of 18,581 individuals in total)</p> <p>NB: While women outnumber men in all other positions (their shares vary between 56 and 63 per cent), they constitute only 45 per cent of full professors; and their share is highest among assistant professors (62 per cent) and instructors (63 per cent).</p> <p>No data on sex distribution of professors in specific subject areas</p> <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁸⁰</p> <p>Researchers: 53.0 per cent women (of 11,174 individuals in total) in the following subject areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Natural sciences: 43.3 per cent women (of 2,368) ✓ Engineering and technologies: 37.8 per cent women (of 1,939) ✓ Medical and health sciences: 63.0 per cent women (of 1,435) ✓ Agrarian and veterinary sciences: 49.8 per cent women (of 500) ✓ Social sciences: 52.2 per cent women (of 2,745) ✓ Humanities and the arts: 67.6 per cent women (of 2,151) <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.⁸¹</p> <p>Researchers by rank (2017 data):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Category A: 35 per cent women ✓ Category B: 57.9 per cent women ✓ Category C: 64.1 per cent women ✓ Category D: 51.4 per cent women <p>Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018.⁸²</p>

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 GEOSTAT, "Statistics: Education, Science, Culture". Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/194/science> (accessed in April 2020).

82 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Database: Human Resources in Research and Development". Available at <http://data.uis.unesco.org/> (accessed in April 2020).

<p>PhD supervisors and leaders of scientific research projects</p>	<p>Share of women among PhD supervisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2018: 42 per cent ✓ 2017: 40 per cent ✓ 2016: 39 per cent <p>NB: The figure is rather low considering the fact that women constitute the majority of associate and full professors (53 per cent) eligible to serve as PhD supervisors (“glass ceiling” effect). Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁸³</p> <p>Share of women among leaders of scientific research projects and junior scientists’ projects funded by the National Science Foundation (aggregated data from 2017 to 2019), by area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All areas: 47.2 per cent of senior, 55.1 per cent of junior ✓ Engineering and technologies: 17.4 per cent of senior, 50 per cent of junior ✓ Agrarian sciences: 28.6 per cent of senior, 75 per cent of junior ✓ Natural sciences: 36.5 per cent of senior, 50 per cent of junior ✓ Georgian studies: 47.8 per cent of senior, 20 per cent of junior ✓ Medical and health sciences: 58.8 per cent of senior, 85.7 per cent of junior ✓ Humanities: 68.8 per cent of senior, 58.3 per cent of junior ✓ Social sciences: 73.9 per cent of senior, 60 per cent of junior <p>Source: Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia, 2020.⁸⁴</p> <p>NB: In the areas with the greatest gender disparity in favour of men at the senior level, there is complete gender parity (engineering and technologies, natural science) or disparity in favour of women (agrarian sciences). In general, outcomes of junior scientists’ competitions show greater gender parity compared to that of seniors’ (exceptions being agrarian sciences and Georgian studies).</p>
<p>Teachers and principals of primary and secondary schools</p>	<p>Teachers at public schools: 86 per cent women Teachers at private schools: 88 per cent women Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.⁸⁵</p> <p>Sex distribution of teachers with various ranks/salary categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mentor: 96 per cent women ✓ Leading: 96 per cent women ✓ Senior: 94 per cent women ✓ Practicing: 80 per cent women ✓ Induction: 78 per cent women <p>School principals: 62 per cent women, 38 per cent men Source: National Center for Teacher Professional Development, 2019.⁸⁶</p>
<p>Proportion of population in given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex (SDG indicator 4.6.1)</p> <p>National indicator: age groups 15-24, 15 and above</p>	<p>No direct data available for the indicator.</p> <p>Literacy levels among 15-49 age group: 99.5 per cent of men, 99.4 per cent of women</p> <p>Level of education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No educational institution or only kindergarten: 0.1 per cent of both sexes ✓ Primary or secondary education: 11.3 per cent of men, 9.3 per cent of women ✓ Upper secondary or higher: 88.5 per cent of men, 90.6 per cent of women <p>Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.⁸⁷</p>

83 Ibid.

84 Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia, communication/email, 5 February 2020.

85 GEOSTAT, “Gender Statistics: Education”.

86 National Center for Teacher Professional Development, Letter MES 9 19 01717969, 16 December 2019.

87 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 50-51.

<p>Degree to which gender equality concepts have been mainstreamed into primary, secondary levels; and in tertiary levels (SDG indicator 4.7.1)</p>	<p>Civic education is currently taught in Georgia in selected grades of primary and secondary schools and covers, among other issues, human rights, tolerance and equality,⁸⁸ though avoiding any mention of the word “gender”. Newly revised standards for teaching biology include elements of human sexuality education and include topics such as HIV/AIDS, family planning, puberty and harmful practices like early marriage. Source: MoESCS Department of Preschool and General Education Development (interview with the deputy head).</p> <p>A 2012 study shows that educational materials replicate implicit gender biases and stereotypes: a gender analysis of history and civic education textbooks found that textbooks present men and women in traditional roles, overemphasize the role of men and underrepresent women and their achievements.⁸⁹ No later study on the topic is available.</p> <p>Curricula of teacher education programmes lack modules or courses dedicated to gender equality and sensitizing teachers to gender issues.</p>
<p>Proportion of schools with access to (a) electricity, (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes, (c) computers for pedagogical purposes, (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities, (e) basic drinking water, (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities and (g) basic handwashing facilities (SDG indicator 4.a.1.)</p>	<p>In 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Electricity and access to the Internet: 100 per cent of schools b) Internet for pedagogical purposes: 100 per cent of schools (school administrations and computer labs) c) Laptops for pedagogical purposes: all first graders and their teachers d) Fully adapted for students with disabilities: 4.3 per cent of public schools; Partially adapted for students with disabilities: 39 per cent of public schools e) Access to water: 100 per cent of schools f) Single-sex basic sanitation facilities: 100 per cent of schools g) Basic handwashing facilities: 100 per cent of schools <p>Source: National SDG Document.⁹⁰</p> <p>The PDO reports different figures for access to water: no drinking water is available in 16.7 per cent of public schools, and no technical water is available in 10.2 per cent of public schools. Moreover, 1.9 per cent of schools had no toilet, while 5.7 per cent of schools had no single-sex toilet. Source: PDO, 2018.⁹¹</p>

88 UNDP and the GEC, Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations, vol. 2, pp. 64-65.

89 I. Khomeriki, M. Javakhishvili, and T. Abramishvili, *Gender Equality Issues in Studying Social Sciences: Gender Analysis of Textbooks* (Center for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations, 2012).

90 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia*.

91 Public Defender of Georgia, *Access to Water and Sanitation in Public Schools of Georgia: Special Report* (2018), pp. 32, 76-77. Figures are based on the monitoring of 108 public schools.

Issue Highlights from the Data

Both in terms of achieved proficiency levels and enrolments and graduation, there is a sex bias of varying degrees in favour of girls. For both sexes, dropout rates are highest at the end of the lower secondary level and the first year of the upper secondary level (which is not mandatory), where the sex discrepancy in favour of girls is also more pronounced. Dropout/out-of-school rates are higher in lower wealth quintiles, and one of the main factors determining school dropout at this level is child labour.⁹² Dropout/out-of-school rates are also higher in rural than in urban areas, the difference increasing at the upper secondary level. In both cases, male students are more likely to be out of school than female students. Remarkably, the Azerbaijani ethnic group is the only group in which the dropout and out-of-school rates at the level of transition from lower to upper secondary are higher (and considerably so) for girls than for boys, which may be connected to the fact that the rate of child marriages for girls is also highest in this group (see chapter “The Girl Child”). Another remarkable fact is that, while both sex and socioeconomic status affect the achievement of reading and mathematics proficiency, as PISA 2018 results show, low socioeconomic status affects girls more negatively compared to boys, especially in reading. The same finding is corroborated by the fact that at the upper secondary level, the difference between out-of-school rates in the wealthiest and poorest quintiles is greater for female students than for male students.

In Georgia, one of the gravest concerns in terms of the access to education remains the problem of accessibility for students with disabilities and special educational needs.⁹³ However, there are still no studies or data on how disability intersects with gender.

Women have higher education levels than men in Georgia; however, their participation in the labour force is lower. Moreover, unlike men, unemployment is highest among women with a higher education (for men, among those with a secondary education).⁹⁴ Women also earn more PhD degrees and constitute 58 per cent of professors and instructors

at higher education institutions; however, their share among the highest ranking professors and PhD supervisors is lower than that of men. There is also a conspicuous vertical segregation by sex among researchers: women constitute 53 per cent of the total number of researchers, while their share among the highest ranking researchers (category A) is 35 per cent. Women’s share among newly admitted PhD students is also significantly lower than their share among graduates from master’s programmes. There is a pronounced gender disparity in specific subject areas, and women are still underrepresented in some STEM disciplines at the tertiary education level and in research. Based on Eurostat data from 2016, Equal Measures 2030 reports Georgia as one of the leading countries by women’s participation in STEM research, reaching 51 per cent.⁹⁵ However, the current figures on tertiary enrolment and graduation, as well as distribution of researchers in subject areas, present a different picture. As seen in the table above, engineering, manufacturing and construction see a very low share of women, while in the sciences, there is actual gender parity at the tertiary education level but some disparity among researchers (women constitute 43.3 per cent of researchers working in the field of natural sciences).

Among the leaders of research projects funded by the National Science Foundation recently, notwithstanding closeness to gender parity in total numbers, there is a conspicuous disparity in specific subject areas, with the lowest share of women in engineering and technologies and the highest in humanities and social sciences (at the senior level). At the same time, the comparison of successful projects at the senior and junior levels shows that gender disparity is lower among young scientists (with the exception of Georgian studies and agrarian sciences). For example, in engineering and technologies as well as in natural sciences, women constitute 50 per cent of junior scientists whose applications were successful, while at the senior level, their share is 17.4 per cent (engineering and technologies) and 36.5 per cent (natural sciences). Without special study, it is impossible to say whether these differences are explained by a

92 ILO and GEOSTAT, *Georgia National Child Labour Survey 2015*.

93 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*.

94 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*.

95 Equal Measures 2030, *Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender Equality: Introducing the 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index (2019)*, p. 29.

generational shift, the loss of women from advanced levels of academic careers in STEM subjects, or some combination of various factors. It is also remarkable that, unlike men, the higher a woman's academic attainment, the more likely she is to be single.⁹⁶ This may relate to the choice between family responsibilities and career pursuits faced by women.

The teaching profession in primary and secondary schools is highly feminized, with women constituting 86 per cent and 88 per cent of teachers at public and private institutions, respectively. Unlike in academia, there is no evidence of vertical segregation in the teaching profession at the primary and secondary levels in terms of rank (to which salaries are tied). No data are available on teachers' distribution in subject areas by sex. However, there is some vertical segregation by sex in terms of school principals: even though women prevail among school principals (62 per cent), their share is much lower when compared to their share among teachers (86 to 88 per cent), which indicates a glass ceiling effect.

Gender equality issues and reproductive health education are covered to some extent, but insufficiently so, in the curricula of primary and secondary education subjects. The civic education curriculum comprises some aspects of gender equality – topics such as early marriage, equal political participation of the sexes, equality and tolerance – but avoids any mention of “gender”, and the biology curriculum (revised in partnership with UNFPA, according to the WHO and UNESCO standards on Comprehensive Sexuality Education) extensively covers issues of human sexuality and reproductive health. At this stage, once the subject standards are revised, it is important to ensure that these standards are adequately reflected in textbooks. And it still remains a challenge to integrate a gender perspective into the curricula of other subjects, such as literature, history and sciences. Apart from the deficiencies in the curricula, it is also a challenge to get teachers adequately qualified to convey gender-sensitive material. This is particularly the case with reproductive health education integrated into the biology curriculum since biology teachers, unlike teachers of civic education, do not

receive training on and are less aware of gender-related issues [interview with the deputy head of the Department of Preschool and General Education Development at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia].

Many educational materials still replicate implicit gender biases and stereotypes,⁹⁷ while effective mechanisms to ensure that textbooks are free of such content and are balanced from a gender perspective still are not in place (discussed more extensively in the next section). The curricula of teacher education programmes also lack modules and courses dedicated to gender equality and to sensitizing teachers to gender issues, and there are no effective mechanisms to guarantee that teachers take training modules aimed at these ends.

To summarize, on average, female students outnumber and outperform male students at all levels of education in Georgia, and women hold the majority of academic and teaching positions. However, there is a sizeable horizontal segregation in subject areas (with women being underrepresented in some STEM subjects) and a significant vertical segregation in academia. Gender is an important factor influencing access to education for students from underprivileged groups such as ethnic minorities (namely in the Azerbaijani community, which is the only group with higher dropout/out-of-school rates for girls than for boys) and families with a lower socioeconomic status (the difference in achievement levels of the lowest and highest socioeconomic segments being considerably higher for girls than for boys). And while there is a recognized problem in terms of access to education for students with disabilities in general, no data are available on how gender affects this. Even though there has been significant progress in recent years in introducing gender-relevant topics into school curricula, namely in the subjects of civic education and biology, the curricula of other subjects still lack consideration of gender issues; school textbooks are still far from being stereotype-free and balanced; and teachers' insufficient qualification for gender-responsive teaching still remains a challenge.

96 UNFPA, *Gender Analysis of the 2014 Gender Population Census Data* (2018).

97 I. Khomeriki, M. Javakhishvili, and T. Abramishvili, *Gender Equality Issues in Studying Social Sciences*.

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

Georgia's commitments to CEDAW, the SDGs and the BpFA imply the country's commitment to ensuring equal access to and attainment of education and professional development, as well as freedom from discrimination in education, training and research. Article 10 of CEDAW requires that States take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education, as well as the same conditions for career and vocational guidance. To achieve these ends, the article highlights the importance of stereotype-free textbooks and school programmes, the qualifications of teaching staff, and access to education on family health and well-being, including family planning.

The SDGs commit Georgia to several targets to ensure gender equality in education and training: ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university; eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities and children in vulnerable situations; and upgrading education facilities that are sensitive to gender, age and ability.

The BpFA defines several strategic objectives to ensure equal access to and attainment of education: ensure equal access to education; eradicate illiteracy among women; improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education; develop non-discriminatory education and training; allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms; and promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

The 2017-2020 Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia lists, as a medium-term priority (to be met by the end of 2020), "ensuring [the] right to education for all children and young individuals, including those with special educational needs, and taking further steps to promote inclusive primary and secondary education."⁹⁸

98 *Association Agenda between the European Union and Georgia 2017-2020*, p. 55.

Laws pertaining to GEWE in education and training include the Law of Georgia on General Education, the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, the Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education, the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education, and the Law of Georgia on Science, Technology and their Development. Other important documents include the 2017-2021 Unified Strategy of Education and Science and the 2017-2020 Rural Development Strategy of Georgia. Of these documents, only the previously mentioned Gender Equality Law and Anti-Discrimination Law include gender-specific clauses, while laws, strategies and action plans governing various levels of education make almost no mention of gender and restrict themselves with general commitments to equality and anti-discrimination. The 2017-2020 Rural Development Strategy highlights the problem of early marriage as a cause of dropouts among girls in rural areas and envisages measures to tackle the problem.⁹⁹

The Gender Equality Law guarantees "equal access to education for men and women and free choice of education at any stage of learning" (Article 4(2)(b)) and ensures equal access to vocational and higher education and gender equality in the sciences (Article 7). However, the law does not mention specific measures to be undertaken to guarantee the realization of these declared rights. The law prohibits harassment and sexual harassment in labour relations in general (Article 6), but it does not mention any such prohibition in the field of education. The Law of Georgia on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination, after its 2019 amendment, explicitly covers education, together with labour and pre-contractual relations, social protection and health-care spheres (Article 2, paragraph 10). The law was also amended to include sexual harassment as a form of discrimination.

The Law on General Education contains general clauses about non-discrimination (Articles 5(6) and 13) and protection from improper treatment, neglect and abuse (Article 9(8)); however, there is no specific mention of gender mainstreaming, sexual harassment or other gender-related issues. The same is the case with other documents governing various aspects of education. For example, the 2017-2021 Unified Strategy of Education and Science mentions gender only once, in the context of discussing gender bias in textbooks.

99 Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, *Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2017-2020*, pp. 108-109.

The teachers' professional standard (revised, to be adopted in 2020) includes general statements about equality as well as the requirement for teachers "to treat all students equally with respect and care, irrespective of cultural differences, sex or special needs"; however, no specific knowledge on gender equality issues is required of teachers. Only the standard for teachers of civic education implies specific knowledge on gender equality issues.

The National Center for Teacher Professional Development provides trainings for school principals and teachers covering issues of gender equality and social inclusion. However, these trainings are not mandatory, and there is no mechanism to ensure that all teachers receive up-to-date knowledge and skills necessary for gender-responsive teaching. Mechanisms ensuring that all education professionals are equipped with such knowledge and skills are still to be developed. A possible shortcut to ensure this goal could be the integration of topics on gender equality and gender-responsive teaching into the content of the tests for teacher certification examinations [interview with the deputy director of the National Center for Teacher Professional Development].

The authorization procedure for primary and secondary school textbooks determines the criteria according to which textbooks are to be evaluated. These criteria include aspects of gender sensitivity (criteria 5.1.1 and 5.1.2); however, the textbook authorization procedure does not sufficiently guarantee that all authorized textbooks meet the criteria. During the most recent round of textbook authorization, several experts (assigned by the PDO) got involved to contribute a gender dimension to the textbooks' review process; however, some of these experts expressed deep dissatisfaction with the fact that their recommendations were not considered by the textbook authors, while there is no detailed procedure ensuring that authors revise their works according to these recommendations [interviews with experts involved in the latest textbook review round]. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia (MoESCS) plans to provide gender and social inclusion experts with trainings on the subject curricula in order to make sure that subject experts and experts on gender and social inclusion have a common understanding of the criteria for evaluating textbooks

[interview with the deputy head of the Department of Preschool and General Education Development at the MoESCS]. However, it is also necessary that subject experts too receive trainings on gender and social inclusion in order to ensure that they have an adequate understanding of gender issues related to textbooks.

No affirmative action policies or practices are in place to encourage women to pursue STEM careers or tackle the glass ceiling effect present at many levels of higher education and science. For example, age restrictions on various stipends, grants and prizes for junior faculty or researchers do not consider the years spent by women on maternity leave. No regulations ensure women's inclusion in various decision-making bodies or committees at universities, and no statistics are available for this issue.

Many existing surveys and studies on different aspects of education still lack adequate consideration of the gender dimension, which makes many potentially valuable reports useless for gender concerns (such as, for example, a study on early childhood education commissioned by UNICEF). GEOSTAT's gender and education statistics methodology and form of presentation also needs to be refined and augmented as it omits some of the most crucial information for conducting gender assessments (for example, GEOSTAT does not publish participation rates, only quantities of students enrolled at various levels, and there are no data on the sex distribution of school teachers and professors in specific subject areas).

Even though the MoESCS, in cooperation with UN agencies and other international partner organizations, makes efforts to increase access to education for children and adolescents with disabilities, these initiatives, as well as studies on this topic, do not consider gender and, instead, treat disability in a gender-blind way [interview with the acting head of the Department for Inclusive Development at the MoESCS]. Indeed, the "current programs and policies of the Ministry do not view girls and women with disabilities as a separate target group."¹⁰⁰ The same is the case for initiatives and studies concerned with the access to education for ethnic minorities. Available data are insufficient for observing the interaction between gender and minority status. For

100 Parliament of Georgia, *Thematic Inquiry on Accessibility of Healthcare Services for Women and Girls with Disabilities* (2019), p. 44.

example, the National Assessment and Examination Center releases data by ethnic minority status but not by sex [interview with the head of the Center for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations].

There is no unit specifically responsible for gender equality concerns at the MoESCS. At the same time, there is a lack of human resources with sufficient expertise on these issues at various departments and units of the Ministry, while the presence of such staff is crucial for the effective implementation of various international obligations and action plans concerned with gender equality [interview with the head of the Strategy Planning Division of the MoESCS]. From 2016 through 2018, UN Women had assigned a national expert on education whose mission was to provide various MoESCS departments and units with gender expertise. The effectiveness of this mandate, however, was different for various units and initiatives and depended on the willingness and readiness of the Ministry's employees to integrate a gender perspective into their work [interview with the UN Women National Expert on Education].

To summarize, notwithstanding its international commitments, Georgia has not done much to move towards greater gender equality in all spheres of education, training and research. On the one hand, gender inequality is not perceived as a serious concern for the Georgian education system since, on average, female students outnumber and outperform male students at all levels of education; women also hold the majority of academic and teaching positions. On the other hand, deeply seated gender stereotypes and attitudes normalize and justify existing gender gaps in specific disciplines as well as the ostensible vertical segregation in higher ranks of academia. At the same time, this generalized attitude overlooks how gender works in the context of various disadvantaged groups; it also overlooks the fact that gender differentially moderates a person's educational achievement and his or her employment opportunities, earnings, chances in life and other circumstances.

Recommendations

- ✓ Ensure the effective implementation of international obligations taken at the United Nations and other regional-level organizations, including the EU and the CoE, related to gender equality in education and science, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Design and implement mechanisms and methods to ensure that accurate and comprehensive gender statistics for the education system are gathered and published (e.g. sex-disaggregated data on participation and graduation rates; distribution of teachers, professors and researchers in specific subject areas and ranks; ICT skills; etc.), by GEOSTAT and the MoESCS.
- ✓ Promote advanced education research to serve as a basis for strategic planning, and mainstream gender through all aspects of data collection and analyses, by the MoESCS.
- ✓ Ensure that teacher education programmes include the essentials on gender equality and gender-responsive teaching, as well as that all teachers already in service update and upgrade their knowledge and skills on these topics, by the MoESCS.
- ✓ Develop and implement effective mechanisms to ensure that school textbooks and teaching and exam materials do not contain gender bias and stereotypes, by the MoESCS.
- ✓ Ensure that the curricula of secondary and vocational schools, as well as universities, contain civic education with a significant portion on gender equality topics, by the MoESCS.
- ✓ Ensure that the integration of content on reproductive health issues into the general education system is finalized, the adopted subject standards are adequately reflected in teaching and learning materials (textbooks) and civic education and biology teachers are sufficiently trained to convey sensitive information, by the MoESCS.
- ✓ Ensure that women and men have equal opportunities to pursue science careers by introducing various temporary special measures based on international good practice, by the MoESCS.
- ✓ Ensure that the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities are duly considered in policy planning and implementation for inclusive education, by the Government of Georgia.

