

# **GEORGIA**

## **National-level Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing +25**

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## Section I – Priorities, Achievements, Challenges and Setbacks

Georgia is an independent, democratic state confirmed by the Referendum of 31 March 1991 and by the Act of Restoration of the State Independence of Georgia of 9 April 1991. The territorial integrity of Georgia and the inviolability of the state frontiers are recognized by the UN and other international organizations. Georgia is a country in the southern Caucasus with a population of around 3.7 million (52% women). Georgia has a high Gender Development Index of 0.970 (2015) placing it among the second group of countries in terms of key gender indicators.<sup>1</sup>

Georgia has declared joining the European Union’s legal and regulatory space as its top policy priority and has signed an Association Agreement (AA) and the accompanying Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the EU in 2014.

At the regional level, Georgia is a member of the Council of Europe and participating State in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It ratified the European Convention on Human Rights on 20 May 1999 and is subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. Georgia has signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). In line with its international commitments, Georgia has made significant strides in adopting legislative and policy reforms to foster gender equality and to achieve progress towards the empowerment of women over the past 5 years, since the completion of the last report in 2014.

Georgia has signed, ratified and is party to the most human rights instruments, which confirms the readiness of the state to strengthen work toward equality between men and women and toward women’s empowerment. The Constitution is the supreme law of Georgia and recognizes the supremacy of international treaties over domestic laws, unless a treaty contradicts the Constitution.

The new Constitution of Georgia was adopted in 2017 and came into force following the Inauguration of 5<sup>th</sup> President of Georgia on December 16, 2018. The entry into force of the Constitution completed the country’s evolution from semi-presidential to parliamentary system of governance.

The Georgian Constitution, Article 11, paragraph 1 contains an equality clause, which reads: “All persons are equal before the law. Any discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, origin, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other views, social affiliation, property or titular status, place of residence, or any other grounds shall be prohibited”. According to paragraph 3 of the same article the state shall ensure “equal rights and opportunities for men and women . . . shall take special measures to ensure the essential equality of men and women and to eliminate inequality”. The discourse of the new equality article trades earlier formal equality wording for substantive equality that shifts the emphasis towards combating structural inequalities and mandating the State to establish and implement special laws, policies and programmes to ensure that women enjoy equality of opportunities as well as results.

The State Concept on Gender Equality and the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality adopted in 2006 and 2010, respectively, underlines the importance of ensuring equal rights between women and men and improving women’s participation in the political, economic and social processes and

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): Gender Development Index (GDI). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI>; key indicators include: life expectancy at birth (78.5 years for women and 71.3 for men), expected years of schooling (14.1 for women and 13.7 for men), mean years of schooling (12.3 and 12.2 respectively), and gross income per capita (\$6,105 for women and \$11,871 for men)

recognize the need for specific actions in order to achieve equality between women and men and eliminate inequality in Georgia.

According to the 2006 State Concept on Gender Equality, equality between women and men is seen as a human rights issue and refers to the equal representation of women and men, equal rights and participation in every aspect of public and private life.

The Law of Georgia on Gender Equality determines states obligation to “support and ensure equal rights for men and women in political, economic, social and cultural life” through ensuring special measures without discrimination.<sup>2</sup> The law guarantees equality of men and women in all spheres of public life, including: labour relations, education and science, access to information resources, healthcare, social security, family relations, participation in elections.<sup>3</sup>

Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is a principal component of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, Goal 5 with its relevant objectives and indicators focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It contains nine targets, including “end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere” and “adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels”.

Government of Georgia began the nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016. The Government identified the priority goals, targets and indicators through the adaptation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This has resulted in mix of global and local targets (100) and indicators (215) for all the 17 SDGs. One of the most important challenges during nationalization of the goals was the provision of disaggregated data: “the key problem identified during the review process is the lack of data disaggregated by age, gender, and specific sectors of economy. This especially concerns the goals and targets that deal with social rights, labor rights, gender issues, poverty and unemployment.”<sup>4</sup> The Government has offered high-level political support to incorporating SDGs into national priorities and presented a voluntarily conducted national review of SDGs in New York at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2016. Government of Georgia (GoG), as a coordinating structure of SDG national processes, established a joint technical working group including experts from different line ministries and National Statistics Office to facilitate the landing of Sustainable Development Goals at the national level.<sup>5</sup> Since May 2, 2017 the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is facilitated through the Sustainable Development Goals Council.<sup>6</sup>