WOMEN AND HEALTH

National Context

Indicator	Data
Average life expectancy	For both sexes in 2014, life expectancy was 72.9 years of age: 68.6 years for men and 77.2 for women. Life expectancy rose in 2018 to 74.0 years of age for both sexes: 69.7 years for men and 78.2 for women. Source: NCDC, 2015 and 2018. ¹⁰¹
Total fertility rate (TFR)	The TFR is 2.1 in Georgia. It is important that fertility has remained almost the same in recent years. As a comparison, the TFR was 2.0 in 2010 and 2.3 in 2015. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ¹⁰²
Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) (SDG indicator 3.1.1)	The MMR in 2010 was 40 per 100,000 live births in Georgia. By 2015, this had reduced to 36 per 100,000, ¹⁰³ and by 2017, it was 25 per 100,000 live births. Source: MMEIG, 2019. ¹⁰⁴ According to national data, the MMR in Georgia is lower; it was estimated as 32.1 in 2015, 23.0 in 2016, 13.1 in 2017 and 27.4 in 2018. Source: NCDC, 2018. ¹⁰⁵
Use of modern contraceptives, by percentage of the population	32.6 per cent of women aged 15-49 currently married or in a union are using (or whose partner is using) a modern contraceptive method. The overall contraceptive prevalence rate is 41 per cent (percentage of women aged 15-49 currently married or in a union who are using (or whose partner is using) any contraceptive method). Source: MICS Georgia, 2018. ¹⁰⁶
Most common forms of modern contraceptives used	13.8 per cent of women (or their partner) aged 15-49 currently married or in a union are using male condoms. IUDs (7.8 per cent) and birth control pills (5.2 per cent) are the second and third most common forms of contraception for women in Georgia. Source: MICS Georgia, 2018. ¹⁰⁷
Awareness of modern contraceptive use	98.2 per cent of women aged 15-49 have heard of any modern contraceptive method. Source: MICS Georgia, 2018. ¹⁰⁸

101 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2015); and NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).

102 GEOSTAT, *Demographic Situation in Georgia 2018* (Tbilisi, 2019), p. 51. Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/media/27215/demograpia-2018.pdf>.

103 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and United Nations Population Division (MMEIG), *Maternal mortality in 1990-2015 – GEORGIA*. Additionally, according to updated data by MMEIG, the MMR in Georgia was 32 per 100,000 live births in 2010, and by 2015 this had reduced to 27 per 100,000.

104 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and UNPD (MMEIG), *Trends in estimates of maternal mortality ratio (MMR; maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) 2000-2017* (2019).

105 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).

106 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 71-73.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., pp. 74-76.

Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods (SDG indicator 3.7.1)	<p>Modern methods: 51 per cent (Percentage of women aged 15-49 currently married or in a union who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern contraceptive methods)</p> <p>Any method: 63.9 per cent (Percentage of women aged 15-49 currently married or in a union)</p> <p>Total demand for family planning: 64 per cent (Percentage of women aged 15-49 currently married or in a union)</p> <p>Unmet need for family planning: 23.1 per cent Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.¹⁰⁹</p> <p>Unmet need for modern contraceptive method: 31 per cent Source: MICS Statistical Snapshot, 2018.¹¹⁰</p>
Proportion of women aged 15-49 who make their own decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care (SDG indicator 5.6.1)	79.2 per cent of women aged 15-49 make informed decisions on reproductive health care. Source: MICS Georgia, 2018. ¹¹¹
Coverage with at least four antenatal care visits	81 per cent by 2018 Source: NCD, 2018. ¹¹²
Timely initiated antenatal care	80 per cent by 2018 Source: NCD, 2018. ¹¹³
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (SDG indicator 3.1.2)	99.9 per cent Source: NCD, 2019. ¹¹⁴
Total induced abortion rate (TIAR), per 1,000 women	The TIAR in the last five years is 130.3, while the lifetime TIAR is 909.4. ¹¹⁵ (The TIAR per woman in the last five years is 1.3, while the lifetime TIAR is 0.9.) Source: MICS Georgia, 2018. ¹¹⁶
HIV prevalence and the number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations (SDG indicator 3.3.1)	<p>The prevalence of HIV was 0.2 per 1,000 by 2018.</p> <p>Number of new cases of HIV infection registered in 2018: 672</p> <p>Incidence per 100,000 population in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For all ages: 18.0 ✓ Aged 15-24: 25.4 ✓ Males: 28.6 ✓ Females: 8.2 <p>Source: NCD, 2018.¹¹⁷</p>
Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (SDG indicator 3.4.1)	<p>Per 100,000 population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cardiovascular diseases: 577.8 ✓ Cancer: 196.5 ✓ Chronic respiratory diseases: 98.6 <p>Source: NCD, 2018.¹¹⁸</p> <p>Diabetes per 100,000 population: 18.5 Source: GEOSTAT and NCD, 2016.¹¹⁹</p>
Suicide mortality rate (SDG indicator 3.4.2)	5.0 incidence per 100,000 population Source: GEOSTAT, 2015. ¹²⁰

109 Ibid., pp. 82-84.

110 GEOSTAT, MICS *Statistical Snapshot, Georgia 2018: Family Planning & Informed Decision*. Available at https://www.geostat.ge/media/28138/2.-MICS-Family-Planning-%26-Informed-Decision.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1Bn6N9zmhSzO75pJg4RRcYQG23xuYX-3K8OqoznDNqG-_jy6VYtyX9BiQA.

111 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 137-139.

112 NCD, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia (2018)*, p. 10.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 Including medical abortions

116 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 126-127.

117 NCD, *Health Care Statistical Yearbook 2018* (Tbilisi, 2019).

118 Ibid., p. 21.

119 Georgia, *National Statistical Document on SDGs*.

120 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia*.

Issue Highlights from the Data

As of 2018, 95 per cent of health-care provision in Georgia is private, despite the fact that State expenses have significantly increased¹²¹ since 2013, when the Universal Healthcare Programme came into effect. According to Georgia's National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) Statistical Yearbook, government expenditures on health as a percentage of the total State budget in 2015 was 8.6 per cent and grew to 10 per cent in 2017.¹²² The NCDC indicates that the "state expenditure on health, as a share of the GDP is growing annually (from 1.7 per cent in 2012 to 3 per cent in 2017), although, this share is still lower than in Western Europe (EU15) at 8 per cent, the EU (EU28) at 7.3 per cent, and the average for 53 European countries at 5.7 per cent."¹²³ From 2014 to 2017, State spending on health per capita substantially increased: from GEL 186 in 2014 to GEL 293 in 2017.¹²⁴ Based on GEOSTAT data, the average household's cash consumption expenditure on health care amounted to 12.5 per cent in 2018.¹²⁵ According to a Curatio study on the health system, the most burdensome expenditures for the population are those associated with medicines, which represented two thirds of out-of-pocket payments and amounted to 57.3 per cent of total health-care expenditures in 2015.¹²⁶ According to a 2017 UNICEF study, despite the fact that households face fewer barriers to access health services since the introduction of the UHP, families spent 16.4 per cent more on health in 2017 compared to 2015.¹²⁷ Moreover, 69 per cent of health expenditures are spent on medicine.¹²⁸

The above-mentioned challenges can be observed due to gaps existing in the Georgian health system. Despite the fact that financial coverage of health-care services has increased since 2013 by introducing the UHP, improving access to health care and providing better financial protection for the population, the financial coverage has lacked consistency; and with-

out a multidimensional approach, it has faced major challenges, especially after the amendments made in 2017 that narrowed its focus on the targeted groups. According to experts, under the UHP, only the financial resources have been allocated and directed mainly to the hospital sectors; that process has not been followed by other important measures with respect to monitoring the quality of the services as well as regulating the costs and quality of the medicines [interview with expert on health-care politics]. According to the WHO, universal health coverage together with health financing encompasses all components of the health system: health service delivery systems, the workforce, facilities and communications networks, technologies, information systems, quality assurance mechanisms, governance and legislation.¹²⁹ Experts are claiming that, while all of the measures taken by the Government of Georgia represented a single-issue intervention, most importantly the reforms were not directed towards the development of the primary health-care services as a main cost-saving tool to identify, treat and prevent diseases at an early stage [interview with expert on health-care politics].

According to the WHO, primary health care has been proven to be a highly effective and efficient way to address the main causes and risks of poor health and well-being today, as well as handling the emerging challenges that threaten health and well-being tomorrow. It has also been shown to be a good value investment, as there is evidence that quality primary health care reduces total health-care costs and improves efficiency by reducing hospital admissions.¹³⁰

Since 1 January 2015, Georgia has been implementing the Population Cancer Registry in order to improve the epidemiological surveillance of cancer. According to the cancer registry data from 2015 to 2018, the share of cancers diagnosed as stage I or II constituted 40.0 per cent.¹³¹ The share of cases diagnosed as

121 In recent years, State budget allocations for the health sector substantially increased (GEL 450 million in 2012 versus GEL 1,092 million in 2017). NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).

122 NCDC, *Health Care Statistical Yearbook 2018*, p. 41.

123 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).

124 Ibid.

125 GEOSTAT, *Households Incomes and Expenditures 2018* (2019). Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/media/23990/Households-incomes-and-expenditures-2018-celi-%28eng%29.pdf>.

126 Curatio International Foundation, *Health System Barometer: IX wave* (2017). Available at http://curatiofoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/HSB-9-Results_September-18-2017.pdf.

127 UNICEF, *The Welfare Monitoring Survey* (2017), p. 18.

128 Ibid.

129 WHO, *Fact Sheet on Universal Health Coverage (UHC)* (2019).

130 WHO, *Fact Sheet on Primary Health Care* (2019).

131 NCDC, *Population-based cancer registry: Results of the 4-years implementation, Georgia 2015–2018*. Available at <https://www.ncdc.ge/Handlers/GetFile.ashx?ID=1f20368c-fbf4-40f1-8fd3-6fa2ad88a11e>.

stage III or IV is high (51.9 per cent in 2015; 48.8 per cent in 2016; and 46.4 per cent in 2017),¹³² meaning that early diagnosis is still a challenge in Georgia as screening programmes are not integrated into primary health-care services.

According to the cancer registry, breast cancer is the most common type in females, with the incidence rate of breast cancer having reached 97.5 per 100,000 women in 2015, 92.3 in 2016, 85.6 in 2017 and 82.8 in 2018.¹³³ According to the registry data, after increasing in 2015 and 2016, the incidence rate of cervical cancer per 100,000 women in 2018 was significantly reduced to 14.3 (down from 19.4 in 2015 and 20.8 in 2016). In women aged 25, only one case has been reported.¹³⁴ As HPV is one of the main causes of cervical cancer, the HPV vaccine has been made available in four territorial areas of the country (Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Adjara and Abkhazia AR) since 2017, aimed at 9-year-old girls. From August 2019, the HPV vaccine has been introduced throughout the country and shall cover girls aged 10-12.¹³⁵

Since 2011, the following cancer screening programmes have been implemented in the country for citizens registered in Tbilisi and the regions: breast cancer screening for women aged 40-70; cervical cancer screening for women aged 25-60; prostate cancer management for men aged 50-70; and colorectal cancer screening for the population aged 50-70.¹³⁶ Since 2013, the UHP has covered chemotherapy, hormone therapy and radiotherapy for cancer patients within the annual limit of GEL 12,000, as well as surgical treatments within the annual limit of GEL 15,000.¹³⁷ Despite the fact that screening programmes exist, their coverage and utilization is still low. This is also due to the lack of screening-related public information campaigns, which have been discontinued; and

currently there are no public awareness programmes funded by the State or by municipal programmes.¹³⁸ In addition, there is a difference between the provided services packages and the unit prices for citizens registered in Tbilisi and in the regions.¹³⁹ Since 2018, the NCDC, supported by UNFPA, has been developing a population-based, national Cancer Screening Registry, fully integrated with the existing Population Cancer Registry, which may become a breakthrough for improving cancer prevention, treatment and care in Georgia.

Some progress can be identified within the maternal health-care programmes in Georgia, most importantly the progress achieved in reducing the country's maternal mortality ratio (MMR).¹⁴⁰ According to UN inter-agency estimates, the MMR in 2010 was 40 per 100,000 live births in Georgia; by 2015, this had reduced to 36 per 100,000;¹⁴¹ and by 2017, it was 25 per 100,000 live births.¹⁴² Maternal mortality represents one of the most important public health challenges in the country. The high lifetime risk of maternal death¹⁴³ puts Georgia among few countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region with rates above the regional average. According to Georgia's national report to the BPfA, the primary reasons for maternal mortality in Georgia are "the low quality of antenatal and perinatal care; a weak transport system; a weak regulatory and monitoring system; the lack of referral mechanisms in maternal health-care services, such as emergency obstetric care; and, the shortage of trained professionals in maternity clinics and consultation centres, especially in the regions."¹⁴⁴ According to experts, cumulative challenges neglect the progress that can be achieved within the health system, especially in maternal health in Georgia. Apart from the low quality of the services and weak monitoring systems, the lack of continuous medi-

132 Ibid.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

135 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).

136 National Screening Center, "Free examinations". Available at <http://gnsc.ge/?act=page&id=21&lang=ge>.

137 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).

138 Public Defender of Georgia, *Human Rights in the Context of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well-being in Georgia: Country Assessment* (2018), p. 90.

139 National Screening Center, "Free examinations".

140 Asian Development Bank, *Georgia: Country Gender Assessment* (2018), p. 22. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/TCS189794-2>.

141 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and UNPD (MMEIG), *Maternal mortality in 1990-2015 – GEORGIA*.

Additionally, according to updated data by MMEIG, the MMR in Georgia was 32 per 100,000 live births in 2010, and by 2015 this had reduced to 27 per 100,000.

142 WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and UNPD (MMEIG), *Trends in estimates of maternal mortality ratio (MMR; maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) 2000-2017* (2019).

143 UNFPA EECARO, *Lifetime Risk of Maternal Death in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*. Available at <https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/LIFETIME-RISK-MMR-WEB.pdf>.

144 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing +25* (2019), p. 28. Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/georgia.pdf?la=en&vs=2350>.

cal education poses another important challenge for Georgia [interview with NCDC representative]. In addition, development of the National Guideline and Protocol remains a fragmented process, without subsequent updating or implementation and compliance monitoring.

To reduce perinatal mortality and to improve the well-being of pregnant women, the WHO recommends a minimum of eight antenatal care visits. According to data from the 2010 Georgia Reproductive Health Survey (GERHS10), almost 98 per cent of pregnant women received at least one antenatal examination. However, there was a gap in the use of these services between urban women (93 per cent) and rural women (86 per cent).¹⁴⁵ According to the NCDC, timely initiated antenatal care has been gradually increasing since 2015;¹⁴⁶ however, in 2018, a 9 per cent decrease in the number of women seeking timely antenatal care was identified. There is no information on the percentage of women who had the recommended eight antenatal examinations.

Despite the fact that overall contraceptive use increased from 1999 to 2010 across Eastern Europe, Georgia still had one of the lowest usage levels in the region.¹⁴⁷ According to GERHS10, the unmet need for modern contraception in the 15-44 age group of women who are married or in a union was 30.5 per cent. Unmet need was particularly high in rural areas, where it reached 40 per cent.¹⁴⁸ The latest data on unmet need for modern contraception shows that it went from 30.5 per cent to 32.6 per cent in 2018 in the same 15-44 age group,¹⁴⁹ indicating the deterioration in contraceptive use since 2010. The small difference between the two data sets shows, firstly, that contraceptive use became far less prevalent and, secondly, that the use of traditional methods declined by half and was not compensated by an in-

crease in the use of modern contraception. According to experts, this means that the Government's actions to meet the health needs of women are insufficient [interview with UNFPA representative]. Unmet need increases in rural residence, low education and poor wealth quintiles. As stated above, MICS data show that there is a major discrepancy between awareness on contraceptives (98.3 per cent on any method)¹⁵⁰ and their usage, which constitutes only 40.9 per cent among women who are married or in a union, meaning that information does not translate into knowledge and ultimately into usage. Usage depends on financial and cultural factors. According to MICS data, for each contraceptive method, there is a considerable gap between the awareness of the method and the knowledge of its effectiveness. Problematic perceptions of the methods' effectiveness play an important role in increasing the risks of unplanned pregnancies and abortions.¹⁵¹

According to the NCDC, the total induced abortion rate (TIAR) is steadily decreasing. As the MICS survey shows, the TIAR in Georgia was 0.9 in 2018; according to the preceding GERHS10, the TIAR was 3.7 in 1999, 3.1 in 2005 and 1.6 in 2010. It is important that the share of abortions among women under the age of 20 has decreased and constitutes 2.3 per cent of the total number of abortions.¹⁵² However, in terms of the TIAR, the data indicate that there is an ongoing rapid decrease in the average reported number of abortions a woman will have during her lifetime. The TIAR of 0.9 corresponds to an average annual abortion rate of 26 per 1,000 women of fertile age.¹⁵³ The comparable abortion rate had been 46 in 2010. According to an in-depth analysis prepared by UNFPA, the reported rapid downward trend in the abortion rate is unlikely.¹⁵⁴ "If nothing else would have changed and the same number of pregnancies would have occurred, the birth rate should have increased

145 Asian Development Bank, Georgia: *Country Gender Assessment*, p. 22.

146 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).

147 UNFPA, *Invest in Family Planning: Policy Brief* (2014).

148 *Georgia Reproductive Health Survey 2010-2011* (2012). Available at <http://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/georgia-reproductive-health-survey-2010-2011>.

149 Data on the unmet need for modern contraception were collected in the MICS among women aged 15-49 and in the GERHS among married women aged 15-44. In this context, the MICS figure of 31 per cent was extrapolated to 32.6 per cent to make it fully comparable to the GERHS data.

150 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, table TM.13.1CS.TM.13.1CS

151 Ibid.

152 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018), p. 84.

153 UNFPA, *Sexual and Reproductive Health in Georgia: Selected Data Analysis and Dynamics – Georgia MICS 2018 Sexual & Reproductive Health related data in-depth analysis* (2019), p. 34.

154 Ibid., p. 35.

considerably, but that did not happen at all. During the period 2010-18, the birth rate in Georgia did not change.”¹⁵⁵ In reality, the MICS survey data indicate a very strong decline, which can only be explained by an increasing tendency among women to underreport their abortion experiences.¹⁵⁶

It is also important to note that despite the overall decline in abortion rates in Georgia according to the aforementioned official data, it is still seen as a family planning method by the general population.¹⁵⁷ This is due to the lack of available family planning services and information in Georgia, especially in rural areas, as well as due to the lack of contraception and family planning counselling during abortion procedures. The MICS analysis shows that this problem is equally spread across Georgia; contraception counselling during abortion procedures constitutes only 63.2 per cent.¹⁵⁸ This means that women’s access to information is not properly ensured, thereby violating their right to health and the principle of informed decision-making.

Women’s access to safe abortion and health care is further violated by the unregulated practice of conscientious objection by medical personnel. According to a study conducted by the PDO, the number of medical facilities and personnel that do not provide abortion services due to conscientious objection is rising.¹⁵⁹ According to the parallel report submitted by civil society organizations (CSOs) on the implementation of the BPfA in Georgia, only 17 per cent of the total 655 medical facilities provide abortion services, and only 5 per cent of primary health-care facilities provide abortion and family planning services in Georgia.¹⁶⁰ Unregulated conscientious objection – without an effective referral system or clear obliga-

tions for medical facilities to refer patients to other hospitals – hinders women’s access to safe abortion care, especially for those in rural areas, where relevant medical facilities are especially limited. Thus, such objections create additional financial and psychological burdens for women who seek an abortion.

Women and girls who can make choices and control their reproductive lives are better able to get quality education, find decent work and make free and informed decisions in all spheres of life.¹⁶¹ According to MICS data, 79.2 per cent of women aged 15-49 (currently married or in a union) make informed decisions on reproductive health care; a stronger degree of women’s empowerment to exercise their reproductive rights is closely related to a higher level of education, more wealth and their place of residence. It is also important to note that this rate is significantly lower among the women with an Azerbaijani or Armenian head of household, 69 and 57.4 per cent respectively.¹⁶²

It is important to underline that only 76.8 per cent of women (aged 18-49 currently married or in a union) with a functional difficulty say that they can make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care.¹⁶³ Some women with disabilities are among those with functional difficulties. According to PDO research, people with disabilities face major barriers to accessing their reproductive health services, including the inaccessibility of the clinics; for example, gynaecological examination rooms and gynaecological chairs throughout the country are not adapted for women in wheelchairs.¹⁶⁴ Women with disabilities who have limited abilities from an early age have less information about contraception than women who acquired

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid., p. 36.

157 Public Defender of Georgia, *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Human Rights: National Assessment, Key Findings* (2019). Available at <http://ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2019072913501234745.pdf>.

158 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 133-135. The indicated data is a percentage of women aged 15-49 who had at least one induced abortion in the preceding five years and who received medical counselling on contraception either before or after the most recent abortion.

159 Public Defender of Georgia, *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Human Rights*, p. 41.

160 *NGO National Parallel Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing +25* (2019).

161 Ellen Starbird, Maureen Norton and Rachel Marcus, “Investing in Family Planning: Key to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, *Global Health: Science and Practice*, vol. 4, No. 2 (June 2016), pp. 191-210. Available at <https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-15-00374> (as cited in GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, p. 136).

162 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 137-139.

163 Ibid., p. 139.

164 Gynaecological services for women with hearing and speech impairments are problematic as medical institutions do not have a sign language interpreter; thus, women with disabilities are obliged to take their own interpreter (or a family member who will function as an interpreter) with her, which prevents confidentiality of the service.

limited abilities in adulthood. The reason for this is the perception that women with disabilities are “asexual creatures” who should not have reproductive health issues.¹⁶⁵ In addition, doctors are indirectly and in some cases directly advising women with disabilities to not have children;¹⁶⁶ this practice violates the principle of equal access to the same standard of health care and health-care services as others. Indeed, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified by Georgia in 2014, health care must be provided on the basis of free and informed consent for persons with disabilities.¹⁶⁷

Georgia is an example of a low prevalence country for HIV/AIDS, according to the Georgia AIDS Center, which estimates the number of persons living with HIV/AIDS at 10,500.¹⁶⁸ As of 7 October 2019, a total of 7,949 HIV/AIDS cases had been registered at the AIDS Center, including 5,961 men and 1,988 women. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is highest in the 29-40 age group.¹⁶⁹ HIV prevalence and an increasing number of new cases among others is caused by the lack of comprehensive information on the transmission of the infection as well as with the stigma associated with it. The epidemic is concentrated among key populations (men having sex with men; people who inject drugs; and sex workers) and still faces a significant risk of expanding due to widespread high-risk practices. Individuals unaware of their HIV status continue to engage in high-risk behaviours and unknowingly transmit the virus. According to an MICS study, the percentage of women with comprehensive knowledge on the transmission of HIV constitutes only 16.1 per cent.¹⁷⁰ In addition, stigma against HIV-positive people is critically problematic as 48.4 per cent of respondents would not buy fresh vegetables from a shopkeeper or vendor who is HIV-positive.¹⁷¹ Stigma and stereotypes against HIV/AIDS hinder the possibilities to better prevent transmission and spread of the infection.

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

Georgia has an obligation to develop laws, policies, programmes and practices to ensure that women and girls have full access to quality and affordable health-care services. The CEDAW concluding observations on Georgia, adopted in 2014, urged the State to improve women’s access to high-quality health care and health-related services by providing access to family planning services and affordable contraceptive methods, including all modern forms of contraception, especially for women in rural areas.¹⁷²

Under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – which includes important commitments related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR),¹⁷³ among other commitments – the Government of Georgia is obliged to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (target 5.6) including family planning services, information and education; to ensure the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes (target 3.7); to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio (target 3.1); and to end the AIDS epidemic (target 3.3).¹⁷⁴ As indicated, the implementation of SDG target 5.6 should be in line with the BPfA. Under the specific 12 areas identified by the BPfA, health-related issues include women’s rights to health care and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) among the strategic objectives that States, including Georgia, agreed to implement.¹⁷⁵ Georgia also committed to taking all appropriate measures in order to ensure – on the basis of equality between men and women – universal access to health-care services, including those related to reproductive health care, as well as family planning and sexual health based on the ICPD Programme of Action.¹⁷⁶ The Government of Georgia committed to taking action to ensure SRHR at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 in November 2019.¹⁷⁷

165 Public Defender of Georgia, *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Human Rights*.

166 Public Defender of Georgia, *Human Rights in the Context of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well-being in Georgia*, p. 129.

167 Ibid.

168 Georgian AIDS Center, “HIV/AIDS epidemiology in Georgia”, 2020. Available at https://www.aidscenter.ge/epidituation_eng.html.

169 Ibid.

170 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 97-99.

171 Ibid., pp. 109-111.

172 CEDAW Committee, *Concluding observations on Georgia*, paras. 30, 31.

173 SDG 3 (targets 3.1, 3.3, 3.7, 3.8) and SDG 5 (target 5.6)

174 Georgia, *Voluntary National Review on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*, Statistical Annex.

175 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*.

176 UNFPA, *Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994*.

177 See <https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/>.

The Law of Georgia on Health Care (1997) separately regulates the issues connected to women's health, including safe motherhood and child health care.¹⁷⁸ The law also sets the conditions for abortion, according to which voluntary termination of pregnancy shall only be permitted at a medical institution if the duration of pregnancy has not exceeded 12 weeks.¹⁷⁹ According to the law, the mandatory waiting period for abortion has been changed from three to five days based on the 2014 amendments.¹⁸⁰ According to the National Parallel Report on the Implementation on BPfA, the five-day mandatory waiting period creates geographical and financial barriers for women, especially for rural and socially vulnerable women.¹⁸¹ The Law on Patient Rights adopted in 2000 further protects the rights of minors (aged 14-18) to receive reproductive health services (without third-party permission), including non-surgical methods of abortion and family planning services.¹⁸² However, according to the PDO, a national assessment shows that medical facilities are violating the rights of minors to access SRH services and are refusing to perform medical interventions without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.¹⁸³

There have been important developments in terms of strategies and policies related to human rights in the context of SRHR in Georgia. The Government's 2018-2020 HR NAP includes specific activities directly connected to SRHR.¹⁸⁴ In 2016, Georgia introduced the Electronic Module for Pregnant and Newborn Health Surveillance, also called the "birth registry". Each pregnant woman, starting with her first antenatal visit until childbirth, is continuously monitored through the electronic module.¹⁸⁵ The Government has also adopted the 2017-2030 National Maternal and Newborn Health Strategy and a three-year Action Plan (2017-2019) aiming to address the main challenges existing in the SRH sectors in Georgia;¹⁸⁶ however, implementation is still lacking as, according

to the PDO, availability and accessibility to quality services are still critical problems in Georgia. Despite the fact that in 2015 Georgia introduced the Perinatal Regionalization Program,¹⁸⁷ the Antenatal Service Package only covers the primary needs of pregnant women. Accordingly, a number of laboratory tests that are essential for the effective monitoring of pregnancy are left out of the package.¹⁸⁸ The quality of antenatal and perinatal care is still low; in addition, the weak monitoring system hinders pregnant women's access to their health-care needs.¹⁸⁹

In terms of family planning, relevant services are not fully integrated into primary health-care services. The number of family planning service provider clinics, outpatient clinics and women's consultation centres is limited in the regions, especially in high mountainous villages.¹⁹⁰ There are currently no State funds allocated towards family planning counselling or service delivery. Neither of these services is included in the State's benefit package or in private insurance schemes. Modern contraceptives are not available for those most in need. These gaps suggest that there exist barriers to accessing quality SRH services and information.

Despite the fact that Georgia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014, the fulfilment of commitments undertaken by Georgia under the Convention is still lacking. According to an assessment by the NDI, "the existing government health insurance system in Georgia covers nearly all persons with disabilities. However, women with disabilities still don't benefit from medical services that accommodate their individual needs... They visit medical institutions in urgent necessities only."¹⁹¹ In addition, women and girls with disabilities are not provided with medicines needed to achieve health. The "majority of beneficiaries have [a] social package as their only source of income, which does

178 Georgia, *Law of Georgia on Health Care* (1997), chap. XXII.
 179 *Ibid.*, art. 139.2.
 180 *Ibid.*, art. 139.2(b).
 181 *NGO National Parallel Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing +25*.
 182 Georgia, *Law of Georgia on Patient Rights* (2000), art. 40.
 183 Public Defender of Georgia, *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Human Rights*.
 184 Georgia, *Governmental Decree N182 of 17 April 2018 on the Approval of the Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2020*.

185 NCDC, *Health Care Highlights, Georgia* (2018).
 186 Maternal Mortality Indicator in the Maternal and Newborn Strategy, target 1.5, p. 8.
 187 MoIDPOTLHSA, *Decree N01-2/6*.
 188 Public Defender of Georgia, *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Human Rights*.
 189 *Ibid.*
 190 *Ibid.*
 191 Parliament of Georgia, *Thematic Inquiry on Accessibility of Healthcare Services for Women and Girls with Disabilities* (2019). Available at http://parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/133126/Thematic_Inquiry_report_ENG.

not provide [persons with disabilities] with [the] medicines that they need.”¹⁹² In terms of medical procedures and examinations, the Universal Healthcare Programme does not cover the full cost of necessary examinations, including renal examinations and urology tests, which are especially needed by wheelchair users.¹⁹³

In 2015, the Georgian National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2018 was adopted. The plan aimed to develop effective prevention and continuum-of-care programmes. Despite the significant progress achieved in the treatment of HIV in Georgia, diagnosis remains the primary challenge. Individuals unaware of their HIV status continue to engage in high-risk behaviours and unknowingly transmit the virus, fueling the growth of the epidemic.¹⁹⁴ Evidence indicates that the HIV epidemic in Georgia is largely concentrated among key affected populations: men having sex with men; people who inject drugs; and sex workers.¹⁹⁵ Georgia has also developed its National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2022 and is awaiting its approval.¹⁹⁶

Despite the legal and policy changes towards ensuring access to quality health care for women in Georgia, critical challenges still exist when it comes to implementation and national obligations. The most important services for women, including family planning, are not fully integrated at the primary health-care level; and MMR is still high in Georgia due to a weak monitoring system and the low quality of services, which hinders women’s access to quality health care, especially for women living in the regions. Accordingly, significant progress in the policies is not translated into practice, and measures taken by the Government are not satisfying the needs of the most marginalized people, including poor, rural, ethnic minority women and women with disabilities. Thus, more effective and results-oriented measures need to be taken to ensure that the health-care needs of all women are ensured in Georgia.

Recommendations

- ✓ Ensure the effective implementation of international obligations related to women’s health and SRHR issues, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Integrate cancer screening programmes into primary health-care services across the country and ensure its quality, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Develop and implement public awareness-raising programmes on female reproductive and breast cancers that also inform people about available cancer screening and treatment programmes, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Include family planning counselling and contraceptives in the Basic Benefit Package of the Universal Healthcare Programme of Georgia, especially for the socially vulnerable population and youth, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Develop and implement public awareness campaigns and educational programmes concerning the issues of family planning, with special focus on youth, ethnic minority women and women living in rural areas, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Improve the availability of quality antenatal and maternal health-care services at the primary health-care level as well as the secondary and tertiary level, particularly in rural areas and for ethnic minority women, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Ensure that safe abortion is available and affordable for women in need by eliminating the legislative and other forms of barriers to accessing such services, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Work towards eliminating the mandatory waiting period for abortions and set the procedures in accordance with existing international evidence and guidelines, by the Parliament of Georgia and the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Ensure that women with disabilities have equal access to quality and affordable SRH services, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.

192 Ibid.

193 Ibid.

194 Nikoloz Chkhartishvili and others, *Late presentation of HIV infection in the country of Georgia: 2012-2015* (2017). PLoS One (as cited in Georgia HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan 2019–2022, p. 9).

195 UNAIDS, *Global AIDS Response Progress Report, Country Progress Report: Georgia* (2014). Available at https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/country/documents/GEO_narrative_report_2015.pdf.

196 Georgia Country Coordinating Mechanism, *Georgia HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan 2019–2022*. Available at <http://www.georgia-ccm.ge/wp-content/uploads/Georgia-HIV-AIDS-National-Strategic-Plan-2019-2022.pdf>.

- ✓ Implement HIV and STI testing at the primary health-care level, including ensuring accessibility for key populations; and strengthen the preventive measures against HIV/AIDS by ensuring that the information is available to the public, especially targeting young people, by the MoDPOTL-HSA.
- ✓ Strengthen parliamentary control over the Government's activities in the area of ensuring equality in health, especially on SRHR issues, by the Parliament of Georgia.
- ✓ Strengthen efforts to work with the Government of Georgia to promote and support health system reform in Georgia, by international and donor organizations.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

National Context

Indicator	Data
Sexual Violence	
<i>Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 who experienced sexual violence by age 18 (SDG indicator 16.2.3)</i>	6.7 per cent of women reported childhood sexual abuse. Source: Government of Georgia, 2019. ¹⁹⁷
<i>Proportion of women and girls aged 15 and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence (related to SDG indicator 5.2.2)</i>	26 per cent of women (aged 15-64) reported having ever experienced sexual violence and/or sexual harassment by a person who was not an intimate partner. Data on age and place of occurrence is not available. ¹⁹⁸ Source: GEOSTAT and UN Women, 2017. ¹⁹⁹
Domestic Violence	
<i>Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age (SDG indicator 5.2.1)</i>	3.5 per cent of women (aged 15-64) experienced physical, sexual and/or psychological intimate partner violence (IPV); 3.2 per cent of women experienced psychological abuse; 2.8 per cent experienced economic abuse; and 1 per cent experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner within the previous 12 months. Source: GEOSTAT and UN Women, 2017. ²⁰⁰
Femicide	
<i>Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex (SDG indicator 16.1.1)</i>	1.13 women were killed in 2018, making up 22 cases, of which 1 was an incitement to suicide, 7 were domestic violence cases and 14 had other motives. Source: PDO, 2019. ²⁰¹
Physical and Sexual Harassment	
<i>Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months (SDG indicator 11.7.2)</i>	20 per cent of women reported sexual harassment during their lifetime, half of which occurred in a workplace, including inappropriate staring or leering, sexually suggestive comments or jokes and inappropriate hugging, touching or kissing. Source: GEOSTAT and UN Women, 2017. ²⁰² 45 per cent of respondents were exposed to some form of sexual harassment in public transport during the preceding six months. Source: Asian Development Bank, 2018. ²⁰³
Trafficking	
<i>Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation (SDG indicator 16.2.2)</i>	0.6 persons were victims of trafficking in 2018, affecting 21 individuals. Sex- and age-disaggregated data is not available. Source: MIA, 2018. ²⁰⁴

197 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia*.

198 The Government of Georgia and GEOSTAT plan to collect these data points at a later time.

199 GEOSTAT, UN Women and the EU for Georgia, *National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017* (UN Women, 2018), p. 49.

200 Ibid., p. 45.

201 Public Defender of Georgia, *Femicide Prevention and Monitoring* (2019).

202 GEOSTAT, UN Women and the EU for Georgia, *National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017*, p. 51.

203 Asian Development Bank, *Georgia: Country Gender Assessment*.

204 Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, "Public Information: Statistics of Registered Crimes", 2019.

Public Attitudes	
Perceptions of gender-based violence (GBV)	In 2017, 33 per cent of women (compared to 78 per cent in 2009) and 50 per cent of men thought that IPV is a private matter and others should not intervene; 22 per cent of women and 31 per cent of men thought husbands are justified in beating their wives in certain cases; almost 50 per cent of both agreed that if a woman does not physically fight back, one cannot call it rape; only 38 per cent of men and 44 per cent of women felt that marital rape is a crime; and 39 per cent of women and 37 per cent of men thought that it is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant. Source: GEOSTAT and UN Women, 2017. ²⁰⁵
Country Responses	
Extent to which institutional mechanisms have been created or strengthened so that women and girls can report acts of violence against them in a safe and confidential environment, free from the fear of penalties or retaliation, and file charges (BPfA strategic objective D.1: Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women)	18 per cent of women who ever experienced IPV appealed to police for support in 2017, while only 1.8 per cent appealed in 2010. 112 calls: 5,477 in 2013; 20,496 in 2018 116 006 calls: 1,016 in 2011; 1,822 in 2018 Shelters: 89 cases in 2011; 412 cases in 2018 Crisis centres: 24 cases in 2016; 224 cases in 2018 Source: GEOSTAT and UN Women, 2017. ²⁰⁶
Number of protection orders issued	Restraining orders: 224 cases in 2013; 7,646 cases in 2018 Source: MIA, 2019. ²⁰⁷ Protective orders: 57 cases in 2013; 141 cases in 2018 Source: UN Women, 2019. ²⁰⁸
Criminal prosecutions and convictions	Criminal prosecutions: 236 cases in 2013; 3,955 cases in 2018 Convictions: 171 cases in 2013; 1,714 cases in 2018 Source: UN Women, 2019. ²⁰⁹
Number of GBV cases, including sexual violence, processed by the Courts	In 2016 and 2017, the first instance courts made 1,236 decisions on domestic violence cases: 495 decisions in 2016 and almost twice as many in 2017 (741 decisions). The highest number of hearings was done at Tbilisi City Court: 256 hearings. 164 cases were considered by Kutaisi City Court and only 59 by Batumi City Court. Source: Supreme Court of Georgia, 2017. ²¹⁰

205 GEOSTAT, UN Women and the EU for Georgia, National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017, pp. 59-64.

206 Ibid.

207 Ministry of Internal Affairs, "Statistical database", 2019. Available at <https://police.ge/en/home>.

208 UN Women Georgia, *Unite to Fight Violence against Women: Project Report* (2019).

209 Ibid.

210 Research and Analysis Centre of the Supreme Court of Georgia, *Application of International Standards in Domestic Violence Cases* (2017), pp. 11-15.

Issue Highlights from the Data

According to the studies conducted during the past 10 years, women and girls in Georgia suffer from various forms of gender-based violence (GBV); however, the numbers are underreported due to prevailing traditional gender norms and attitudes of non-disclosure, as well as the lack of social support and trust in law enforcement, health care and other relevant systems.²¹¹ Qualitative data from vulnerable groups reveal that disabled, LGBT and ethnic minority women also experience all forms of partner and non-partner violence.²¹² Victims of GBV as well as women being stalked constitute a high-risk group for femicide.²¹³ One of the main contributors to the situation is the societal attitudes described in the preceding table. Such attitudes prevent police officers from helping victims. The economic conditions of the victims of domestic violence (DV) further exacerbate their situation [interview with PDO representative]. The problem of sexual harassment has recently gained some attention but is still not widely discussed in the media and on social networks; the population lacks awareness on this issue.²¹⁴ Georgia has been a source, transit and destination country for sex trafficking of women and girls and forced labour of men, women and children.²¹⁵

Violence against women (VAW) – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence – is a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights. According to the WHO, violence can negatively affect women's physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health, and it may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.²¹⁶ No specific analysis has been conducted in Georgia to identify the health consequences of VAW despite the fact that it leads to physical injuries, unintended pregnancies, gynaecological problems, PTSD, depression and self-destructive behaviour. The lack of relevant data on such health effects prevents State agencies

from planning and strategizing victim-supportive systems within the relevant agencies. However, findings from existing studies do give an indication of the associations between intimate partner violence and health problems among women with experiences of GBV. For instance, according to a 2017 study, women who had experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence were more likely to be depressed and were significantly more likely to have suicidal thoughts.²¹⁷ The study further found consistent differences at the bivariate level between women who reported experiences of violence by an intimate partner and those who did not, for almost all symptoms of ill health addressed in the study.²¹⁸

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

The CEDAW concluding observations on Georgia highlighted the importance of fighting violence and domestic violence against women.²¹⁹ Additionally, under the SDG agenda, Georgia took on the obligation to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere (target 5.1) and to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (target 5.2). Some of the recommendations from both instruments have been implemented, and overall, Georgia has taken important steps against VAW in recent years.

In 2017, Georgia ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (also known as the Istanbul Convention)²²⁰ and adopted a milestone legal framework aimed at harmonizing the domestic legislation (including the DV Law of 2006) with the requirements under the Istanbul Convention. The Ministry of Justice developed a package of relevant amendments for as many as 25 pieces of leg-

211 Public Defender of Georgia, *Monitoring of Services (shelters) for Victims of Domestic Violence and Trafficking* (2018).

212 GEOSTAT, UN Women and the EU for Georgia, *National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017*.

213 Sapari, *Femicide – Hate Crime and the State's Obligation to Combat It* (2016).

214 Asian Development Bank, *Georgia: Country Gender Assessment*.

215 United States Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report* (2019), p. 196.

216 WHO, *Fact Sheet on Violence against Women* (2017).

217 GEOSTAT, UN Women and the EU for Georgia, *National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017*, pp. 67, 73.

218 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

219 CEDAW Committee, *Concluding observations on Georgia*, paras. 20-21.

220 Council of Europe, *The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (Istanbul, 2014).

islation passed by the legislature in 2017. As a result, the scope of DV-related legislation, previously gender-neutral, has now been expanded to also apply to other forms of gender-based violence against women, thus taking into consideration its gender inequality dimensions; additionally, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, stalking and forced sterilization have been criminalized.

DV prevention and the protection of its victims is the responsibility of the central as well as local governments.²²¹ In 2017, the Government of Georgia, with the support of the United Nations and development partners (Sweden and the EU), established the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence²²² (hereinafter the Inter-Agency Commission) to serve as an institutional mechanism on gender in the executive government.²²³ To further strengthen the efficiency of the response to VAW/DV, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA) established the Department of Human Rights Protection and Quality Monitoring within its structure in 2018 to oversee investigations into and administrative proceedings on domestic violence, violence against women (including sexual violence), crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination, hate crimes, trafficking and crimes committed by and/or towards minors.²²⁴ The department also provides witness and victim support services at the MIA, with the latter currently being piloted.

A GPS electronic monitoring system (ankle bracelets) for perpetrators is being introduced by the MIA. The equipment and software for the system has already been installed with the MIA's relevant unit, and staff has been trained. This is an additional step forward in the prevention of reoffending. To ensure uniform response to VAW/DV cases and following the recommendations of the PDO and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its caus-

es and consequences (UNSRVAW) (A/HRC/32/42/Add.3), a risk assessment tool was introduced in July 2018 as a milestone policy shift in police response against domestic violence. A risk assessment checklist enables law enforcement to evaluate risks for re-abuse by perpetrators and plan further measures to protect victims/survivors.²²⁵

The nationwide hotline 116 006 was established in 2012 and is accessible 24/7 for free from anywhere in Georgia, with support in eight languages. It is also accessible for persons who are deaf or have hearing difficulty. Another innovation introduced by the MIA is a new feature of the mobile application for 112 – the Emergency and Operative Response Center of the MIA. The 112's mobile app is a free-of-charge, innovative and high-tech service, and its biggest advantage is in determining a user's location using GPS. The app includes an SOS and chat feature so that if a user cannot talk, or if making a call would be too dangerous, then she can either use the SOS or chat options. The app provides information in Georgian, English and Russian on available State services: the hotline, shelters and crisis centres.²²⁶

In 2018, as per the Prosecutor General's order, only specialized prosecutors are entitled to handle DV cases. For the time being, across the country, there are 155 specialized prosecutors and prosecution service investigators in total. The detection of psychological violence has improved; however, despite the progress, only 11 cases with gender-based discrimination as the motive were identified in 2018.²²⁷

Specialization reform within the court system is also pending, being the least ready to address cases of VAW (for example, gender-based motives are not properly identified in such cases), including femicide, especially in the regions²²⁸ [interview with the UN Women and PDO representatives].

221 United Nations and others, *Gender in Disaster Risk Reduction: A study on Specific Needs and Potential in Building Community Resilience* (2017).

222 The Inter-Agency Commission's existence and mandate is reflected in Article 12, paragraph 6 of the existing Law on Gender Equality.

223 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*.

224 Human Rights Secretariat, *Midterm Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights 2018* (2020).

225 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*.

226 State Audit Office of Georgia, *Efficiency Audit Report: Protective and Preventive Mechanisms against Domestic Violence* (2019).

227 Research and Analysis Centre, *Application of International Standards in Domestic Violence Cases*, p. 49.

228 Public Defender of Georgia, *Femicide Prevention and Monitoring*.

In line with the Istanbul Convention, a behavioural correction and rehabilitation programme for perpetrators was developed (supported by UN Women) and has been operated by the Ministry of Justice within probation services since 2015 and in two correctional facilities since 2019.²²⁹ However, the number of perpetrators covered is relatively small, 3 per cent among conditionally convicted persons in 2017.²³⁰

One of the main functions of the State-funded Legal Aid Service is the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of the rights of VAW/DV victims. The entity provides free legal aid to survivors, including legal consultations, drafting of legal document and court representation in protective order proceedings, irrespective of the victim's socioeconomic status²³¹ [interview with UN Women representative]. In addition, victims are entitled to free legal aid in civil and administrative cases related to domestic violence.²³² Between 2014 and the first quarter of 2019, 84 beneficiaries (including 43 juveniles) were provided with court representation on protective orders, and 616 were provided with legal consultations on matters related to domestic violence.

The State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking (ATIPFUND) is the main institution providing assistance to survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. It is actively involved in the work on the National Referral Mechanism for the identification, protection, support and rehabilitation of VAWG/DV survivors; however, this document is still awaiting approval from the Government.²³³ The range of ATIPFUND services includes shelters, medical and psychological assistance, legal aid and rehabilitation for perpetrators and victims/survivors of sexual violence. Currently, there are five State-supported shelters in Batumi, Gori, Kutaisi, Signaghi and Tbilisi and three donor-supported shelters in Akhaltsikhe, Tbilisi and

Zugdidi. Five State-supported crisis centres are located in Gori, Kutaisi, Marneuli, Ozurgeti and Tbilisi and two NGO-run crisis centres are located in Telavi and Zugdidi [interviews with the AVNG, UN Women and the PDO]. All shelters and crisis centres follow special guidelines,²³⁴ and their staff is properly trained. However, the number of these institutions is still not sufficient. According to the explanatory report of the Istanbul Convention,²³⁵ 400 places (1 place per 10,000 people) should be available for victims, but according to experts, there are half as many places available [interviews with AVNG representatives]. Experts also advise increasing the number of crisis centres (rather than shelters) as they ensure immediate protection. Yet another obstacle is shelter accessibility. Victims need to have an official status to be permitted access to a shelter, but there are still cases when none of the four possible ways to acquire this status are available for victims.