One of the goals of the Government of Georgia is the prioritizing 5th Goal. It aims to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls. The following UN and Government agencies were involved in nationalization of the 5th goal: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Administration of Government/PMs Assistant on human rights and gender equality issues; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Education, Science, Culture And Sport of Georgia; Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, UN WOMEN, UNFPA; UNICEF, UNDP.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Article 4

<sup>3</sup> Article 6-11

<sup>4</sup> <file:///C:/Users/ilortkipanidze/Desktop/IRINA%20PERSONAL/UN%20WOMEN/Voluntary%20National%20Review%20Georgia-SDG.pdf> pg. 8

<sup>5</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10680SDG%20Voluntary%20National%20Review%20Georgia-.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Details about the work of SDG Council please see in Section III

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.parliament.ge/uploads/other/86/86668.pdf> pg. 4

The SDGs have been well fitted into the national policies and also are integrated in strategic umbrella document - Annual Governmental Work Plan (AGWP), other national, multi-sectorial strategies and action plans. Important work has been done by Georgia to ensure that SDGs have gender-sensitive indicators. Of the 54 gender-related indicators at the global level, 30 (56%) have been adopted as is.<sup>8</sup> The steps taken by the government will increase women's economic participation, promote equal economic opportunities for women and men, advance gender balance in decision making, and end violence against women and girls.<sup>9</sup>

During the past five years, Georgia has made several significant improvements to accelerate progress for women and girls, to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls. It has made significant progress towards its gender equality goals through enactment and implementation of legislation and policy reforms and working towards ending violence against women.<sup>10</sup> Some of the major highlights include improvement of Georgia's legislative framework on gender equality, violence/domestic violence against women and girls and women's rights, strengthening of Georgia's national institutional framework to monitor and advance women's equality, ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and harmonization of Georgian legislation with the international standards lead by Justice Ministry, important policy shift by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the fight against domestic violence and violence against women and etc.

On May 2, 2014 Parliament of Georgia adopted Law on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination by 115 votes to one, which includes the prohibition of discrimination based on sex, as well as on sexual orientation and gender identity. This law is of paramount importance for the development and well-being of Georgian society. Adoption of this law is the attempt of Georgia to make its legal environment more EU compatible and to adapt its anti-discrimination legislation. The law repeats the definition of direct and indirect discrimination as it was defined by the Law on Gender Equality and has introduced the concept of multiple discrimination and prohibited support or encouragement of discriminatory actions.<sup>11</sup> The law entitles the Public Defender of Georgia to monitor and oversee the efforts for the elimination of discrimination. Public Defender collects and analyzes statistical data, drafts opinions on relevant legislative amendments to be submitted to the Parliament and carries out various events aimed at raising public awareness on the discrimination issues.<sup>12</sup>

The law has granted to the Public Defender not only the responsive, but also proactive function, which is crucial for development of policy of elimination of discrimination. According to the law Public Defender inquires the facts of discrimination at own initiative and/or submission of application/complaint.<sup>13</sup> Role of mediator of Ombudsman determined by the law is very positive development. Public defender is entitled to invite a victim of discrimination and a person who potentially committed discrimination, and try to settle the case.<sup>14</sup> In case settlement cannot be achieved and the other party is an administrative authority, the Public Defender addresses the court

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<sup>8</sup> The following global indicators appear as is in the Georgia SDG framework (as at September 2018): In local framework: 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 1.4.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.3.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.6.1, 4.7.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1, 5.5.1, 5.5.2 (as 16.7.1.c), 5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.a.1, 5.b.1, 8.3.1, 8.5.1, 8.6.1, 8.7.1, 8.8.2, 10.2.1, 16.1.1, 16.2.3, 16.7.2, 17.18.1.

<sup>9</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/georgia>

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. 2014. Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia (CEDAW/C/GEO/4-5).

<sup>11</sup> Law on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination -Article 2

<sup>12</sup> Ibid; Article 6

<sup>13</sup> Ibid; Article 6; paragraph "b"

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, Article 6, paragraph "c"

pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Code and requests invalidation of a respective act, issuing of a new act or suspension of actions.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, a victim of discrimination is entitled to address the court at all stages of development, without reporting to the Ombudsman, of the case and request from a person who committed discrimination, material and moral compensation.<sup>16</sup> The law made effective protection of rights of a victim of discrimination more realistic by imposing burden of proof on respondent either when establishing the fact of discrimination in the case of filing the complaint to the Public Defender, or during the judicial proceedings.<sup>17</sup>

In August, 2014 The Equality Department was established at the Public Defender's Office in order to effectively implement functions and competencies granted by the anti-discrimination legislation, which started functioning from November 20, 2014. The Public Defender of Georgia has been participating in the EQUINET activities as an observer since 2014. In 2018, members of the Network unanimously supported PDO's full membership in EQUINET..<sup>18</sup>

In 2017 Georgia has become the 23rd country to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), which defines and criminalizes all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. The Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe is the most comprehensive international treaty on combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention was presented in 2011 and signed in August 2014.