To ensure the compliance of the VAW/DV specialized services with relevant standards and best practices, the Gender Equality Department of the PDO is carrying out regular monitoring of State-run shelters and crisis centres. The PDO issues relevant recommendations for the ATIPFUND on further improvements of the services and elimination of any gaps identified. The monitoring found that the beneficiaries mostly evaluate the services positively; however, there are problems that need to be addressed: insecure environments (one of the shelters is located in the same building as other organizations with separate entrances); the lack of services, mostly psychological counselling; failure to inform clients about existing services; and the lack of support for acquiring skills to live an independent life.²³⁶

Georgia still does not address sexual violence against women and girls with adequate and relevant measures. The UNSRVAV, in the report on her visit to

229 Human Rights Secretariat, *Report on Implementation of the National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors) for 2018-2020 (2020)*; and UN Women Georgia, *Unite to Fight Violence against Women: Project Report*.

230 Research and Analysis Centre, *Application of International Standards in Domestic Violence Cases*.

231 According to the changes introduced in 2018

232 Georgia, *Law of Georgia on Legal Aid (2007)*, art. 5, paras. 24 and 25.

233 State Audit Office of Georgia, *Efficiency Audit Report*.

234 MoIDPOTLHSA, *Decree of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs elaborated Ministerial Order N01-64N on "Minimum Standard Requirements for Crisis Center Establishment and Functioning"*.

235 Council of Europe, *Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul, 2011)*. Council of Europe Treaty Series No. 210.

236 Public Defender of Georgia, *Monitoring of Services (shelters) for Victims of Domestic Violence and Trafficking*.

Georgia, expressed concern that sexual crimes are underreported by victims, for reasons including fear of social stigma; a lack of confidence in the law enforcement authorities; and a lack of specialized services.²³⁷ According to the MIA, in 2018, the overall number of registered crimes committed against sexual freedom was 405; of these, 96 were rape cases, 63 of which were unsolved. In 2019, the number of registered rape cases increased by 24 per cent: of the 421 registered VAW cases, 119 were rape cases, 72 of which were unsolved.²³⁸

At the same time, certain reforms have taken place in the health-care system. Rules and guidelines for identifying, documenting, treating and referring victims of violence were updated; standardized forms, a risk assessment tool and operational procedures were developed; budget allocation and the mechanisms for providing services to the victims of sexual violence were updated; an electronic training module on the health-care response to GBV/DV was prepared; and trainings of medical personnel in Kakheti region were conducted. A pilot programme to identify and refer victims of GBV was also realized in all respective municipalities in Kakheti region [interview with UNFPA representative].

Georgia has seen significant progress in responding to VAWG, especially DV, including by law enforcement and increased disclosure of incidents by victims/survivors in the past few years, as evidenced by the relevant administrative data. For example, some 18 per cent of women who have ever experienced intimate partner violence have appealed for support to the police,²³⁹ as opposed to only 1.5 per cent in 2009.²⁴⁰

In her 2016 Georgia Report (A/HRC/32/42/Add.3), the UNSRVAW reiterated the call she made for all States to establish a “femicide watch” or “gender-related killing of women watch”, which would collect and publish annually data on the number of fem-

icides and establish or entrust an existing body to analyse each case of femicide, in order to identify any failure of protection, with a view of improving measures to prevent femicides. In April 2017, the Public Defender announced that the PDO would assume the role of the Femicide Watch in Georgia, becoming the second Ombudsman in the world (the first being Argentina) to undertake the responsibility for monitoring femicide cases. In November 2018, the Parliament of Georgia adopted amendments to the Criminal Code of Georgia initiated by the MIA as a result of extensive consultations with development partners and the PDO. Pursuant to the bill, a gender motive has been introduced as one of the aggravating circumstances to the crimes of intentional murder, incitement to suicide, intentional infliction of grave bodily injury and intentional infliction of less grave bodily injury, thereby establishing it as a crime of aggravated murder, following the recommendation of the PDO’s femicide watch on the special legislative regulation of femicide.²⁴¹

The national counter-trafficking policy in Georgia has been implemented focusing on five key areas: crime prevention, victim protection, proactive investigation, effective criminal prosecution and enhanced collaboration. The policy has been shaped and coordinated by the Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The 2017-2018 National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the recently adopted subsequent NAP for the 2019-2020 period extensively cover issues related to the prevention of trafficking of minors and the provision of child-friendly services to survivors.

Two specialized shelters for trafficking victims in Tbilisi and Batumi are operated by the Government. They provide medical and psychological assistance, legal aid, childcare and reintegration services, as well as a one-time financial compensation of GEL 1,000.²⁴² In 2018, pimping was criminalized, and relevant

237 United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to Georgia* (22 July 2016). A/HRC/32/42/Add.3, para. 17.

238 Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, “Public Information: Statistics of Registered Crimes”.

239 GEOSTAT, UN Women and the EU for Georgia, *National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017*, pp. 12-15, 83.

240 UNFPA and ACT, *National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Georgia* (2010).

241 Georgia, *Criminal Code of Georgia* (1999).

242 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*.

amendments were made to the Criminal Code to ensure proper qualification of trafficking cases and to prevent children from being forced into prostitution. Between 2014 and 2018 (as of 5 July 2018), prosecution for human trafficking was initiated against 20 individuals, and 31 women were granted the status of statutory victims. Some 17 defendants were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 7 to 15 years; one trafficker has been sentenced to life in prison [interview with UN Women representative].

Overall, the State, with the active support of international donor organizations, has made serious progress in combating DV and other forms of violence, and this progress is ongoing. The policy development in the area of DV can be considered the most advanced among all areas addressed in this report. Still, there is room for improvement. A coordinated response and access to justice is of utmost importance in cases of violence, especially for women living in rural areas and for IDP, ethnic minority and LBT women.²⁴³ The lack of a comprehensive and unified administrative data-gathering system is still a challenge within law enforcement agencies and the justice system at large. Existing gaps are more severe in terms of domestic violence against LBT women, whose cases are not effectively investigated or prosecuted.²⁴⁴

Recommendations

- ✓ Fully harmonize the legislation with the Istanbul Convention provisions, by the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament and line ministries through the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Improve the monitoring of issued restraining and protection orders by the MIA and develop a crime prevention intersectoral policy document with the inclusion of social workers (MoIDPOTLHSA), police and prosecutors and the court system.
- ✓ Finalize and approve the National Referral Mechanism for the identification, protection, support and rehabilitation of VAWG/DV survivors, by the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Strengthen multisectoral services based on the National Referral Mechanism and respective SOPs

for health, police and psychosocial services, by the Inter-Agency Commission.

- ✓ Ensure high-quality psychological counselling services at shelters and crisis centres for victims of GBV, by the ATIPFUND.
- ✓ Further train shelter, crisis centre and hotline personnel (for example, in how to provide full and exhaustive information on available services to victims/survivors), by the ATIPFUND.
- ✓ Increase the number and coverage of VAW and trafficking services (e.g. shelters and DV crisis centres) to meet internationally set standards, by the ATIPFUND (and local governments in relation to DV crisis centres).
- ✓ Reinvigorate efforts directed at the socioeconomic rehabilitation of survivors, by the ATIPFUND and the Government of Georgia (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, MoIDPOTLHSA).
- ✓ Strengthen the response of the health system to VAW/DV, by the MoIDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Strengthen perpetrator behavioural correction programmes within and beyond the criminal justice system, by the line ministries (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs).
- ✓ Implement regular monitoring of compliance with the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention and the follow-up observations from GREVIO, by the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Conduct an independent evaluation of the effects of measures introduced into the law enforcement system, inter alia, analysis of recidivism, especially of those covered by the behavioural correction programmes for perpetrators, by experts and researchers.
- ✓ Improve administrative data collection on all aspects of violence against women and girls, by the line ministries and GEOSTAT.
- ✓ Conduct awareness-raising campaigns on all forms of VAW, and integrate comprehensive information on gender equality, VAWG and DV in formal education, by the central and local governments.
- ✓ Provide technical support, including tailored training, to the designated personnel of the law enforcement system and common courts system, with a special focus on judges at the trial courts and appellate levels, by the court and the line ministries through the Inter-Agency Commission.

243 United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women*, p. 9.

244 L. Jalagania and K. Chutlashvili, *Domestic Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* (2018).

WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT / WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

National Context

Indicator	Data
Proportion of women at the decision-making level in the security sector	<p>Ministry of Defence: 23 per cent in 2018 (30 per cent in 2017) Source: PDO.²⁴⁵</p> <p>Armed Forces: 2 per cent at the decision-making level; 8 per cent in the Armed Forces in total (2019) Source: PDO (interview with representative).</p> <p>Ministry of Internal Affairs: 5 per cent (2019) Source: PDO (interview with representative).</p> <p>Share of women among police officers: 13.7 per cent (2018) Source: GEOSTAT.²⁴⁶</p>
Representation of women in peace negotiations	<p>Geneva International Discussions: 40 per cent in 2017 and 2018 (4 women among the 10 Georgian members); 17 per cent in 2019 (2 of the 12) Source: Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality (interview with representatives).</p> <p>Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism: 33 per cent in 2017 Source: 2018-2020 WPS NAP.²⁴⁷</p>
Inclusion of IDP and conflict-affected women in the peacebuilding process	<p>Proportion of people-to-people diplomacy initiatives implemented by women's CSOs or addressing women's issues: 27 per cent (11 of the 41 projects aimed at peacebuilding and restoring trust) Source: Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality (interview with representatives).</p>
Number of and women's ratio among IDPs	<p>Internally displaced persons: 283,271 (90,156 households) Women: 53 per cent of the total IDP population Source: MoIDPOTLHSA.²⁴⁸</p>

245 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*, p. 111.

246 GEOSTAT, "Gender Statistics: Crime". Available at <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=crime> (accessed in March 2020).

247 Georgia, *2018-2020 National Action Plan of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security* (Tbilisi, 2018). Available at <http://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/assets/documents/2019/NAP/NAPGeorgia2018.pdf>.

248 MoIDPOTLHSA, "IDP Statistics".

<p>Prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among IDP women, women living close to the administrative boundary lines, and in Abkhazia or the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia</p>	<p>Share of IDP women reporting lifetime experience of specific forms of violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Physical violence: 6 per cent ✓ Sexual violence: 4 per cent ✓ Sexual harassment: 14 per cent ✓ Controlling behaviour/emotional abuse: 18 per cent <p>Source: Population's Life Experiences in Georgia Survey, 2016.²⁴⁹</p> <p>Share of women living close to the administrative boundary lines (ABL) reporting lifetime experience of specific forms of violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Physical violence: 6 per cent ✓ Sexual violence: 2 per cent ✓ Sexual harassment: 9 per cent ✓ Controlling behaviour/emotional abuse: 14 per cent <p>Source: Population's Life Experiences in Georgia Survey, 2016.²⁵⁰</p> <p>Abkhazia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 32.7 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 18-49 have experienced at least one act of physical, sexual and/or emotional violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime (17.1 per cent in the preceding 12 months). ✓ 16.6 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 18-49 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime (7.7 per cent in the preceding 12 months). ✓ 15 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner in their lifetime. ✓ Rates of violence by both an intimate partner and non-partner are higher in rural than in urban areas: ✓ Intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence, lifetime: 24.8 per cent of rural, 13.8 per cent of urban ✓ Intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence, in the preceding 12 months: 15.6 per cent of rural, 5.1 per cent of urban ✓ Non-partner physical and/or sexual violence, lifetime: 20.6 per cent of rural, 12.6 per cent of urban <p>Source: UN Women, 2019.²⁵¹</p> <p>Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia: No data available</p>
<p>Number and ratio of women detained while "illegally" crossing the administrative boundary lines</p>	<p>Both sexes in 2018: 96 persons at the ABL with the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia; and 28 persons at the ABL with Abkhazia (according to the Ossetian and Abkhazian sides, these figures were 607 and 300 respectively)</p> <p>Source: PDO.²⁵²</p> <p>Share of women: 19 per cent in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia; and 3.5 per cent in Abkhazia</p> <p>Source: PDO (interview with representative).</p>

249 IBRD and World Bank, *Gender Based Violence in Georgia: Links Among Conflict, Economic Opportunities and Services* (Washington, D.C., World Bank Group, 2017), p. 61.

250 Ibid.

251 UN Women Georgia, *Study on Violence against Women in Abkhazia 2019: Summary Report* (2019).

252 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*, p. 260.

<p>Capacity for preventing and responding to SGBV (the share of the security sector, specialized units, the Special Tasks Department, peacekeeping personnel, law enforcement and legal aid service employees trained on preventing and responding to SGBV)</p>	<p>325 patrol and community inspectors trained on preventing and responding to SGBV (2018)</p> <p>112 investigators trained for specializing on domestic violence cases (2018)</p> <p>The Department of Human Rights Protection and Quality Monitoring at the MIA has been monitoring cases of SGBV since 2018. Source: Government of Georgia, 2018.²⁵³</p> <p>A mandatory course on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace is taken by all civil employees of the Ministry of Defence and all officers and corporal-sergeants in command positions.</p> <p>All 3,060 personnel of missions to Afghanistan and the Republic of Central Africa attended a seminar on domestic violence in 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>All units of the Armed Forces have an assigned person responsible for gender issues.</p> <p>83 employees of the Prosecutor's Office were trained on SGBV in 2018.</p> <p>32 prosecutors were trained on SGBV and the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS in 2018.</p> <p>39 attorneys were specialized on SGBV cases in 2018. Source: Government of Georgia, 2018.²⁵⁴</p>
<p>Number and rank of gender advisers in peacekeeping missions and operations</p>	<p>Gender advisers in peacekeeping missions in 2020 have not yet been assigned. Source: Ministry of Defence (interview with representative).</p>
<p>Share of IDP and conflict-affected women and men who benefit from the free State Legal Aid Service</p>	<p>1,459 IDPs (5 per cent of all Legal Aid Service beneficiaries): 774 women and 685 men (2018) Source: Government of Georgia, 2018.²⁵⁵</p>
<p>Share of IDP and conflict-affected women benefiting from public services</p>	<p>In 2019, 800 women from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia benefited from the referral health-care system (53 per cent of all beneficiaries). Source: Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality (interview with representatives).</p> <p>Indirect data (from 2014): IDPs from South Ossetia received assistance in 51.2 per cent of requested cases; IDPs from Abkhazia – in 24.4 per cent of cases. Source: UN Women Georgia.²⁵⁶</p>
<p>Share of IDP and conflict-affected women and girls informed about health-care and social services</p>	<p>In 2019, five consultation meetings were held with the population residing along the ABL on sexual and domestic violence and the available health-care and social services. Source: Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality (interview with representatives).</p>
<p>Share of IDPs provided with long-term accommodation</p>	<p>44.2 per cent of IDP households (2018); disaggregated data by sex of household head not available Source: PDO.²⁵⁷</p>

253 Georgia, *2018 Report on NAP on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors) for 2018-2020* (2018), p. 23.

254 Georgia, *2018 Report on 2018-2020 NAP of Georgia for the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security* (2018).

255 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

256 UN Women Georgia, *Study on Needs and Priorities of IDP and Conflict-Affected Women and Girls* (Tbilisi, 2014), p. 20.

257 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*, p. 270.

258 UN Women Georgia, *Study on Needs and Priorities of IDP and Conflict-Affected Women and Girls*, p. 9.

Issue Highlights from the Data

Women are severely underrepresented in the security sector in Georgia – both in general and in decision-making positions. Their share is particularly low in decision-making positions within the MIA. Women are also underrepresented in two official dialogue formats concerned with conflict resolution: the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM). The number of women included in the 12-member (previously 10-member) Georgian delegation to the GID has ranged between two and four, while there are no Ossetian or Abkhazian women engaged in the GID. One or two women participate in the IPRM meetings on behalf of Georgia (the delegation usually consists of six members), while there are usually no women among the Abkhazian and Ossetian participants. Media reports and images show that even when there are female participants at the IPRM, they are seated at the back of the room rather than at the negotiating table, demonstrating barriers to women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. Furthermore, the formats do not integrate the principles of women, peace and security (WPS), and meeting agendas do not include discussion items on the special needs and priorities of IDP and conflict-affected women and girls.²⁵⁹

IDPs constitute one of the largest socially and economically vulnerable groups in Georgia. The State still has not provided more than half of IDP households with permanent accommodation. Many internally displaced women live below the poverty line and face increased risk of violence. Among the problems faced by the IDP population, the most important include unemployment and economic conditions, housing, mobility, access to health services and education, access to land and security.²⁶⁰ All of these challenges have specific gender aspects, such as the lack of access to reproductive services for women and the

lack of care services such as kindergartens. Another important issue concerns IDPs' ownership rights to their place of residence.²⁶¹ Violations of human rights, underrepresentation in elections and exclusion from consideration in development projects are also listed among important concerns for IDPs.²⁶² It is remarkable that IDP women, especially single women with IDP status, are more likely to be unemployed than men from the same group, while in the general population, women's unemployment rates are lower than that of men.

Thousands of people living adjacent to the administrative boundary lines (ABL) with Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia face various challenges. The most pressing problems for these people are related to socioeconomic issues, property rights, land registration, physical security, access to basic services (e.g. health care), freedom of movement and personal documentation.²⁶³ As a result of new restrictions on documentation, the closing of specific checkpoints or bans on crossing altogether for extended periods, the residents of these areas were denied access to health-care facilities and educational institutions and could not visit their families or attend relatives' funerals.²⁶⁴

It is impossible to systematically monitor and study the status of women's and children's rights in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, which presents a serious obstacle to addressing issues in this respect.²⁶⁵ Available data indicate a serious problem with domestic violence: from January to September 2016, in the regions of Gali, Oчамchire and Tkvarcheli, 75 cases of domestic violence were reported.²⁶⁶ The prevalence of child marriage also represents a serious problem in these regions.²⁶⁷ The 2019 UN Women Study on Violence against Women in Abkhazia also shows that the incidence of all forms of violence (physical, sexual, emotional) is

259 Public Defender of Georgia, *The Human Rights Situation of the Conflict-Affected Population in Georgia* (2016).

260 UN Women Georgia, *Enhancing Internally Displaced Women's Sustainable Livelihoods: Approaches, Tools and Interventions* (2016), p. 8.

261 UN Women Georgia, *Study on Needs and Priorities of IDPs and Conflict-Affected Women and Girls*.

262 Asian Development Bank, *Georgia: Country Gender Assessment*, p. 29.

263 Public Defender of Georgia, *The Human Rights Situation of the Conflict-Affected Population in Georgia*.

264 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*, pp. 261-263.

265 Public Defender of Georgia, *The Rights of Women and Children in the Conflict-Affected Regions in Georgia. Review of 2014-2016* (2017), p. 4.

266 *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 72.

267 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8, 72.

quite high, especially in rural areas. It is also higher in Gali district, compared to other districts. Other persistent problems facing women and children in these regions include poor access to health and education services and the prohibition of the right to an abortion (in Abkhazia).²⁶⁸ Regarding access to education, the ban against Georgian as a language of instruction in schools in the districts of Gali (since 2015) and Akhagori (since 2017) severely limits access to education for ethnic Georgian students. The number of students attending school in Gali and Akhagori has been steadily decreasing in recent years (sex-disaggregated data not available).²⁶⁹

So far, the Georgian Government has ensured the provision of 44 per cent of IDP households with a durable housing solution. Besides the urgent need to improve the living conditions of the remaining households, there is a need for sustained efforts to provide IDPs with access to employment and livelihoods. Even the IDPs residing in private accommodation (who thus own their property) are sometimes forced to move back to substandard housing conditions in collective centres in order to qualify for continued assistance because of the lack of economic opportunities.²⁷⁰ As a result of important measures, including improved legislation regulating the provision of housing, more IDPs are now accommodated in urban and economic centres rather than in isolated rural areas. However, there are still concerns about the selection process of recipients to ensure access for those most in need.²⁷¹ In addition, there are no data or studies on how existing housing policies affect internally displaced women specifically.

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

Georgia's commitment to the BPfA, specifically in area E on "Women and Armed Conflict", implies the country's commitment to increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at all decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of

armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation; to reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments; to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations; to promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace; and to provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.

With respect to CEDAW, in 2013, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) adopted its General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, a landmark document giving authoritative guidance to countries that have ratified CEDAW's concrete measures to ensure that women's human rights are protected before, during and after conflict.²⁷²

Georgia adopted UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security in 2000 and its "sister resolutions" (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467 and 2493) and has been implementing it since 2011 through three National Action Plans for the periods 2012-2015, 2016-2017 and 2018-2020.

The current 2018-2020 National Action Plan for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS NAP) was adopted in 2018, and its development was coordinated by the Inter-Agency Commission. The 2018-2020 WPS NAP covers six major goals:

1. Increased participation of women at the decision-making level in the security sector and peace negotiations
2. Increased participation of IDP and conflict-affected women and youth in decision-making processes regarding conflict prevention, management and resolution

268 Ibid., p. 9.

269 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*, pp. 261-265.

270 United Nations General Assembly, *Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia: Report of the Secretary-General* (21 May 2019). A/73/880.

271 Ibid.

272 CEDAW Committee, *General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations* (18 October 2013). CEDAW/C/GC/30.

3. Prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and other risks related to human security
4. Ensured security and physical and psychological well-being of women and girls
5. Socially and economically empowered IDP and conflict-affected women, girls and their family members
6. Integration of the goals and objectives of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) into the national policies and sectoral strategies of the State institutions

The main feature distinguishing the 2018-2020 WPS NAP from its predecessors is its emphasis on localization, based on the recommendations of UN Women, the PDO and the Women's Information Center. The process of localization is ongoing in 10 pilot municipalities of Georgia – Dusheti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Khashuri, Sachkhere, Stepantsminda, Tsalenjikha, Tsakalubo and Zugdidi – selected because of their proximity to the ABLs with Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia or their higher concentration of the IDP population.²⁷³

As a step towards fulfilling the commitments to the BPfA and the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS, a considerable number of trainings and workshops on women's rights and WPS issues were conducted for the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Service and the Ministry of Defence. In particular, the Ministry of Defence has been exemplary in its adoption of policies to meet the BPfA and resolution 1325 goals: so far, it is the only ministry to have internal legal documents regulating gender balance in the professional development and career opportunities of its employees. It has also established a gender equality monitoring group; carried out a study of the organizational cli-

mate to identify barriers for gender equality and to serve as the basis for its future strategies for organizational development; established a system for sex-disaggregated data collection; integrated gender modules and training courses into the curricula of all educational courses; introduced a mandatory course on sexual harassment for all of its employees; established a mechanism for responding to cases of sexual harassment and gender discrimination; and created a body of internationally certified trainers that provide trainings on gender-related issues.

Establishing sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis systems in the security institutions is part of the commitments undertaken by the Government of Georgia under the 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 National Action Plans on WPS. However, sex-disaggregated data is still hard to obtain, and most indicators in the 2018-2020 NAP lack baseline data, even though the same commitment on the part of the Government was already implied by the 2016-2017 NAP.

In 2014, the CEDAW Committee was concerned about the limited involvement of women in peace negotiations.²⁷⁴ Accordingly, the Committee recommended that the State should involve women in the implementation of its action plan and policies aimed at settling conflicts and promote the active participation of women in high-level meetings in this regard.²⁷⁵

Notwithstanding women's low participation in official peace negotiation formats (which is in part due to the fact that delegation membership is determined by formal positions), their participation as well as impact in informal peace processes has been considerable from the start; an important factor determining women's meaningful participation in such processes has been the presence of strong civil society actors in the regions concerned [interview with the head of the Institute for the Study of Nationalism and Conflict].

Despite existing barriers, the Georgian central government continues to provide free health-care services for the population living close to or on the other side of the ABLs; it also allocates resources to support teachers' professional development and support the studies of students from these territories. The State fully funds the studies of students from these territories at higher education institutions.²⁷⁶ However, access to the aforementioned services, especially

273 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*.

274 CEDAW Committee, *Concluding observations on Georgia*, para. 24.

275 *Ibid.*, para. 25.

276 Council of Europe, *Consolidated Report on the Conflict in Georgia (2018)*, p. 10; and Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*, pp. 261-265.

health care and social security, has been severely restricted in recent months due to the closure of checkpoints or the suspension of ABL crossings altogether. People still manage to travel to territories controlled by the Georgian central government in order to receive health-care services. However, with the aforementioned restrictions, especially in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, they have to travel longer distances and thus spend more time and financial resources to do so [interview with representatives of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality].

The main criticism of the previous as well as the current WPS NAP voiced by NGOs concerns inadequate budgeting – that insufficient funds have been allocated for its implementation, which makes the fulfilment of obligations taken by the State agencies under the NAP contingent upon external financial support (by UN Women and other international and non-governmental organizations).²⁷⁷ Another obstacle hindering the effective implementation of the WPS resolutions is the weak or absent coordination between the central and the local self-government, as well as between various agencies, undermining the effectiveness of the institutional mechanism for gender equality and coordination between the various agencies.²⁷⁸ The same concerns the Inter-Agency Commission and its special Working Group on resolution 1325.²⁷⁹ Other obstacles to the implementation of the NAP include the local authorities' lack of gender sensitivity and knowledge on gender equality issues, content and the importance of UN Security Council resolution 1325; the low involvement of local CSOs; the insufficient involvement of IDPs and conflict-affected people in the policy planning process; and the insufficient inclusion of IDP and conflict-affected women in the GID.²⁸⁰

To sum up, the lack of adequate budgeting, the lack of coordination between responsible agencies and the lack of gender sensitivity and knowledge of gender equality and WPS issues on the part of implementing

officials (local as well as central) are the main obstacles to the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS and to the achievement of the BPfA area E strategic objectives.

Recommendations

- ✓ Ensure the effective implementation of international obligations under BPfA area E, the CEDAW Committee's General recommendation No. 30 and the UN Security Council resolutions on WPS by allocating enough budgetary funds for the implementation of the WPS NAP, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Identify the needs and priorities of the internally displaced and conflict-affected women and girls, those living along the ABLs and those living in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia through a participatory approach.
- ✓ Develop sustainable financial schemes aimed at supporting local women's CSOs that work on the localization and implementation of the national commitments to the WPS agenda.
- ✓ Ensure that the procedures for providing IDPs with housing and social assistance are transparent and gender-responsive, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Advocate for the needs and priorities of the internally displaced and conflict-affected women and girls through the GID and IPRM.
- ✓ Put in place mechanisms for women to become informed and engage in meaningful participation in the GID and IPRM.
- ✓ Develop adequate mechanisms and methodologies for sex-disaggregated data collection and dissemination on women's participation in the security sector and peace negotiations and on the situation (social, economic, security, etc.) of IDPs, persons living along the ABLs and the population of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia – for the purpose of strategic planning as well as progress monitoring, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Ensure, through tailored trainings and information campaigns, that security sector employees (the police and the military) have adequate skills, knowledge and understanding to address women's and girls' needs and priorities, by the Government of Georgia.

277 UNDP and the GEC, *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations*, vol. 1, p. 88.

278 Ibid.

279 Ibid.

280 Ibid.

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

National Context

Indicator	Data
Employment rate by sex, age and marital status	<p>In 2018, the total employment rate was 55.8 per cent, with a 14.1 per cent difference in the employment rate between women (49.3 per cent) and men (63.4 per cent).</p> <p>The employment discrepancy between men and women is higher among youth. In the 15-24 age group, only 21.0 per cent of women are employed, compared to 34.8 per cent of men. Employment among other age groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aged 25-34: 49.8 per cent of women, 71.6 per cent of men ✓ Aged 35-44: 62.5 per cent of women, 77.0 per cent of men ✓ Aged 45-54: 68.5 per cent of women, 76.9 per cent of men ✓ Aged 55-64: 63.0 per cent of women, 72.4 per cent of men ✓ Aged 65 and older: 32.0 per cent of women, 44.5 per cent of men <p>Marital status among employed women and men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Married or in a union: 65.1 per cent of women, 73.9 per cent of men ✓ Unmarried/single: 14.1 per cent of women, 22.3 per cent of men ✓ Divorced: 4.3 per cent of women, 1.8 per cent of men ✓ Widowed: 16.4 per cent of women, 2 per cent of men <p>Among all self-employed persons in Georgia, women comprise 45.5 per cent, while men comprise 55.5 per cent.</p> <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸¹</p>
Employment distribution, by education and sex	<p>Level of education among employed women and men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elementary/basic: 6.3 per cent of women, 6.5 per cent of men ✓ Secondary: 30.6 per cent of women, 40.9 per cent of men ✓ Vocational: 24.8 per cent of women, 21.2 per cent of men ✓ Tertiary or above: 37.8 per cent of women, 31.0 per cent of men ✓ Unidentified: 0.5 per cent of women, 0.2 per cent of men <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸²</p>
Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex (SDG indicator 8.3.1)	<p>The proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment amounted to 36.2 per cent in 2018. Women's informal employment made up 29.8 per cent of the women in the non-agriculture sector, while men's informal employment made up 41.5 per cent of the men in the non-agriculture sector.</p> <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸³</p>

281 GEOSTAT, Labour Force Survey 2018; and GEOSTAT, Letter #7-3382.

282 GEOSTAT, Labour Force Survey 2018.

283 Ibid.

<p>Unemployment rate, by sex, age and marital status (SDG indicator 8.5.2)</p>	<p>In 2018, the total unemployment rate in Georgia was 12.7 per cent. The unemployment rate for women was 11.2 per cent, compared to 13.9 per cent for men.</p> <p>The unemployment rate for women aged 15-24 was 35.3 per cent, compared to 26.7 per cent for men. Unemployment among other age groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aged 25-34: 16.6 per cent of women, 19.1 per cent of men ✓ Aged 35-44: 13.2 per cent of women, 12.5 per cent of men ✓ Aged 45-54: 8.9 per cent of women, 10.4 per cent of men ✓ Aged 55-64: 5.8 per cent of women, 10 per cent of men ✓ Aged 65 and older: 1.7 per cent of women, 5.2 per cent of men <p>Marital status among unemployed women and men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Married or in a union: 49.4 per cent of women, 52.2 per cent of men ✓ Unmarried/single: 32.2 per cent of women, 43.3 per cent of men ✓ Divorced: 11.1 per cent of women, 3.1 per cent of men ✓ Widowed: 7.3 per cent of women, 1.3 per cent of men <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸⁴</p>
<p>Unemployment distribution, by education and sex</p>	<p>Level of education among employed women and men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elementary/basic: 3.6 per cent of women, 6.2 per cent of men ✓ Secondary: 32.3 per cent of women, 45.6 per cent of men ✓ Vocational: 25.6 per cent of women, 15.8 per cent of men ✓ Tertiary or above: 38.5 per cent of women, 32.4 per cent of men <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸⁵</p>
<p>Economic activity and inactivity rates, by sex</p>	<p>Economic participation among the total population aged 15 and older:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Active: 63.9 per cent overall, 55.6 per cent of women, 73.6 per cent of men ✓ Inactive: 36.1 per cent overall, 44.4 per cent of women, 26.4 per cent of men <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸⁶</p>
<p>Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by sex, occupation, age and persons with disabilities (SDG indicator 8.5.1)</p>	<p>Average hourly earnings in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Women: GEL 5.10 ✓ Men: GEL 8.00 <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸⁷</p> <p>Average monthly nominal earnings in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Women: GEL 823 ✓ Men: GEL 1,281 <p>Women's average monthly earnings ratio with respect to men's average monthly earnings comprised 64.2 per cent, meaning a gender pay gap of 35.8 per cent.</p> <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.²⁸⁸</p>

284 Ibid.

285 Ibid

286 GEOSTAT, *Labour Force Survey 2018*; and GEOSTAT, Letter #7-3382.

287 GEOSTAT, Letter #7-249. Calculations are based on average monthly nominal earnings.

288 GEOSTAT, "Establishment Survey", *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*, p. 56.

Emigration and migration, by sex	Women comprise 43 per cent of emigrants; men, 57 per cent. Women comprise 35 per cent of immigrants; men, 53 per cent. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ²⁸⁹
Proportion of adults (aged 15+) with an account at a financial institution or mobile-money-service provider (SDG indicator 8.10.2)	In 2017: ✓ Both sexes: 61.2 per cent ✓ Women: 63.6 per cent ✓ Men: 58.5 per cent Source: Global SDG Indicators Database, 2017. ²⁹⁰
Fatal and non-fatal occupational Injuries among employees (SDG indicator 8.8.1.)	Fatal injuries: 49 Non-fatal injuries: 142 Total injuries: 191 Source: MIA, 2019. ²⁹¹
Enterprises with female co-owner(s)	In 2018, 52 per cent of Georgia's newly established enterprise owners (registered) were men, 29 per cent were women and 18 per cent were unidentified. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ²⁹²
Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location (SDG indicator 5.4.1)	No official data. Women report spending 45 hours a week, on average, on domestic and care work, compared to 15 hours a week reported by men. Employed women report spending 42 hours a week, on average, on domestic and care work, compared to 16 hours a week reported by employed men. Unemployed women report spending 47 hours a week, on average, on domestic and care work, compared to 14 hours a week reported by unemployed men. Source: UN Women, 2018. ²⁹³

289 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*, p. 11.

290 United Nations, "Global SDG Indicators Database".

291 Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Letter #8 1/12/2020. 24 February 2020.

292 Business Register 2018, cited in GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*.

293 UN Women Georgia, *Women's Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia* (Tbilisi, 2018).

Issue Highlights from the Data

Unpaid domestic work is the main contributor towards the gender gap in employment and other gender-related economic inequalities in Georgia. The gender gap in employment stands at 14.1 percentage points (p.p.) on average; however, for the population aged 45-65, the gender gap in employment declines to 10 p.p.²⁹⁴ The gender gap in employment is highest for the population aged 25-34 (21.8 p.p.).²⁹⁵ The age-related pattern of the gender gap in employment is driven by the reproductive function of women under the age of 45 and the unpaid domestic work that child-rearing entails. According to the IMF and the World Bank, the “lower female participation rate is in part explained by a lack of childcare opportunities, significant wage disparities between men and women, and the lack of flexible employment opportunities.”²⁹⁶ Alongside the shortcomings of the public care institutions, weak social protections and ineffective labour regulations to ensure a work-life balance for female workers, gender stereotypes also contribute to the disproportionate amount of domestic work that women do – caring for children and the family is predominantly perceived as a woman’s obligation.²⁹⁷

The relatively high gender gap in employment for the population aged 65 and older is observed (12.5 p.p.), along with the high levels of employment among the elderly; however, it can be explained by poverty and the inadequate pension that induces elderly people to work.²⁹⁸ Prevailing gender stereotypes compel elderly men to seek employment while elderly women contribute to unpaid domestic work and caring for the grandchildren.

Although a Time Use Survey has never been conducted by GEOSTAT in Georgia, UN Women did conduct a national representative survey that included a time module demonstrating that, on average, unpaid do-

mestic work performed by women is three times higher than that by men (45 hours per week versus 15 hours). Indeed, 49 per cent of women outside of employment cited their family-related responsibilities as a reason for not working. Employed women perform 42 hours of domestic work per week in contrast with the 16 hours per week that employed men do – clearly demonstrating the double burden of women’s work.²⁹⁹ This double burden of work often forces women out of the labour market. Women who leave the workforce for family-related reasons have a low chance of resuming gainful employment later in life.³⁰⁰ Studies conducted by both the World Bank and UN Women have found that the presence of children in the household is associated with a significant reduction in female labour force participation and increased male labour force participation.³⁰¹ In addition, single mothers demonstrate a higher economic non-participation rate compared to single fathers.³⁰² This negative impact on mothers’ economic outcomes is known as the “motherhood employment penalty”.³⁰³ Women’s non-participation in gainful labour adversely affects the economic situation of the household – it increases the chances of falling into poverty by 26 per cent.³⁰⁴ Apart from that, the gendered division of household labour reflects the power dynamics in the family that leave women with less bargaining power within the family because of economic dependency on a male breadwinner.

The unemployment rate for men (13.9 per cent) is higher than that for women (11.2 per cent), but women’s economic inactivity rate is almost twice as much as men’s. The gender gap in economic inactivity stands at 17.5 p.p. These numbers indicate that although there are more women outside of employment, a higher number of men than women are seeking employment opportunities. The highest unemployment among women and men is ob-

294 GEOSTAT, *Labour Force Survey 2018*; and GEOSTAT, Letter #7-3382.

295 Ibid.

296 IMF, *Georgia: Selected Issues*, p. 23.

297 UNDP Georgia, *Research Report: Public Perceptions on Gender Equality in Politics and Business* (Tbilisi, UNDP, 2013).

298 IMF, *Georgia: Selected Issues*.

299 UN Women Georgia, *Women’s Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia*.

300 Ibid.

301 World Bank Group, *Georgia Country Gender Assessment; and UN Women Georgia, Women’s Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia*.

302 UN Women Georgia, *Women’s Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia*.

303 Gaelle Ferrant and Annelise Thim, “Measuring Women’s Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Inequality”, OECD Development Policy Paper No. 16 (2019). Available at <http://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/MEASURING-WOMENS-ECONOMIC-EMPOWERMENT-Gender-Policy-Paper-No-16.pdf>.

304 UN Women Georgia, *Women’s Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia*.

served among the youth, in the 15-24 age group (35.3 per cent of female youths, 26.7 per cent of male youths).³⁰⁵ The share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) is also higher for younger women than for men – for the population aged 15-29 based on 2018 data, 38.9 per cent of women and 24.9 per cent of men classify as NEET.³⁰⁶ Apart from signaling the adverse effects on young women’s career prospects by damaging their chances for gainful employment because of long periods of economic inactivity and a lack of previous experience, high NEET numbers among youth limit Georgia’s potential for economic development.

A substantial gender pay (or wage) gap, which is a measure of the difference in pay between women and men wage earners, further discourages women from joining the labour force. According to the estimates published by GEOSTAT, Georgia’s monthly gender pay gap stood at 35.8 per cent in 2018. This figure relies on the Establishment Survey, which is a company-level survey and, therefore, the best source for salary statistics; however, it does not include the hourly disaggregation of salaries in Georgia and the informal sector. UN Women’s study “Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labour Market in Georgia” instead draws on GEOSTAT’s Labour Force Survey, which includes the informal sector and the data on hours worked. Based on the monthly wages reported in the Labour Force Survey, Georgia’s monthly gender pay gap was 37.2 per cent in 2017, which means that employed women, on average, earned 62.8 per cent of employed men’s monthly earnings.³⁰⁷ The hourly gender pay gap was estimated as 17.7 per cent.³⁰⁸ The difference between monthly and hourly gender pay gaps reflects the fact that women spend fewer hours on paid work each month compared to men – according to the same study, women spend an average of 39.9 hours on paid work per week as men spend 47. Unpaid domestic work leaves women with fewer hours to contribute to gainful employment. The adjusted gender pay gap, which includes the educational attainments, professional experiences and other personal characteristics between men and women, was estimated as 24.8 per

cent at the level of hourly wages.³⁰⁹ It is wider than the hourly gender pay gap, which reflects the fact that employed women have better labour-market characteristics (specifically education) and earn less wages per hour than employed men. The UN Women study also found that both employed women and unemployed women have better educational characteristics when compared to men in the same groups in Georgia.³¹⁰ This can be partially linked to horizontal segregation – women tend to choose those career paths that require higher education (education, health and social care).

As for horizontal and vertical gender segregation, so far existing surveys do not provide the comprehensive and precise data required for such analyses. The UN Women study reveals that horizontal gender segregation manifested in occupational and sectoral segregations is of moderate magnitude.³¹¹ This implies that about a third of women and men employees would need to switch places across job categories for their distribution to become identical in Georgia.³¹² Education, health and social care are dominated by women, but manufacturing and especially construction are more “masculine” sectors. As for vertical gender segregation, the data is limited – the analysis has documented it for some high-ranked professions (e.g. senior government officials) but not for others, such as legislators.³¹³ However, the margin of error for the above-mentioned estimates is significant; therefore, the conclusions should be made with caution. The identification of horizontal and vertical segregation requires additional research based on a high-quality establishment-level survey.

The employment structure demonstrates the significant share of vulnerable employment among women and men in Georgia. Based on the 2017 Labour Force Survey, 51.4 per cent of employed men and 53.6 per cent of employed women were identified as wage employees (among the population aged 15-64), and 2.8 per cent of employed men and 1.4 per cent of women were classified as employers.³¹⁴ The rest of employment can be categorized as informal and most likely vulnerable – 45.7 per cent of employed men and 45

305 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*.

306 GEOSTAT, *Labour Force Survey 2018*. GEOSTAT’s calculation.

307 UN Women Georgia, *Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labour Market in Georgia* (Tbilisi, 2020).

308 Ibid.

309 Ibid.

310 Ibid.

311 Ibid.

312 Ibid.

313 Ibid.

314 Ibid.

per cent of employed women are classified as either self-employed or contributing household workers.³¹⁵ The majority of people in these two categories works in subsistence agriculture. It is worth mentioning that wage employment can also be informal. For women, domestic work, followed by a wide variety of services, constitutes an important share of non-agriculture informal employment.³¹⁶ Women are less likely to work informally, but family and children increase women's chances of informal employment and reduces that of men.³¹⁷ Since self-employment, contributing to household work and informal employment are outside of labour regulations, such workers do not have the same labour rights and social protections that are afforded to those in formal work. Until 2020, GEOSTAT had been relying on methodology that counts subsistence farmers as self-employed/contributing household workers. From 2020 onward, however, GEOSTAT plans to change the methodology and exclude subsistence farmers from these categories as their productivity is not oriented towards the market.

The impediments described above for women's participation in the labour market also apply to women's participation in entrepreneurship. The quantitative data on women's entrepreneurship is limited in Georgia – the only reliable source is a study conducted in 2015 by the Asian Development Bank and GEOSTAT demonstrating that 6.5 per cent of men and 2.6 per cent of women in Georgia engage in entrepreneurship as their main activity.³¹⁸ The Parliamentary Thematic Inquiry dedicated to women's participation in the State-funded economic development grants programmes has identified that women constitute the minority of State grant recipients and that the larger the grant programme, the less likely it is to benefit women. Among the barriers described above (unpaid domestic work, gender stereotypes, etc.), the access to assets and access to finances were defined as additional impediments women face on their way to becoming entrepreneurs.³¹⁹

According to the census, the flow of emigrants from Georgia has increased. Between 2002 and 2014, as many as 1.15 million people left the country for a period of at least six months or longer.³²⁰ In the early 2000s, the most common destinations for Georgian migrants were the post-Soviet countries (Russia and Ukraine), in addition to Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Turkey and the United States. However, after the 2006-2008 period, migration to Russia became an arduous task for Georgians, and as a result, migration patterns have changed. This has led to a slight increase in the percentage of women among international migrants.³²¹ Women make up about half of all labour migrants from Georgia, primarily to Western Europe, Greece and Turkey.³²² The gendered pattern of migration movements can be partially explained by the destination country's labour-force demands, with women more likely to migrate to countries offering care work jobs. As for internal migration, there is a difference between the urban and rural population by age and sex; for example, the median age in Georgia is higher in the countryside (40.07 years) than in the urban areas (35.19 years).³²³ This can be explained by migration from rural regions to the urban areas during the peak of economically active ages; as a result, older people are being left behind.³²⁴

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

In relation to gender inequality in the workplace, Georgia ratified the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). In addition, the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia, signed on 27 June 2014, aims at harmonizing the labour regulations of Georgia with the relevant EC directives. The Association Agreement places emphasis on the issue of women's labour through several directions: decent work, the regulation of labour standards in

315 Ibid.

316 UN Women Georgia, *Women's Economic Inactivity and Engagement in the Informal Sector in Georgia*.

317 Ibid.

318 GEOSTAT, *Pilot Survey on Measuring Asset Ownership and Entrepreneurship from a Gender Perspective: Georgia* (Tbilisi, Asian Development Bank, 2018). Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/media/21027/EDGE-Report-ENG-Final.pdf>.

319 Parliament of Georgia, *Thematic Inquiry on Women's Participation in State Economic Programmes* (2019).

320 Ralph Hakkert, *Population Dynamics in Georgia: An Overview Based on the 2014 General Population Census Data* (UNFPA, 2017). Available at <https://georgia.unfpa.org/en/publications/population-dynamics-georgia-overview-based-2014-general-population-census-data>.

321 Migration Policy Centre, *Migration Profile: Georgia* (2013). Available at http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Georgia.pdf.

322 World Bank Group, *Georgia Country Gender Assessment*.

323 Ralph Hakkert, *Population Dynamics in Georgia*.

324 Ibid.

accordance with the ILO conventions, the protection of employee's rights through labour laws, the prohibition of discrimination and gender equality, and labour safety.³²⁵

In the 2000s, the Georgian Government undertook market liberalization politics, which resulted in the liberalization of the labour legislation and labour market regulations. Subsequently, employment protections and unemployment benefits, as well as labour inspections, were abolished. Georgia has made several amendments to the Labour Code of Georgia, the Code of Administrative Offences of Georgia, the Gender Equality Law and the Anti-Discrimination Law.³²⁶ However, the amendments are not necessary to safeguard the rights guaranteed by the above-mentioned ILO conventions and the obligations of the Association Agreement, especially in the following areas: (1) non-discrimination based on pay and the establishment of a sectoral minimum wage (in compliance with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention); (2) maternity protection; (3) the protection of pregnant women and nursing mothers by giving them paid leave if they are working in harmful working conditions; and (4) work-life balance.