The Convention entered into force, as regards Georgia, on 1 September, 2017. The Parliament of Georgia confirmed the commitment of combating violence against women through endorsing ratification of the Istanbul Convention and adopting milestone legal framework aimed at harmonization of the domestic legislation with the Istanbul Convention. The Ministry of Justice of Georgia has developed a package of relevant amendments to up to 25 legislative acts. From the legislative changes, amendments made *inter alia* in Criminal Code on liabilities for forced marriage, female genital mutilation, stalking and forced sterilization shall be marked.

In reaction to the unprecedented number of femicides, the President of Georgia declared the year 2015 as the "Year of Women". In her 2016 Georgia Report, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, 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 femicides and establish or entrust an existing body to analyze 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 of Georgia (PDO) announced that PDO would assume responsibility for monitoring gender-based killings of women in Georgia. Being the second Ombudsman's office in the world, the first being Argentina, to undertake the responsibility for monitoring femicide cases. As part of the monitoring process, the Public Defender's Office analyzes relevant court decisions in detail to evaluate the real scale of the problem of femicide, the applied measures of protection and prevention and the obstacles to addressing the issue. In addition, the Public Defender's Office studies available statistical data and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, Article 6; paragraph "g"

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Article 10

<sup>17</sup> –Ibid, Article 8, paragraph 2

<sup>18</sup> Public Defender of Georgia, *Special Report On combating discrimination, its prevention and the situation of equality in the country*; September 2015; pg. 6

information on investigations and criminal prosecutions conducted by law enforcement agencies. Femicide Monitoring Reports were published by the Public Defender's Office in 2016 and 2017.

In 2017 amendments introduced to the Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence expanded the scope of this law, and now it deals not only with domestic violence, but also the general violence against women. The title of the law changed to "Elimination of violence against women and/or domestic violence, protection and support of victims of violence." Article 3<sup>1</sup> "Violence against Women" was added to the law, according to which "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." For the purpose of this law female juvenile who have not reached age of 18 is also considered to be a woman.<sup>19</sup> Based on the legislative changes, number of individuals authorized to report domestic violence cases have increased. Exceptional circumstance have been determined for individuals, who based on their professional occupation carry obligation to ensure confidentially (doctors, teachers, lawyers) of information. These individuals will not be limited from reporting on cases related too violence against women and/or domestic violence, if there is a risk of repeated violence. Starting January 1, 2017 marriage in Georgia is permitted from the age of 18.<sup>20</sup> The spouses have equal personal and property rights and bear equal responsibilities in domestic relations.<sup>21</sup>

In 2018, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia in cooperation with UN Women made milestone changes regarding law enforcement's response to domestic violence cases. The new tool assessing risks of domestic violence was approved by the decree of the Minister of Internal Affairs and entered into force in September 2018. Prior to the enactment of this tool, police officers were required to determine the questions to ask a victim of domestic violence at the crime scene, and usually investigators had their own, non-standardized approaches to this process.

The significant changes were introduced to the restrictive and protective orders, according to which, the restrictive and protective orders can be applied to all facts of violence against women.<sup>22</sup> Restraining order issued by police on the grounds of violence does not require additional submission to the court. In addition, domestic violence victim as well as any female victim of violence may receive free legal advice, medical and psychological assistance on the state expense;<sup>23</sup> enjoy the right of receiving 30-day vacation and shelter during a year.<sup>24</sup>

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia established Human Rights Protection Department within its structure to strengthen response to violence against women and domestic violence. The Department has been established on the basis of the ministerial order on 12 January 2018 to ensure timely response and effective investigation into the domestic violence, violence against women, including sexual violence, crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination, hate crimes, human trafficking and crimes committed by and/or towards minors. In 2019, the effective work

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<sup>19</sup> Law of Georgia on Elimination of Violence/Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence, Article 3<sup>1.2</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Civil Code of Georgia; Article 1108

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*; Article 1152

<sup>22</sup> Law of Georgia on Elimination of Violence/Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence, Article 10, paragraph "a" - To ensure prompt response to violence against women and/or domestic violence cases, the authorized body, in order to ensure protection of the victim and to restrain certain actions of the abuser, may issue a restraining or protective order as a temporary measure.