At present, there are two regimes regulating labour relations in Georgia. The first (2010) refers to all employees, while the second (2015), established by the Law on Public Service, is limited to public servants (not all public organizations are covered by the Law on Public Service; therefore, a considerable number of public sector employees do not enjoy the status of a public servant). The labour protection standards for public servants are higher than those of the Labour Code in terms of guaranteeing paid maternity leave for 183 days.³²⁷

Extended maternity leave is available for employed women in Georgia; however, such leave is not adequately compensated for the employees of the private sector and some public organizations. In 2014, maternity leave for pregnancy, childbirth and childcare was raised from 477 to 730 days, and “paid maternity

leave” was raised from 126 to 183 calendar days. In the case of the birth of twins, or complications with the pregnancy, paid maternity leave can be extended to 200 days. For the adoption of a child under the age of 1, the parent is entitled to adoption leave up to 730 days, of which 90 days are paid.³²⁸ No additional days are considered for the birth and care of a disabled child, and surrogate mothers are left out from receiving the maternity benefit [interview with UNICEF representative; interview with PDO representative]. These provisions are universal in the public and private sector, but the remuneration of paid maternity leave is different for the employees that are under the authority of the Law on Public Service (public servants and persons holding a political office) and other employees that are under the authority of the Labour Code. Paid maternity leave days are fully compensated by the employer exclusively for public servants and persons holding a political office under the authority of the Law on Public Service. Employees working in the private sector or in public organizations that are not under the authority of the Law on Public Service (e.g. public universities and some LLCs) are not entitled to paid maternity leave by their employer. In such cases, there is a one-time compensation available up to GEL 1,000 to cover the paid maternity leave days and leave during pregnancy, childbirth, childcare or during the adoption process. The compensation is paid by the Social Service Agency of the MoIDPOTLHSA. However, if an employed woman earns only GEL 100 or less per month, the amount of the one-time monetary assistance is reduced to GEL 600.

Public servants and those holding a political office (both women and men) are also entitled to parental leave, which consists of 550 calendar days including 90 paid days. Fathers are entitled to paid parental leave only in cases when the mother has not used the paid maternity or adoption leave.³²⁹ The Labour Code and the Law on Public Service prohibit termination of employment during pregnancy and maternity leave;³³⁰ however, there are no statistics on dismissal due to pregnancy [interview with GTUC representative].

325 Raisa Liparteliani and Ekaterine Kardava, *Harmonization of Georgian National Legislation with EU on Women Labour Rights Directives* (Tbilisi, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018). Available at <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/14996.pdf>.

326 UNDP and the GEC, *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations*.

327 UN Women Georgia, *Gender Analysis of the Labour Market Regulations in Armenia and Georgia* (Tbilisi, 2018).

328 MoIDPOTLHSA, Order №231 “*On paid leave during pregnancy, childbirth, childcare or during the adoption process*” (2017). Available at <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3725416?publication=0>.

329 Ibid.

330 Georgia, *Labour Code of Georgia* (2010), arts. 36(2-g), 37(3-c).

In 2018, the Law on Occupational Safety and Health was adopted, and the Labour Inspection Department was established in the MoDPOTLHSA to monitor work safety. The law sets minimal standards for occupational safety and health, focusing on hazardous, hard and harmful occupations. As of 2020, the MoDPOTLHSA has defined the standard for harmful and hazardous work for pregnant women, postnatal and nursing mothers in compliance with the Law on Occupational Safety and Health. However, it should be noted that the Government of Georgia is obliged to include all of the elements of labour inspection in compliance with EC directives and ILO standards which are not currently in place, including the monitoring of labour rights.

In 2018, the GEC approved its internal Action Plan (2018-2020), which includes an objective to improve the labour standards with regard to maternity leave and women's economic empowerment.³³¹ The 2018-2020 HR NAP of the Government contains sections related to labour rights and gender equality, which in turn covers the issues related to equal employment opportunities (section 12.6.1), equal pay (section 12.6.3) and the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace (section 12.6.4).³³²

Objective 9.1.3 of the HR NAP recommends the review and consideration for prospective ratification of several ILO conventions (Nos. 81, 129, 155, 176, 183, 102 and 156) that have not yet been ratified by Georgia.³³³ Among this list, two conventions are especially important for gender equality at work: (1) the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), which sets the minimum duration and compensation for maternity leave; and (2) the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), which promotes non-discrimination at work on the basis of family care responsibilities and work-family balance.

The ILO Convention on Domestic Workers, 2011 (No. 189), which is critical for protecting the labour rights of paid domestic workers, is not included in the HR NAP's list of recommendations.

Gender mainstreaming in economic policies and economic analysis from a gender perspective is underdeveloped in Georgia. The only initiative recorded is the programme established by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD) with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture to promote entrepreneurship in Georgia. While the programme is not specifically designed for women, it does create new opportunities for them.

Gender-responsive budgeting is not instituted in Georgia at the central and municipal level, but programme budgets should include sex-disaggregated indicators. The implementation of programme budgeting in Georgia launched in 2011 as per the Decree of the Government of Georgia N284 (2010). At the State budget level, implementation of programme budgeting launched in 2012, and the development of programme budgets has been mandatory for all municipalities since 2013. However, even recently, the municipalities have been failing to properly implement the recommendations included in the budget development programme. The methodology has been improved several times. In accordance with the Decree of the Minister of Finance of Georgia N283 of 27 July 2018, the State budget for 2019 was developed with the new methodology, followed by local self-government units. The new methodology calls for the use of sex-disaggregated indicators. In addition, one of the goals of the Government's 2018-2020 HR NAP is gender mainstreaming in the State policies, which includes the goal of developing gender-responsive budgeting (objective 12.2.4).³³⁴

331 GEC, *Action Plan (2018-2020)* (2018), sects. 2.4, 2.5.

332 Georgia, *National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights* (2018-2020).

333 Ibid.

334 N. Loladze, *Programme/Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Georgia* (UNDP, 2019).

Recommendations

- ✓ Reform the labour legislation (the Labour Code and the Law on Public Service) in full compliance with ILO Conventions No. 111 (non-discrimination) and No. 100 (equal remuneration) and the relevant EC directives with special emphasis on the following: defining discrimination based on pay and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value; introducing a sectoral minimum wage; introducing maternity protection; affording paid maternity leave for all employees; affording paid leave for pregnant women and nursing mothers who work in harmful and hazardous conditions; and effectively eliminating discrimination in hiring and dismissal, by the Parliament of Georgia and the MoDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Ratify and comply with ILO Conventions No. 183 (Maternity Protection), No. 156 (Workers with Family Responsibilities) and No. 189 (Domestic Workers), by the Parliament of Georgia and the MoDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Conduct a review for the ratification of the ILO conventions (Nos. 81, 129, 155, 176 and 102) listed in the HR NAP, by the Parliament of Georgia and the MoDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Undertake measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid domestic work through flexibility in work arrangements and access to care facilities, by the MoDPOTLHSA, the MoESD and local municipalities.
- ✓ Mainstream gender in economic development policies at the micro and macro level, by the MoESD.
- ✓ Institutionalize and effectively implement gender-responsive budgeting, by the Ministry of Finance.
- ✓ Monitor the implementation of the recommendation of the Parliamentary Thematic Inquiry on establishing a conducive environment for female entrepreneurship, by the Parliament of Georgia, the MoESD and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.
- ✓ Develop and promote special programmes for women entering and/or re-entering the labour market (especially for poor, rural and young women), and promote the active labour market policies, by the MoDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Conduct a high-quality establishment-level survey containing individual-level data, by GEOSTAT.

WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

National Context

Indicator	Data
Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments (SDG indicator 5.5.1)	<p>Women's representation in the Parliament of Georgia is 14.8 per cent (22 women and 127 men). Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.³³⁵</p> <p>Women's representation within the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara is 9.5 per cent (2 women and 19 men). One of the women is a committee head. Source: Adjara Supreme Council, 2019.³³⁶</p> <p>Women's representation in local governments is 13.5 per cent (277 women and 1,781 men). Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.³³⁷</p>
Proportion of elected women mayors (country-specific indicator 5.5.1.1)	<p>0 per cent: All five mayors of the self-governing cities (Batumi, Kutaisi, Poti, Rustavi and Tbilisi) are men.</p> <p>1.7 per cent: Of the 59 mayors of self-governing communities, only one is a woman. Source: GEC, 2018.³³⁸</p>
Proportion of appointed women governors (country-specific indicator 5.5.1.2)	<p>0 per cent: None of the nine governors are women. Source: GEC, 2018.³³⁹</p>
Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service and the judiciary) compared to national distributions (SDG indicator 16.7.1)	<p>Civil servants (totalling 38,009):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Women: 32.8 per cent (12,449) ✓ Men: 67.2 per cent (25,560) <p>Women with disabilities constitute 0.21 per cent of all women civil servants and 0.003 per cent of the female disabled population in the country; men with disabilities constitute 0.16 per cent of all men civil servants and 0.008 per cent of the male disabled population in the country. Source: Civil Service Bureau, 2018;³⁴⁰ and GEOSTAT, 2014.³⁴¹</p>
Proportion of women in I and II rank positions (country-specific indicator 5.5.2.1)	<p>Of I and II rank managerial positions, 39 per cent are held by women, and 61 per cent are held by men. Source: Civil Service Bureau, 2018.³⁴²</p>

335 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*, p. 76.

336 Adjara Supreme Council, "Members of the Supreme Council". Available at <http://www.sca.ge/geo/static/107/umaghlesi-sab-chos-tsevrebi>.

337 GEOSTAT, "Gender Statistics: Local self-governance". Available at <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=Influence%20and%20Power> (accessed in March 2020).

338 UNDP and the GEC, *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations*, vol. 1, p. 9.

339 Ibid.

340 Civil Service Bureau, *Civil Service Bureau Activity Report 2018*, pp. 34-47.

341 GEOSTAT, "Distribution of population by age, health related limitations and sex", 2014 General Population Census Database. Available at <http://census.ge/en/results/census1/health> (accessed in March 2020).

342 Civil Service Bureau, *Civil Service Bureau Activity Report 2018*, p. 36.

Proportions of women in the judiciary (country-specific indicator 16.7.1.3)	In the courts, women make up 53.7 per cent of the 306 active judges. Source: GEOSTAT, 2019. ³⁴³
Proportion of women decision-makers in the judiciary (country-specific indicator 5.5.2.2)	37.5 per cent: three of the eight judges of the Constitutional Court Source: Constitutional Court of Georgia, 2019. ³⁴⁴ 40 per cent: 4 of the 10 Supreme Court judges (of whom the First Deputy Chief Justice is a woman) Source: Supreme Court of Georgia, 2019. ³⁴⁵ There are 53 per cent of women among the judges of the Kutaisi Court of Appeals and 46 per cent in the Tbilisi Court of Appeals. However, among the 26 Presidents of Courts, only four (15.4 per cent) are women, and there are only two (22.2 per cent) women among the nine Presidents of the Chambers. There are no women among the Chairs of judicial panels. Source: Tbilisi Court of Appeals, 2019; and Kutaisi Court of Appeals, 2019. ³⁴⁶
Proportion of women in managerial positions (SDG indicator 5.5.2)	36 per cent Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ³⁴⁷ Women held 45 per cent of ministerial positions (five female and six male ministers). The prime minister is a man, while two of the three deputy prime ministers are women. Source: Government of Georgia, 2020. ³⁴⁸
Proportion of the population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group (SDG indicator 16.7.2)	58 per cent of the population thinks that in Georgia women do not have enough time for politics because of household responsibilities. Source: NDI, 2016. ³⁴⁹ 67 per cent of men and 78 per cent of women thought that women are not as good in decision-making as men. Source: NDI, 2014. ³⁵⁰

343 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*, p. 77.

344 Constitutional Court of Georgia, "Active judges", 2019.

345 Supreme Court of Georgia, "Judges", 2019.

346 Tbilisi Court of Appeals, "Judges", 2019. Available at <http://www.tbappeal.court.ge/?text=20&mc=2>; and Kutaisi Court of Appeals, "Judges", 2019. Available at <http://www.kutaisiappeal.court.gov.ge/about-us/judges/>.

347 GEOSTAT, *Labour Force Survey 2018*.

348 Georgia, "Members of the Georgian Government", 2020. Available at http://gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=27.

349 NDI, *Public attitudes in Georgia, November 2016*. Dataset (2016).

350 NDI, *Women's Political Participation in Georgia* (2014).

Issue Highlights from the Data

Women are underrepresented in the Parliament of Georgia, seeing an increase of only 2.8 per cent since 2012.³⁵¹ At this rate, the target set by the BPfA – 30 per cent female representation by 2030³⁵² – is not achievable. At the same time, it is very important to have women in positions of leadership in the Parliament, in line with SDG indicator 5.5.1. Indeed, there is a big difference between being just an MP and being a committee head, who have the power to initiate and promote reforms and innovations. The Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia (GEC) underwent structural reform to maintain institutional continuity as grounds for ensuring the sustainability of reforms; this process was initiated and finalized by the GEC head, a woman [interview with NDI representatives]. Previously there were five female Heads of Parliamentary Committees, but as of January 2020 only one is in place.

In 2011, the Parliament of Georgia, after intensive advocacy from the development community and upon the initiative of the GEC, adopted legislation on financial incentives for women's participation in political party lists. This voluntary measure constituted an additional 10 per cent in budgetary financing for a party that included at least two representatives of the opposite sex for every 10 candidates in the election party list. In 2013, MPs and members of non-parliamentary parties agreed to maintain voluntary quotas with increased incentives (i.e. 30 per cent additional funding for including at least three representatives of the opposite sex for every 10 in the party list). The amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Political Unions of Citizens were adopted in July 2013. Prior to the 2012 and 2016 parliamentary elections, parties made the general commitment to include more women in their party lists, as well as nominate women in the single-mandate districts. However, the two major competing parties – the United National Movement and Georgian Dream – did not use the existing mechanism of voluntary quotas and did not put more women in the winnable positions despite

increased financial incentives. Georgia's voluntary quota mechanism has been assessed as ineffective, as the financial incentive it envisages has not resulted in more women being selected as candidates or elected; more work is necessary towards women's political empowerment in the country.³⁵³

The number of women in local self-governance bodies has been decreasing from election to election in Georgia. From 14 per cent after the local elections of 1998, the percentage of women dropped to 12 per cent in 2002 and remained at 11 per cent in the 2006, 2010 and 2014 elections. In the October 2017 local elections, women constituted only 36.85 per cent of the candidates in the proportional lists of local legislative bodies (Sakrebulo) and only 16.5 per cent of majoritarian candidates. Among the mayoral candidates of five self-governing cities, only 22.92 per cent were women. Of the mayoral candidates of 59 local self-governing municipalities, only 12.15 per cent were women. As for the candidates for the office of Tbilisi Mayor, 15.38 per cent were women. All five mayors of the self-governing cities (Batumi, Kutaisi, Poti, Rustavi and Tbilisi) are men, and of the 59 mayors of self-governing communities, only one is a woman.³⁵⁴

The share of women in civil service was 9 per cent in 2018; this number has been increasing since 2016 by an average of 2 per cent annually, excluding the police. The percentage of women in managerial positions has also increased to 13 per cent in 2018,³⁵⁵ but this might mainly be attributed to more men exiting the system for higher income-generating activities. Data are collected by the Civil Service Bureau from all civil service agencies in the country, including the Parliament, local governments and ministries, but some indicators are collected only as averages, such as average age and salary [interview with Civil Service Bureau representative]. A step forward is disaggregated information provided by the I and II rank positions on the one hand and the III and IV ranks on the other, where women are mostly present at the lower managerial positions; however, this ranking system

351 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*.

352 Asian Development Bank, *Georgia: Country Gender Assessment*.

353 EU and the Council of Europe, *Regional Study on Women's Political Representation in the Eastern Partnership Countries* (2017), pp. 41, 46.

354 Central Election Commission of Georgia, "Gender Statistics of Elections". Available at <http://cesko.ge/statistic/>.

355 Civil Service Bureau, *Civil Service Bureau Activity Report 2017*; and Civil Service Bureau, *Civil Service Bureau Activity Report 2018*

is different from the international one required by SDG indicator 5.5.2. The UNDP gender equality study of the civil service advises a thorough investigation of women's conditions and salaries in this sector.³⁵⁶

According to the recent gender equality study in the judiciary, women are almost equally represented at the lower levels of the system, but “gender disparities persist in [upper] management and leadership positions”. The barriers identified by the study include the absence of clear criteria in selection procedures, the prevalence of gender stereotypes and the double burden of unpaid domestic work on women.³⁵⁷

In Georgia, “women are less frequently found in managerial positions, which may be an early sign of the glass ceiling effect.”³⁵⁸ Indeed, horizontal and vertical segregation are quite frequent in all types of institutions.³⁵⁹

Against this background, it might not be wise to trust a value of 36 per cent of women managers across public and private sectors, due to the availability of data and especially because we were not able to find out at what levels the data were collected. Indeed, women are underrepresented in decision-making processes at all levels and in all spheres of public life. This disadvantage is also reflected in public opinion studies, as noted in the preceding table.

The overall conclusion on the situation of women in decision-making cannot be considered exhaustive because of the lack of data from the private sector; the existing data enables us to only see the picture as it is in the public sector, and it is not satisfactory. If and when women are present in managerial positions, they are mainly in low-ranking positions; and while the situation in the civil service and the judiciary has improved over the years, the situation at the top level – the parliaments and local governments – has largely remained the same.

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

According to the CEDAW concluding observations on Georgia, the Committee is concerned that women remain significantly underrepresented in the legislative and executive branches, especially in senior and decision-making positions, and that the number of women in local legislative bodies is continuously decreasing.³⁶⁰ The Committee recommends the State to ensure the full and equal participation of women in political and public life, especially at the senior and decision-making levels, including in local legislative bodies. In particular, it recommends that Georgia introduce mandatory gender quotas to significantly increase the representation of women in the national and local-level legislatures.³⁶¹

The Constitution of Georgia provides for equality of results – that is, substantive gender equality – and mandates the State to introduce special measures for this purpose (Article 11). Activity 13.1.7.1 of the HR NAP calls for initiating “legislative amendments in order to increase the representation of women in elected bodies”. The Gender Equality Law, among other provisions, envisages equal rights to participate in elections and be elected. The GEC, established in 2004, carries out relevant studies, and its internal 2018-2020 action plan, among other important aims, lists advocating for legislative changes that support increasing women's numbers in decision-making positions.

In 2017, the Government of Georgia, with the support of the United Nations and development partners (Sweden and the EU), established the Inter-Agency Commission to serve as an institutional gender mechanism in the executive government.³⁶² Co-chaired by the Adviser to the Prime Minister of Georgia on Human Rights and Gender Equality and the Deputy Minister of Justice, the institutional framework for

356 UNDP, *Global Report: Gender Equality in Public Administration* (New York, 2017).

357 N. Janashia, *Assessing the Main Factors Contributing to the Underrepresentation of Women Judges in the Common Courts of Georgia* (2019).

358 UN Women Georgia, *Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labour Market in Georgia*; and Asian Development Bank, *Georgia: Country Gender Assessment*.

359 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*.

360 CEDAW Committee, *Concluding observations on Georgia*, para. 25.

361 *Ibid.*, para. 26.

362 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*.

gender equality has been strengthened further, as the Inter-Agency Commission's mandate covers work in four thematic areas: violence; communication and awareness-raising; UN Security Council resolution 1325 on WPS; and local government gender equality councils. Positioned under the office of the Prime Minister of Georgia, the Inter-Agency Commission ensures coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to advance gender equality and performs functions under Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention.³⁶³ To ensure the participation of civil society, the Inter-Agency Commission operates thematic task forces, including the Task Force on Ending Violence against Women,³⁶⁴ the Task Force on Harmful Practices³⁶⁵ and other relevant working groups.

All governors' and mayors' offices have gender equality officers. Gender equality councils have now been established in all local councils. Twenty-three such councils have developed action plans, while 39 are still working on them.³⁶⁶ All ministries except the MoDPOTLHSA and the MoESD have gender focal points. At the same time, all ministries have designated members to the gender equality group of the Inter-Agency Commission [interview with the head of the Inter-Agency Commission]. All of these groups are a step forward in terms of gender machinery development; however, much still needs to be done. The PDO recommends clearly defining the responsibilities of gender focal points and other members of gender equality groups.³⁶⁷ In almost all cases, these individuals were initially hired for other positions, with gender equality responsibilities later added to their tasks. Thus, they not only lack the time to fulfil gender equality tasks but also lack expertise and knowledge in the gender equality field [interviews with one of the focal points and with an environmental protection expert].

To sum up, women are underrepresented in decision-making in all spheres of public life, and this problem is not adequately addressed by the Government, for example, initiatives to introduce gender quotas in the Parliament of Georgia have failed, while voluntary quotas introduced for political parties have not produced any tangible results. The existing in-

stitutional gender machinery is nascent and is not able and will not be able to address existing gender inequality and women's empowerment challenges because of the lack of human and financial resources.

Recommendations

- ✓ Introduce a mandatory electoral gender quota that is compatible with the country's electoral system, by the Parliament of Georgia.
- ✓ Further promote changes in the selection and promotion procedures in the judiciary, by the High Council of Justice of Georgia.
- ✓ Work more closely with political parties on introducing principles of fair structuring and decision-making processes within parties.
- ✓ Make gender equality and women's rights training an integral part of civil servants' on-the-job trainings, by the Civil Service Bureau in cooperation with the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Create the legal grounds for institutional continuity and sustainable development, including through the allocation of human and financial resources, for gender equality institutional mechanisms at both the national and local level, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Provide technical support to the gender equality councils in the regions, especially on the principles of gender-responsive budgeting, by the Ministry of Finance in close cooperation with the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Ensure sex-disaggregated data collection, especially in terms of intersectionality, including other vulnerable groups (e.g. people with disabilities, etc.), by line ministries.
- ✓ Ensure the awareness-raising of gender equality focal points through tailored trainings at all ministries in the country, and outline their role and responsibilities, by the ministries in close cooperation with the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Ensure separate budgets for gender equality focal points so that they have enough time to fulfil their functions, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Work with political parties, the Parliament, the Central Election Commission and the media on promoting zero tolerance for violence against women and sexism in politics and elections.

363 Istanbul Convention, Article 10 – Co-ordinating body: "Parties shall designate or establish one or more official bodies responsible for the co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by this Convention. These bodies shall co-ordinate the collection of data as referred to in Article 11, analyse and disseminate its results."

364 Co-chaired by UN Women

365 Co-chaired by UNFPA

366 Gender International Network of South Caucasus, "Institutional Mechanism of Gender Equality: Georgia", 2019. Database. Available at http://www.ginsc.net/map_html/index.php?lev=0&cat=0&sub=0&lang=ge.

367 Public Defender of Georgia, *Annual Report: The Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2018*.

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

National Context

Indicator	Data
<p><i>Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex (SDG indicator 5.b.1)</i></p>	<p>95 per cent of women and 96 per cent of men aged 25-55 own a mobile phone. However, differences are visible for older groups. According to GEOSTAT, 54 per cent of women and 63 per cent of men aged 75 and above use a mobile phone in Georgia.</p> <p>According to GEOSTAT data for 2019 (regarding the population aged 15 and above who used the Internet or a computer during the preceding three months), a high portion of the Georgian population has access to a computer and the Internet. 79 per cent of women use a computer almost every day, and 89 per cent use the Internet. These variables are slightly higher among men, with 81 per cent and 90 per cent respectively.</p> <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2019.³⁶⁸</p> <p>The percentage of households that have access to the Internet at home is 70.8 per cent. There is a major difference between rural (52 per cent) and urban (84 per cent) areas, as well as between the poorest (29.8 per cent) and richest (98 per cent) groups.</p> <p>Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.³⁶⁹</p>

368 GEOSTAT, "Gender Statistics: ICT".

369 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, p. 58.

Issue Highlights from the Data

Technology and the media play a key role in the empowerment of women by ensuring access to social opportunities and helping promote equal and socially inclusive societies. As statistical information shows, access to technology depends on the demographic characteristics of households. Despite the fact that most households own a television (95.6 per cent) and mobile phones (95.7 per cent), differences exist when it comes to owning a smartphone (urban 79.3 per cent, rural 56.2 per cent).³⁷⁰

Only 70.8 per cent of households have access to the Internet,³⁷¹ with a lower share in rural areas and, as expected, among the poorest population (29 per cent, while access is 98 per cent in the richest population).³⁷² The share of households with computer and Internet access, by sex of the head of the household, is lower among women. In 2019, computer access among women was 56.9 per cent (65 per cent for men), and Internet access among women was estimated at 74 per cent, compared to 82 per cent among male household heads.³⁷³

Together with technology, the media plays an important role in the empowerment of women by covering gender-related issues responsibly. In terms of media coverage of the issues connected to women's rights and female civic or non-civic actors, there is limited information available, with only several recent studies referring to those issues. According to the media monitoring analysis by We Research in 2018,³⁷⁴ coverage of gender-related issues by the media, when compared to all topics covered, varies between 2 and 7 per cent: 6 per cent of TV coverage, 7 per cent of online media and 2 per cent of print media. During the time used on gender-related issues, TV media covered gender equality (16 per cent) and sexual harassment issues (14 per cent), while limited time was used to cover issues connected to LGBT rights (2 per cent). Within online media, coverage was devoted to sexual harassment issues (29 per cent), domestic violence (18 per cent) and gender quotas (women in

politics) (10 per cent). The coverage of gender-related issues is rather low within the press. In addition, the coverage of feminist actors in the media is lower than the coverage of all gender-related issues. According to the above-mentioned study, only 14 per cent of the gender-related time was used to cover feminist actors.³⁷⁵

The effectiveness of the coverage of gender-related issues depends on its content. The media is mainly focused on scandalous facts, and accordingly, the themes they choose to cover are stereotypical and insensitive.³⁷⁶ According to experts, this is due to a lack of knowledge on the part of journalists on how to cover women's rights properly, as well as how to transform the fragmental coverage of gender equality issues into an integral part of the media culture [interview with the former head of the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics].

As for gender balance within the media, there is no information available that would track the differences. However, experts are indicating that women dominate in journalism schools and that more women are employed within all types of media. However, this is due to the presumed view of the media as a more feminine sector. As for managerial positions, according to an expert, small differences can be identified, as men occupy higher positions more often than women. However, experts are claiming that these differences are not significant [interview with a media expert].

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

According to SDG target 5.b, States should enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.³⁷⁷ The BPfA more broadly assesses the role of the media and its connection to gender equality in the respective countries.³⁷⁸ According to strategic objective J.1, States should increase the participation and access of women to expression

370 Ibid.

371 Ibid.

372 Ibid.

373 GEOSTAT, "Gender Statistics: ICT".

374 We Research, Coverage of Feminist Actors in Georgian Media and Experience of Media Communications (2018). Available at http://feminism-boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2018/12/boell_final_draft_09.12.2018_final.pdf.

375 Ibid.

376 Ibid.

377 The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), *Final list of proposed Sustainable Development Goal indicators*. Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11803Official-List-of-Proposed-SDG-Indicators.pdf>.

378 United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 27 October 1995*.

and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.

According to strategic objective J.2 of the BPfA, governments are obliged to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. Self-regulatory mechanisms for the media need to be created and strengthened and approaches developed to eliminate gender-biased programming.³⁷⁹ According to the CEDAW concluding observations on Georgia, the patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society remain deeply rooted and are exacerbated by the increased sexualization of women in the media, which undermines the social status, participation in public life and professional careers of women.³⁸⁰

The UNSRVAV is also concerned about the media's dissemination of sexist remarks and widespread gender stereotypes. As stated in her report on Georgia, the Special Rapporteur has noted that insensitive media can have a negative impact on women's opportunities and social status, their professional careers and their participation in political and public life on an equal basis with men.³⁸¹

According to the EU directive on Audiovisual Media Services, EU Member States shall ensure that audiovisual commercial communications provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction comply with requirements, inter alia, to not include or promote any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.³⁸² Under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, Georgia took on the obligation to implement the requirement of the above-mentioned directive.³⁸³

The Government's HR NAP for the period 2018-2020 includes the obligation of the MoESD to enhance the

access to new technologies and communication for women living in rural areas.³⁸⁴ The NAP also includes the obligation of the State to strengthen access to the media and information for ethnic minority groups in Georgia.³⁸⁵

The legal framework for the media is covered by the Georgian Law on Broadcasting (2004) and the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters adopted by the Georgian National Communications Commission. The Georgian Law on Broadcasting obliges Georgian Public Broadcasting "to reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age, and gender diversity in programs".³⁸⁶

Self-regulatory mechanisms promote and ensure that the media is independent, transparent and free from government interference. According to the Law on Broadcasting, the "broadcaster shall, on the basis of the code of conduct, establish an effective mechanism for self-regulation that will make it possible to review and provide timely and justified responses to complaints."³⁸⁷ Despite this, the media's internal complaint mechanisms are ineffective, and even in the rare cases of a hearing, the implementation of the decisions is lacking.³⁸⁸ The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics³⁸⁹ represents an important tool in regulating the standards and ethics of how journalists cover different issues. In 2017, the Charter adopted its Guidelines on the Coverage of Gender Issues³⁹⁰ in order to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media. However, despite the fact that the Charter has a complaint mechanism, its decisions are recommendatory in nature and have limited force and resources to effectively regulate ethical issues among journalists when it comes to coverage of certain issues. According to experts, monitoring systems play a key role in developing the quality of media content, which should be ensured by enhancing the financial and technical support for monitoring mechanisms. International and national

379 Ibid., "Women and the media", area J, para. 237.

380 CEDAW Committee, *Concluding observations on Georgia*, para. 18.

381 United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women*, para. 77.

382 European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Directive 2010/13/EU – Audiovisual Media Services Directive* (2010), art. 9.1.ii.

383 See https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2019_association_implementation_report_georgia.pdf.

384 Georgia, *National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights (2018-2020)*, sect. 12.8.5.

385 Ibid., sect. 17.2.

386 Georgia, *Law of Georgia on Broadcasting* (2004), art. 16.1(m).

387 Ibid., art. 14.1.

388 MDF, *Self-Regulation of the Broadcaster: Legislation and Practice* (2014). Available at <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/uploads//mautskeblis-tvitregulireba-kanini-praqtika.pdf>.

389 See <https://www.qartia.ge/en>.

390 See <https://www.qartia.ge/ka/sakhelmdzghvanelo-tsesebi1/article/34573-genderuli-sakithkhebis-gashuqeba>.

human rights organizations should actively communicate with the Charter in order to plan future awareness-raising activities for the specific media channels [interview with the former head of the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics].

During the past decade, the Government was implementing the awareness-raising component of its international and national commitments on gender equality. As indicated in Georgia's National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA, the Government of Georgia was using media platforms for national and social campaigns; however, it was focused mainly on violence against women and domestic violence.³⁹¹

Hence, in Georgia, there are still limited media activities that would actively promote gender equality and the adequate portrayal of women. Media coverage of gender-related issues is incidental and reactive. The lack of readiness from the media platforms is accompanied by politicians' insensitive and problematic narratives and speeches. Equal access to ICT is another challenge in Georgia, as the lack of access to technology hinders the active realization of women's human rights and creates obstacles to building an equal and socially inclusive society. Accordingly, more effective and consistent measures are needed to enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular ICT, to promote the empowerment of women as indicated in the SDG agenda.

Recommendations

- ✓ Ensure that households have equal access to new technologies and that women and girls can benefit from it, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Promote the non-discriminatory and positive coverage of issues related to gender equality in keeping with the standards of journalistic ethics, by the media.
- ✓ Improve and update existing self-regulation mechanisms of the media that would be gender-sensitive, efficient and results-oriented and aimed against the propagation of discrimination and prejudices, by the media.
- ✓ Contribute to awareness-raising among journalists on codes of ethics and anti-discriminatory approaches, by the media.
- ✓ Ensure that the priorities and programming of Georgian Public Broadcasting properly reflect the challenges and problems faced by women, by Georgian Public Broadcasting.

391 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*, pp. 54-56.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

National Context

Indicator	Data
<i>Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status (SDG indicator 2.3.2)</i>	Data not available
<i>Average monthly income of agricultural population by household from employment or the sale of agriculture products (country-specific indicator 2.3.2.1)</i>	GEL 445 in 2018 (combining income from wages, self-employment and the sale of agricultural products) Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ³⁹² 43 per cent of the agricultural population produces goods for sale, with an average monthly income of GEL 313.30. However, the distribution is highly positively skewed; therefore, reporting a median income of GEL 133.30 is more appropriate. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ³⁹³
<i>(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (SDG indicator 5.a.1)</i>	Of the total landowners, 62.3 per cent are men and 37.7 per cent are women. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ³⁹⁴ 81 per cent of land is owned by men; 19 per cent, by women. Source: GEOSTAT, 2018. ³⁹⁵ In 2016, women owned 28.2 per cent of the agricultural lands; 10 per cent of the farming land under lease; and 17 per cent of the total farming land (including under lease). Source: Sapari and UNDP, 2017. ³⁹⁶ Considering ownership by tenure type, women own 19 per cent of the land that has legal ownership or is in legal owner-like possession; 11 per cent of the land that is rented out; and 18 per cent of the land that is operated with a long-term lease (no possession). Source: We Research, 2017. ³⁹⁷
<i>Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services (SDG indicator 1.4.1)</i>	14.3 per cent of the rural population does not have access to drinking water on their premises. Collection of drinking water is almost equally divided between men and women (aged 15 and above): 50.6 per cent and 45 per cent respectively. About 77.6 per cent of the rural household population is satisfied with water quality. The piped sewer system is available for 15.8 per cent of rural households. Source: MICS Georgia, 2018. ³⁹⁸
<i>Access to kindergartens</i>	23.3 per cent of children living in rural areas (aged 36-59 months) do not attend kindergartens. Source: MICS Georgia, 2018. ³⁹⁹
<i>Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population (SDG indicator 13.1.1)</i>	Between 2011 and 2015, the average death rate attributed to natural disasters was 0.2 per cent. Source: WHO, 2016. ⁴⁰⁰

392 GEOSTAT, "Distribution of Average Monthly Incomes per Household by Urban and Rural Areas 2018". Dataset. Available at https://geostat.ge/media/23998/_Distribution-of-average-monthly-incomes-per-household-by-urban-and-rural-areas.xls (accessed in May 2020).

393 GEOSTAT, *Household Income and Expenditure Database* (2018). Available at <https://geostat.ge/media/24778/2018-DB.zip>. Authors' own calculations.

394 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2018*, p. 44.

395 GEOSTAT, "Gender Statistics: Distribution of Land Area Operated by Holdings", 2018. Available at <http://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=Agriculture> (accessed in March 2020).

396 Kristine Margvelashvili, *Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia: Analysis of Existing Policies and Initiatives* (Tbilisi, Union "Sapari" and UNDP, 2017), p. 26.

397 We Research for Women in Europe for a Common Future, *Sustainable Development Goal # 5 Gender Assessment in Georgia* (Tbilisi, 2017), p. 20.

398 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 274, 277, 292.

399 *Ibid.*, pp. 203-205.

400 WHO, *World Health Statistics 2016: Monitoring health for the SDGs* (2016).

Issue Highlights from the Data

Rural Georgia is home to 1,539,100 people, which is 41.3 per cent of the total population. More than half of the country's population is employed in agriculture, which accounts for 9 per cent of GDP. In some regions,⁴⁰¹ more than 70 per cent of the labour force is employed in agriculture. The table's data on land ownership by sex point to only a slightly disproportional ownership; however, considering land size, women are in a disadvantaged position, which is also reflected in the economic inactivity in villages.⁴⁰²

Women and men are equally involved in farming, with men spending 98.1 days and women 84.3 days per year in the crops value chain, while men spend 165.8 days and women 259.9 days in the animal husbandry value chain.⁴⁰³ Taking care of domestic animals and producing dairy products heavily depend on problematic water and gas supplies; this is probably one of the reasons for the long hours spent on animal husbandry. Indeed, rural women have limited access to basic services, as indicated in the preceding table. These shortages affect women as they are the main caretakers of family members and, thus, use water for everyday household activities such as cooking, washing and cleaning; quite frequently, women wash in cold water to save family expenses [interview with expert on gender in agriculture and the environment]. Waste disposal is a problem for many households without a car. Such situations for rural women may hamper their income-generating activities, as women with limited access to basic services spend much more time and effort on household chores and have less time for other income-generating activities, not to mention free time. The lack of kindergartens – or the poor conditions or long distances of existing ones – leave almost no chance for women with small children to find the opportunity to work [interviews

with experts on gender in agriculture and the environment].

The shortage of basic supplies pushes the rural population to collect firewood for heating, which, in turn, affects the environment. Mainly poor and elderly women collect non-timber resources, such as mushrooms and berries; a consequence of deforestation⁴⁰⁴ is the additional foraging time and effort required of those who rely on forests for firewood, fodder and other non-timber forest products.⁴⁰⁵ The lack of transport – and thus the need to walk long distances – is another problem for women who use forest resources.⁴⁰⁶ In addition, road construction might create some adverse impacts on the local population, such as excessive dust causing health problems in children and more time spent on cleaning for women, who usually care for the children and take them to see a doctor [interviews with experts on gender in agriculture and the environment].

Environmental challenges, including climate change and the risk of landslides, floods, fires and droughts, affect women and men differently. As women are mainly responsible for housework, they are less ready to react quickly to natural disasters.⁴⁰⁷ Women and children are 14 times as likely as men to die during disasters. The most vulnerable groups are inhabitants of high mountainous regions and rural areas, poor people and those living below the poverty line, and people living alone.⁴⁰⁸

In addition, some women are victims of varying forms of domestic violence; in the case of economic violence, for example, husbands forbid their wives to work [interview with expert on gender in agriculture]. Other victim women and their children are in need of shelters and crisis centres; however, these

401 Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti

402 Margvelashvili, *Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia*.

403 UN Women Georgia, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and Austrian Development Cooperation, *Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems in Georgia* (2018).

404 SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

405 UN Women, *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (New York, 2018).

406 Ibid.

407 Filia, Women's Fund in Georgia, and We Research, *Situational Analysis and Recommendations on Environmental Justice and Women's Rights in Georgia* (Second Phase) (2019). Available at https://www.womenfundgeorgia.org/Files/WF-Final-Report_ENG.pdf.

408 Women's Fund in Georgia, *Situation Analysis and Recommendations on Environmental Justice and Women's Rights in Georgia: Phase 1 (Policy and Legal Framework; Projects/Initiatives; Main Stakeholders)* (2017). Available at https://www.womenfundgeorgia.org/Files/Situation-Analysis_PART-1-FINAL.pdf.

are not always accessible. Crisis centres are very limited in number and geographical scope. Rural women have limited access to economic opportunities, like starting their own business or being employed in a highly rewarded position; in addition, they face barriers to taking out loans and borrowing credit⁴⁰⁹ as they lack their own income or property.

Not being a landowner creates the additional risk of being excluded from village development programmes and, correspondingly, from decision-making processes.⁴¹⁰ The same holds for IDPs and ethnic minority women.⁴¹¹ Because of traditional gender stereotypes, women are not entitled to decision-making in public activities; rural women rarely participate in decision-making affecting their own village or town's development,⁴¹² including environmental issues.⁴¹³ In one of the municipalities of western Georgia, for example, all top managers of quarry extraction companies are men, and women are also underrepresented in waste management decision-making [interview with Ozurgeti gender equality council representative].⁴¹⁴ At the same time, in some regions, women actively intervene in decisions on regional development, including environment protection issues [interview with an environmental expert and an NGO representative].

Small and medium-sized enterprises provide the main source of economic growth and employment in countries with market economies. During the third quarter of 2018, the share employed in this type of business constituted 63 per cent of the entire employed population in Georgia.⁴¹⁵ Women-owned enterprises⁴¹⁶ are few; beyond that fact, women face problems selling their products as they cannot compete with large food producers, in addition to lacking food-keeping facilities.⁴¹⁷

The main problem for rural women as well as the rural population is the lack of income and lack of in-

come-generating activities. This, in turn, exacerbates their careless approach to environment protection, which also arises from a lack of awareness on environmental issues. Women are in a disadvantaged position because of their submissive role in families and societies, lacking a voice in decision-making processes in their own communities. Family responsibilities as dictated by traditional gender roles further impede women's economic and decision-making activities in villages.

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

The Social-economic Development Strategy of Georgia (2020) and the Organic Law of Georgia on Agricultural Land Ownership (2019) do not address gender issues at all. The 2018-2021 Regional Development Programme of Georgia is based on the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, establishes five priorities and mentions gender equality and social inclusion as one of its objectives. All regional development strategies are similar to one another, especially in terms of gender equality; most of them include aim 14: development of the media and the public sector and reducing gender inequality, with corresponding activities to be executed (in Guria, Imereti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Racha-Lechkhumi). The development strategies of some of the regions – for example, Kvemo Kartli – add the integration of ethnic minorities, while others consider gender equality data on political representation, economic activity and employment, and the education of women (in Imereti, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti).

The 2016-2020 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) Development Strategy of Georgia and its Action Plan were adopted, followed by reports on its implementation in 2016, 2017 and 2018.⁴¹⁸ The strategy envisages support for vulnerable groups and women. Indeed, special trainings were provided for them, to-

409 OECD, *Monitoring Georgia's SME Development Strategy 2016-2020* (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2019). One of the recommendations of Georgia's SME Development Strategy 2016-2020 is increasing loan guarantees for women.

410 GEC, *Thematic Survey on Women's Participation in State Economic Programmes* (2018).

411 UNDP and the GEC, *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations*, vol. 2.

412 UN Women Georgia, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and Austrian Development Cooperation, *Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems in Georgia*.

413 Women's Fund in Georgia, *Situation Analysis and Recommendations on Environmental Justice and Women's Rights in Georgia: Phase 1*.

414 United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, strategic objective K.1.

415 MoESD, *SME Development Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020: Annual Progress Report 2018*.

416 SDG indicator 2.3.2: Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status.

417 GEC, *Thematic Survey on Women's Participation in State Economic Programmes*.

418 MoESD, *SME Development Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020: Annual Progress Report 2017; 2018; 2019*.

gether with establishing a special sub-council to promote women's entrepreneurship within the Private Sector Development Advisory Council.⁴¹⁹

The only national document concerning environmental protection that addresses the needs of women is the 2017-2020 National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and its Action Plan, which envisages ensuring gender equality in the disaster risk reduction policy by considering the special needs of women (for example, clause 3.12 regarding pregnant women) in an emergency and engaging women in preparedness work.⁴²⁰

The 2017-2020 Rural Development Strategy of Georgia lists a number of objectives that mention women in terms of supporting their employment and participation in decision-making. Although the envisaged infrastructure development forgets to mention gender problems, the corresponding NAP includes plans to rehabilitate or build 70 kindergartens. The 2016-2017 HR NAP and the National Agriculture Development Strategy and corresponding NAP call for supporting women in cooperatives. The Strategy of Market Formation and its NAP fail to mention gender issues. Overall, these documents lack an understanding of gender equality.⁴²¹ State programmes, tailored towards supporting rural women in their skills development and access to finances, still await their realization.⁴²²

Rural women are disproportionately affected by poverty and the lack of access to basic supplies and services, and these barriers are inadequately addressed in legislation as well as action. Overall, certain initiatives and projects consider gender equality, but these are sporadic, less-coordinated inputs that need a more consolidated approach and clear-cut policy. SDG indicator 5.a.2 – the proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control – is addressed at a low level. In addition, Georgia adopted a country-specific indicator: the existence of measures supported by the State guaranteeing women's equal rights on economic resources, as well as on ownership of land and other property including ownership and control of inheritance. By its essence,

the indicator addresses the disproportional situation of rural women but only on paper. Overall, legislative bases can be considered prone to being gender-blind. The sporadic initiatives will not be able to produce any systemic change or improvement; there is a lack of policy that addresses women's issues in agriculture and environment protection in the country.

Recommendations

- ✓ Analyse existing legislation and introduce necessary changes in the laws, regulations and corresponding national action plans, and introduce a deeper gender equality approach in the corresponding documents of the regional development strategies, by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, the GEC and the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Develop a gender equality and social inclusion checklist for all types of programmes and project proposals, by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.
- ✓ Strengthen gender equality and social inclusion awareness of the Ministry's own staff through enhancing gender mainstreaming and social inclusion trainings.
- ✓ Introduce gender equality and social inclusion assessments of programmes and project proposals in the sphere of agriculture and environmental protection, by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and the GEC.
- ✓ Support the inclusion of women in decision-making at the local level, by the GEC and the Inter-Agency Commission.
- ✓ Provide trainings for the mountainous population on disaster risk reduction and its gender aspects, by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and the GEC.
- ✓ Support the development of waste collection systems in villages, by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.
- ✓ Support women-initiated and realized rural projects, by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.
- ✓ Ensure disaggregated data collection, especially in terms of other vulnerable groups (e.g. people with disabilities, etc.), by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and GEOSTAT.

419 MoESD, *SME Development Strategy of Georgia 2016-2020* (2015). Available at http://www.moesd.gov.ge/uploads/files/2017/ek__politika/eng_sme_development_strategy.pdf.

420 United Nations and others, *Gender in Disaster Risk Reduction*.

421 UNDP and the GEC, *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations*, vol. 2.

422 Margvelashvili, *Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia*.

THE GIRL CHILD

National Context

Indicator	Data
Proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (SDG indicator 5.3.1)	<p>The proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 15 is 0.3 per cent, compared to 0.5 per cent of men.</p> <p>The proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 18 is 13.9 per cent, compared to 0.5 per cent of men.</p> <p>Overall, 7.2 per cent of women aged 15-17 married in 2018.</p> <p>Of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 18, 12.4 per cent were ethnic Georgian women, compared to 37.6 per cent Azerbaijanis and 4.5 per cent Armenians.</p> <p>Of women aged 20-24 who were married by age 18, 46.5 per cent had only completed primary or lower secondary school, while just 3.1 per cent of this group were in or had graduated from higher education.</p> <p>Source: MICS Georgia, 2018.⁴²³</p>
Number of girls who dropped out from school because of early marriage	<p>In 2015, the number of girls who dropped out of school because of marriage equalled 408.</p> <p>Source: MoESCS, as cited in National SDG Document.⁴²⁴</p>
Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age (SDG indicator 5.3.2)	<p>No quantitative data</p> <p>The qualitative study found that some older women in the Avar community experienced FGM/C (type Ia: removal of the clitoral hood or prepuce only).</p> <p>Source: UNFPA and UNICEF, 2017.⁴²⁵</p>
Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 engaged in child labour, by sex and age (SDG indicator 8.7.1)	<p>5.8 per cent of children aged 5-17 were engaged in economic activity, and 4.2 per cent were engaged in child labour.</p> <p>6.3 per cent of boys and 1.9 per cent of girls aged 5-17 were engaged in child labour.</p> <p>Source: ILO and GEOSTAT, 2015.⁴²⁶</p>
Sex ratio at birth	<p>Sex ratio in Georgia: 107.9 male births per 100 female births</p> <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.⁴²⁷</p> <p>Birth order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ First: 106 male births per 100 female births ✓ Second: 107 male births per 100 female births ✓ Third and beyond: 113 male births per 100 female births <p>Source: GEOSTAT, 2018.⁴²⁸</p>

423 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, pp. 24, 246-247.

424 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia*.

425 UNFPA and UNICEF, *Exploring Harmful Practices of Early/Child Marriage and FGM/C in Georgia* (2017).

426 ILO and GEOSTAT, *Georgia National Child Labour Survey 2015*, pp. 6-8.

427 GEOSTAT, "Sex Ratio at Birth 1994-2018". Available at <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/319/dabadeba> (accessed in March 2020).

428 GEOSTAT, *Women and Men in Georgia 2019*.

Issue Highlights from the Data

UNFPA qualitative research reveals that despite the downward trend in the sex ratio at birth (SRB), son preference is still prevalent in Georgia, and it varies across different groups.⁴²⁹ It is generally accepted that the biological norm for the sex ratio is around 105 male births per 100 female births. In the 1990s, in Georgia, the SRB began to increase, reaching a high of 114.9 boys per 100 girls in 2004.⁴³⁰ However, since 2004, the SRB has declined to reach a normal level (104.4 boys per 100 girls) in 2016 and again increased to 107.9 male births per 100 female birth in 2018. In this regard, the geographical variations and urban/rural divide are significant. Between 2010 and 2014, the SRB reached 111.8 boys per 100 girls in rural areas, while in the capital, it was one of the lowest: 105 boys per 100 girls.⁴³¹ Higher levels of son preference are found among Armenian and Azerbaijani families in Georgia, while the lowest levels can be found among wealthier families and families relying on social assistance.⁴³² Son preference becomes prominent with each subsequent birth and depends on the gender composition of the children in the family.

Early and child marriage remains a persistent problem in Georgia. The prevalence rate was 17.2 per cent in 2005, 14 per cent in 2010 and 13.9 per cent in 2018.⁴³³ The MICS provides evidence that child marriage in Georgia is a strongly gendered phenomenon: 11.2 per cent of girls aged 15-19 included in the survey were married or living in a union, compared to just 0.1 per cent of boys.⁴³⁴ Women in rural areas are more likely to marry under the age of 18 (8 per cent urban women, 25 per cent rural women).⁴³⁵ This cor-

roborates the data on childbirth: more women aged 20-24 living in rural areas reported that they had given birth before the age of 18 than did women in the same age group living in urban areas (10.8 per cent versus 3.6 per cent).⁴³⁶

The economic and educational background of girls appears to be an important factor affecting the likelihood of early marriage. For instance, 24.9 per cent of girls aged 15-19 from the lowest wealth quintile reported that they were married or living in a union, compared to 0.5 per cent of girls in the same age group from the richest wealth quintile.⁴³⁷ Women who married before 18 were most likely to fall short of completing secondary or higher education.⁴³⁸ The data on childbirth provides additional insights into early marriage and also confirms that women aged 20-24 who had only completed primary or lower secondary schooling were much more likely to have given birth before the age of 18 than those with higher education.⁴³⁹ Currently, the referral system obliges school administrations to report and prevent cases of potential or actual child marriage. However, according to a 2018 PDO report, schools are still reluctant to report their students' marriage cases or to interfere with such cases due to the prevailing perception that such cases are a "family affair".⁴⁴⁰ The social and economic background, as proxied by the parents' education level, also appears to play a role. If a woman's father attained at least some tertiary education, she is significantly less likely to have married under the age of 18. However, a mother's education does not appear to have a significant impact on the chance that a woman will marry underage.⁴⁴¹

429 UNFPA, *Social Economic Policy Analysis with Regard to Son Preference and GBSS* (2019).

430 GEOSTAT, "Sex Ratio at Birth 1994-2018".

431 UNFPA, *Global Programme to Prevent Son Preference and the Undervaluing of Girls* (2018).

432 Ibid.

433 UNFPA and UNICEF, *Exploring Harmful Practices; and GEOSTAT, Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*.

434 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*.

435 Ibid., p. 246.

436 Ibid., p. 67.

437 Ibid., p. 248.

438 NCDC, MOLHSA, and Division of Reproductive Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (DRH/CDC), *Reproductive Health Survey Georgia 2010: Final Report* (Tbilisi, 2012). Available at https://georgia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GERHS_2010_%20Report%20%20ENGL_0.pdf; and GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*.

439 Ibid., p. 67.

440 Public Defender of Georgia, "Recommendation on the ineffective response to the cases of early marriage and engagements", 8 April 2019. Available at http://www.ombudsman.ge/geo/akhali-ambebi/rekomendatsia-zogadi-saganmanatleblo-datsesebulebebis-mier-adreul-asakshi-kortsinebis-da-nishnobis-faktebze-araefekturi-reagirebis-shesakheb?fbclid=IwAR0u5zXWovt54qEwFtscMDtSGo56NiV9wsZiw36iPyIYz_Z7_KUGidlzodc.

441 Dustin Gilbreath, *Child Marriage in Georgia: Economic and Educational Consequences* (Tbilisi, CRRC, 2019). CRRC Policy Bulletin. Available at http://crrc.ge/uploads/tinyMCE/documents/PolicyBriefs/Early_Marriage_Policy_Brief.pdf.

Apart from the clearly problematic social and health-related consequences of early marriage, it is associated with worse economic outcomes for women who marry underage. The lower level of economic achievement among women who experienced child marriage appears to derive primarily from the lower level of educational achievement than that of those who marry later. For instance, women who do not marry early have a 35 per cent chance of attaining higher education, while women who married under the age of 18, by contrast, have a 14 per cent chance.⁴⁴²

The rates of child marriage vary by ethnic group and by region. Azerbaijani girls (37.6 per cent) are at greater risk of child marriage than Georgian (12.4 per cent) or Armenian (4.5 per cent) girls.⁴⁴³ However, the findings for Azerbaijani and Armenian women aged 20-24 who were married before age 18 are based on between 25 and 49 unweighted cases, meaning that these figures may not be conclusive. As for the regional discrepancy, the highest rates of child marriage are observed in Kakheti (34.5 per cent of women aged 20-24 married by age 18), Kvemo Kartli (23.1 per cent) and Shida Kartli (21.3 per cent).⁴⁴⁴ The four regions with the lowest prevalence rates were Tbilisi (4.9 per cent), Adjara AR (13.9 per cent), Mtkheta-Mtianeti (14.2 per cent) and Samtskhe-Javakheti (14.3 per cent).⁴⁴⁵

In addition to the occurrence of child and forced marriages, sexual violence against girls is a pressing issue that is shrouded in obscurity in Georgia. Sexual violence against girls can cause mental health problems, as well as serious damage to the reproductive and sexual health of a victim. According to the MIA, 287 of the 405 registered crimes “against sexual freedom” committed in 2018 were concerning minors.⁴⁴⁶ The Social Service Agency identified 70 cases of sexual violence concerning minors in 2018.⁴⁴⁷ The effective prevention and identification mechanisms safeguarding children from violence, in accordance with

the international standards, still remain a challenge. It should be noted that family members and acquaintances are often the perpetrators of violence against children.⁴⁴⁸ The ineffective referral mechanisms and lack of a victim-based approach within law enforcement agencies further neglect the detection and investigation of the cases.

The latest MICS survey reveals that some 71.4 per cent of married women aged 15-19 were not using any method of modern contraception.⁴⁴⁹ In Georgia, public awareness and access to information on reproductive and sexual health and rights is still a challenge. The reproductive health and gender equality issues are, to some extent, covered in the school curriculum and integrated into civic education and biology classes. However, it still remains a challenge to provide students with this sensitive information in a professional manner.

The number of children who have never attended any educational institution comprises 2.1 per cent of the total number of children aged 5-17.⁴⁵⁰ There are more girls (57.9 per cent) than boys (36.7 per cent) engaged in hazardous labour.⁴⁵¹ Among those in the 5-17 age cohort engaged in hazardous labour, more girls (90.1 per cent) than boys (82.6 per cent) pursue school education.⁴⁵² However, there is no significant sex discrepancy when it comes to girls and boys engaged in non-dangerous (and permissible) labour.⁴⁵³ According to the Child Labour Study, children who dropped out of school constitute 1.9 per cent of children aged 5-17.⁴⁵⁴

The Department for Inclusive Development functions under the MoESCS. The first inclusive education project was launched for the period 2006-2008 and included 10 public schools in Tbilisi. In the 2018/19 academic year, 7,914 students were registered as children with special needs. However, children with special needs do not necessarily correspond to the status of persons with disabilities. There is also a

442 Ibid.

443 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, p. 247.

444 Ibid., p. 246.

445 Ibid., p. 246.

446 Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, “Public Information: Statistics of Registered Crimes”.

447 Radio Freedom, “Sexual Violence against Children: the Most Hidden Crime”, 2019.

448 UNICEF, *Violence against Children in Georgia* (2013), p. 13.

449 GEOSTAT, *Georgia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018*, p. 71.

450 ILO and GEOSTAT, *Georgia National Child Labour Survey 2015*, p. 86.

451 Ibid., p. 97.

452 Ibid., p. 125.

453 Ibid., p. 86.

454 Ibid., p. 125.

gender discrepancy in the number of registered students, with approximately two thirds of them boys [interview with the acting head of the Department for Inclusive Development at the MoESCS].

International Obligations, National Legal Framework and National Policy

Apart from CEDAW, Georgia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994 and later signed the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to eliminate discrimination against the girl child. Georgia also ratified the Istanbul Convention, which places special emphasis on the elimination of violence and forced marriages against the girl child. In addition to the above instruments, the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962) addresses, in particular, the problem of child marriage, but it has not been signed by Georgia yet. At the national level, the Law on Gender Equality (2010), the Law on Domestic Violence (2006) and the Anti-Discrimination Law (2014) aim to address gender issues and discrimination against the girl child. There is also a separate regulation on sex-selective abortions under the Protocol of Safe Termination of Pregnancy (2014), approved by the MoDPOTLHSA.

According to Article 140 of the Criminal Code, sexual intercourse with a person under the age of consent, which is 16, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of 7 to 9 years or 8 to 10 years in aggravating circumstances.⁴⁵⁵ Between 2014 and 2018, criminal proceedings under Article 140 of the Criminal Code were initiated against 478 individuals, and 500 women and girls were recognized as victims.⁴⁵⁶

The 2018-2020 HR NAP contains sections related to the relevant gender issues (sections 12 and 16).⁴⁵⁷ In 2018, the Gender Equality Council approved an Action Plan (2018-2020) that includes an objective to improve the implementation of the existing legislation with regard to early marriage (objective 6.5).⁴⁵⁸ Until 2015, parental permission was enough to grant the marriage of a person younger than 18, but since

the amendment to Article 1108 of the Civil Code, a court decision is required.

In Georgia, the Law on Health Protection and the Law on Patient Rights guarantee the right of all citizens to have access to medical services. Article 41(2) of the Law on Patient Rights states that “health services shall be provided to a minor under 16 only [with the] consent of his/her parents or legal representative”.⁴⁵⁹ However, Article 40(2) provides some exceptions for adolescents aged 14-18 who can consult health-care providers for “the treatment of sexually transmitted disease or drug abuse or for counselling about non-surgical methods of contraception or for abortion”.⁴⁶⁰ However, this regulation is often violated by medical facilities by not providing the relevant medical services to adolescents in need. This is due to the lack of youth-friendly health-care services and insensitive SRH services.

The sex ratio at birth, early marriages and lack of youth-friendly health-care services against the backdrop of economic hardships continue to remain a challenge for girls in Georgia.

Recommendations

- ✓ Establish appropriate mechanisms to prevent early/child marriage, including strengthening the enforcement of existing laws by training relevant officials, such as judges, civil registrars, police officers, teachers and social workers, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Ensure effective social protection systems and strategies to prevent and eliminate child labour, by the Government of Georgia and the MoDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Develop sex-disaggregated data related to children in the economy, health care and other sectors, by GEOSTAT.
- ✓ Train health-care providers on gender equality, especially on girls’ rights to primary and reproductive health-care services, to enable them to provide counselling to adolescent girls and their mothers, by the MoDPOTLHSA.

455 Georgia, *Criminal Code of Georgia*, art. 1108.

456 Georgia, *National-level Review of the Implementation of the BPfA Beijing +25*, p. 51.

457 Georgia, *National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights (2018-2020)*.

458 GEC, *Action Plan (2018-2020)*, sects. 2.4, 2.5.

459 Georgia, *Law of Georgia on Patient Rights*, art. 41(2).

460 *Ibid.*, chap. VIII, art. 40.

- ✓ Ensure effective functioning of the referral system to prevent child marriages, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Raise public awareness of the minimum legal age of marriage – which, following changes to the Georgian Civil Code, was raised to 18 with no exceptions – and of the penalties for breaking the law, by the Government of Georgia.
- ✓ Ensure the provision of high-quality, inclusive services for young people, especially adolescent-friendly SRH services, and address health professionals' stigmatizing attitudes and practices, by the MoDPOTLHSA.
- ✓ Ensure that the younger generation is equipped with evidence-based information on SRH and reproductive rights, gender equality and healthy lifestyle principles through formal and/or informal education channels in ways that are meaningful and non-stigmatizing, by the MoESCS.
- ✓ Strengthen work at the local/municipal level to create opportunities for the development of adolescents and young people, especially young women and girls, in order to enhance young people's agency over their aspirations and opportunities, particularly among the most vulnerable adolescents and youth, by the local governments.
- ✓ Allocate adequate financial resources for adolescent and youth programmes in State and municipal budgets, by the Government of Georgia and local governments.
- ✓ Support the participation of women and young people in local self-government, by the local governments.
- ✓ Develop, under the guidance of the Inter-Agency Commission, a multisectoral approach for implementing a Communication for Behavioural Impact strategy targeted at eliminating the harmful practice of early/child marriage, pursuant to the nationalized SDGs.
- ✓ Engage key actors in adolescent girls' social networks to change attitudes towards GEWE.
- ✓ Improve vocational opportunities for girls and boys in order to facilitate their employability in the local labour market, by the MoDPOTLHSA and local governments.
- ✓ Strengthen outreach work with married adolescents to enable them, for instance, to continue education and to access public childcare services, by the MoESCS and the local governments.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the work carried out to develop the 2019 Country Gender Equality Profile of Georgia, several general remarks should be highlighted.

Several cross-cutting issues emerge concerning the process of adopting international obligations and relevant indicators with respect to GEWE. Many SDG indicators are designed with global issues in mind and do not necessarily reflect the issues within a local context. Nationalization of the SDG indicators was supposed to address such gaps. For example, Georgia has added the employment rates of graduates of vocational and tertiary educational institutions to the indicators for SDG 4 (indicators 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.1.2), which is no doubt commendable. However, unlike the analogous indicator adopted by the EU (“employment rates of recent graduates by sex”, SDG_04_50),⁴⁶¹ these indicators, as nationalized by Georgia, do not require disaggregation by sex. This omission is even more inexplicable since, in Georgia, gender inequality in the context of education is most problematic not in terms of access to education but precisely in terms of returns from education.

The logic of choosing to adopt certain SDG indicators over others also raises questions; some global indicators that are obviously relevant to Georgia are neglected in the national document. For instance, SDG target 8.b focuses on youth employment, and SDG target 11.2 addresses enhancements to transport systems for all, yet both are absent from the national document. Other indicators have been adopted in a mechanical way not necessarily adequate for evaluating the true state of the situation. For example, SDG indicator 5.a.1 has two parts: (a) proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or right-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure. In the Georgian

translation, the second part lacks the phrase “type of tenure” and thus essentially repeats the first part; likewise, it neither asks for nor provides any additional information over and above that which is provided in the first part.⁴⁶² Moreover, since GEOSTAT only looks at the Georgian translation, the same information is repeated on its website.⁴⁶³

The process of adopting and validating the SDG indicators in Georgia has taken several years (from 2015 to 2019); however, the procedures, task allocation and communication among the involved parties are still not quite clear.⁴⁶⁴ We interviewed representatives of the Government, line ministries and GEOSTAT – all agencies in the chain that leads to producing data for the SDG indicators – and came to the conclusion that none of those interviewed were acquainted with the explanatory files for each indicator, nor did they have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to collect the necessary data. As a result, some data are misleading. For example, for the agricultural population, a monthly income of GEL 324 from the sale of their farming products is highly overestimated (see this report’s chapter on agriculture). Another example of misleading data for SDG indicators can be found in the national SDG document (and the related web portal), which states that, as of 2018, 100 per cent of schools had access to water, basic handwashing and single-sex sanitation facilities (indicator 4.a.1),⁴⁶⁵ while PDO monitoring conducted in the same year revealed that no drinking water was available in 16.7 per cent of public schools and no technical water was available in 10.2 per cent of public schools.⁴⁶⁶ Moreover, the report found that 1.9 per cent of schools had no toilet, while 5.7 per cent of schools had no single-sex toilet.⁴⁶⁷ In addition, it was impossible to obtain rates or proportions for some indicators because GEOSTAT provides quantities and because available databases are not always suffi-

461 See <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/quality-education>.

462 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia*.

463 GEOSTAT, “Goal 5: Gender Equality Database”.

464 The same conclusion is reached by the following study: We Research for Women in Europe for a Common Future,

Sustainable Development Goal # 5 Gender Assessment in Georgia.

465 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia*.

466 Public Defender of Georgia, *Access to Water and Sanitation in Public Schools of Georgia*, p. 32.

467 *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

cient to calculate percentages; this is not helpful for understanding the situation. Data on specific underrepresented or underprivileged groups among women – LGBT, IDP, ethnic and religious minorities – are missing; thus, we were deprived of the possibility to present a comprehensive intersectional picture of the challenges affecting women of various backgrounds and identities. The national SDG document⁴⁶⁸ notes that some data will be collected later; however, considering the shortcomings just highlighted, it can be expected that the newly collected data will also be deficient. The limitations described above have also been found by the State Audit Office of Georgia.⁴⁶⁹

It is necessary to ensure the competence and knowledge of the SDG methodology among the stakeholders in order to avoid misleading data that distort the picture and divert attention from the real issues. So far, insufficient efforts are being made to establish a functioning system of data collection on the SDG indicators. The lack of coordinated work between the governmental agencies towards the development of a coherent and holistic approach to the data collection impedes the existence of efficient and functioning State machinery for the implementation of the SDG agenda.

The current status of Georgia in the 12 critical areas of concern for GEWE is varied, depending on the initial conditions at the moment of the country's commitment to international obligations and the efforts made by the State, international organizations, CSOs and informal and grass-roots groups over the past 25 years, as well as the political and socioeconomic developments in the country and the whole region. In some areas, such as the education and training of women or women's economic participation, the independent Georgian State inherited from its predecessor a rather equitable status quo, when considered on the global scale. In other areas, such as women's political participation, a nearly complete absence of democratic culture was the background against which efforts towards greater gender equality were to be made; thus, progress has been very slow. Other areas like health, social security and violence were

impacted by the drastic breakdown of the economic system followed by the State policy of deregulation, the neglect of socioeconomic rights, pressures exerted on the social fabric by armed conflicts and forced internal migration, uncontrolled crime, severe economic insecurity and vast outward labour migration. These issues defined the backdrop against which the State's commitments to GEWE were to be fulfilled.

In terms of efforts, too, the situation is varied in different critical areas of concern. Due to both increased pressure and aid from international organizations (including UN agencies), as well as the State's increased capacity to control crime by means of the police, the response to violence against women and domestic violence has been significant in recent years. In other areas, specifically those related to the social and economic rights of women (health, work, economic empowerment, social security), there have been some local interventions by international organizations and CSOs; however, State policy has been virtually non-existent until very recently (especially until committing to the EU-Georgia Association Agreement), and currently we observe the very first attempts by the State to address some of the issues in these areas. This neglect of the socioeconomic rights of women is to be understood in the more general context of the neglect of socioeconomic inequality issues by the State, fostered by the lack of pressure from civil society as well as international organizations. And, finally, for some areas in which the current situation may seem relatively less problematic through a gender lens (such as access to education), this is mainly due to the status quo inherited by the independent Georgian State from the Soviet Union, rather than to any efforts made by the State in response to its commitments to GEWE. In such areas, policies remain overwhelmingly gender-blind, and gender inequalities affecting specific underprivileged groups or specific dimensions of these areas remain neglected under the blanket of generalized appraisals.

In general, even where there are efforts made to address GEWE via State policies, the policies suffer from a lack of consideration of how gender intersects other axes of inequality, such as disability, ethnic minority status, age and place of residence, among others. In most cases, these latter dimensions are treated in a gender-blind manner, while gender itself is treated in a generic way, as one more monolithic category – this concerns both policy as well as data collection and analysis efforts.

468 Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals National Document of Georgia*.

469 State Audit Office of Georgia, *Sustainable Development Goals' Implementation Report* (2019).

It is also important to consider recent or current political, social and economic developments in the country and the region as well as in the global arena that compound the current efforts for greater GEWE. Among such, in the context of the present document, several developments should be highlighted as directly affecting critical areas considered here, such as the increased tensions with respect to the ABLs with Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, including aggressive “borderization” and restrictions on line crossing that are compounded by the depletion of international negotiation resources. Another factor of importance is the recent upsurge of far right and conservative political groups, with their conspicuous anti-gender dimension, to which the State has already compromised on several occasions. For example, in response to pressure from far-right groups, the State stepped back from the plans to expand the civic education curriculum to more comprehensively cover gender-related issues (the word “gender” being altogether omitted from curricula and standards) and to introduce reproductive health education classes at schools. The State has also done little to respond to the violence against LGBT persons and LGBT rights activists and to defend their right to freedom of expression and assembly; for example, the State narrowed the constitutional definition of marriage to the union of heterosexual couples. This upsurge, which echoes the global trend, is aggravated by the lack of effort to adequately address the growing socioeconomic inequality and the concomitant political and social exclusion of vast segments of society.

Unlike the obligations under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals are not mandatory and therefore provide less of an incentive to fulfil them. At the same time, the efforts for awareness-raising on the Association Agreement were much more effective than those for the SDGs. Considering the non-binding status of the SDGs, it is even more crucial to invest resources to ensure that all State agencies understand the SDG agenda and to devise incentives for pressing said agencies to adhere to these commitments. In addition, there still remain international instruments critical for GEWE concerns to which Georgia has not yet committed. For instance, the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), which sets the minimum standard for maternity leave, and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), which promotes work-family balance, are among those ILO conventions that have not yet been ratified by Georgia. The international community has to play an important role in driving Georgia to adopt these instruments and begin their implementation.

Apart from policies, implementation mechanisms and structural constraints, the measures taken by the State to raise awareness among society are still sporadic; instead, such measures should play an important role in reducing discrimination and inequality caused by stereotypical gender norms. Indeed, in Georgia, “gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes remain deeply entrenched and prevalent in society, infringing on women’s enjoyment of the right to equality and perpetuating violence against women, especially in rural areas.”⁴⁷⁰ Accordingly, much remains to be done to change patriarchal norms and public attitudes towards gender roles in the country.

470 United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, para. 75.*

ANNEX: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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