<sup>23</sup> Law of Georgia on Elimination of Violence/Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence; Article 17; paragraph "g"

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*; Article 17; paragraph "g"

undertaken by the Department led to its enlargement and transformation into Human Rights Protection and Quality Monitoring Department ensuring high-level protection of human rights as well as improved quality of investigation on crimes committed against life and health.

According to the amendment to the Imprisonment Code for the purpose of protection of female victims of violence, prison administration shall immediately inform the Ministry of Internal Affairs before the perpetrator who committed violence/domestic violence against women is released.<sup>25</sup>

As of May 2017, the new Article 133<sup>2</sup> of the Criminal Code of Georgia prohibits female genital mutilation on any grounds. This means that female circumcision, infibulation partially or fully, or coercion of a woman to undergo FGM under religious, ethnic, national or other traditions, or other reasons except when it is necessary for a woman's life or health - is punishable.<sup>26</sup> The criminal liability for stalking was introduced in the Criminal Code of Georgia under Article 151<sup>1</sup>.

Following the entry into force of the legislative amendments, protection of women's rights is guaranteed by the relevant mechanisms, and the Georgian legislation is harmonized with the Istanbul Convention. State Parties to the Istanbul Convention are required to establish effective legal mechanisms for protection against violence of women and domestic violence. The Convention provides for monitoring mechanisms at both national and international levels. For this purpose, a team of experts (GREVIO) dealing with acts of violence against women and domestic violence is established to monitor the compliance with the Convention requirements and evaluating legislative and other measures taken by the State Parties.

In an effort to meet its international commitments, Georgia has strengthened its national institutional framework to monitor and advance women's equality. Georgia's national machinery for gender equality consists of three key bodies:

1. Gender Equality Council of the Parliament;
2. Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues; and
3. Gender Department of the Public Defender's Office

In 2004, Parliamentary Decree #105/3 established the Gender Equality Council. It became a standing body with the passage of the Gender Equality Law in 2010. Given its placement within the Parliament, the Gender Equality Council remains uniquely poised to play an important role in monitoring legislative developments. Since January 2017 Gender Equality Council is chaired by the first Vice Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia as suggested by the Chairperson of the Parliament. The new, extended composition of 17 members of the council was also comprised in the same period. Council is comprised by the representatives of all the political parties in the 9th convocation of the Parliament of Georgia. The organizational and technical support is provided by the staff/secretariat of the first Vice Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia.

In June, 2017 with the establishment of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in the executive branch, the institutional

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<sup>25</sup> Imprisonment Code of Georgia, Article 45<sup>1</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Criminal Code of Georgia, Article 133<sup>2</sup>, paragraph 1.



framework for gender equality has changed. The Commission replaced the Inter-Agency Council, which was previously focused only on Domestic Violence. An inter-ministerial body located in the executive branch, the Commission was created in order to meet the requirements of Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention. The Commission is chaired by the Assistant of Prime Minister on Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues and co-chaired by the Deputy Justice Minister and it involves, inter alia, representatives of Ministries, the Public Defender's Office, the Legal Aid Service, the Public Broadcaster, the Gender Equality Council of Parliament, the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of Victims of Human Trafficking and the Supreme Court. Thus, under its auspices, Gender Focal Points have been identified at all government institutions as major partners responsible for implementation of the gender mainstreaming within the State institutions. With regard to civil involvement, the participation of civil society groups is ensured.<sup>27</sup> Its mandate covers gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence, as well as implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. It is responsible for the adoption, implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plans on Gender Equality, Violence against Women/Domestic Violence and UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. In addition to its work on substantive issues, the Commission is mandated to support the effective functioning of, and coordination between, the activities of respective state bodies in the field of gender equality, violence against women, domestic violence and women's empowerment. With respect to violence against women and domestic violence, the Commission functions as a domestic monitoring mechanism required by Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention. Its mandate includes developing proposals on these issues and submitting them to the Government of Georgia for their review and further action.

With support from UN Women the Inter-Agency Commission developed a national communication strategy and action plan on violence against women and domestic violence, which specifies details about the awareness activities to be carried out during the period from 2018 to 2020. The communication strategy aims at consolidating resources and improving joint planning and coordination to ensure that government's awareness raising interventions are evidence based, targeted and address root and structural causes of violence. The strategy is informed by the findings of the Nation-Wide Survey on Violence against Women. The initiative responds directly to the commitments undertaken by the Government of Georgia under the Istanbul Convention, which amongst others, places the responsibility on the Government of Georgia to regularly promote and conduct awareness-raising campaigns and programmes to increase awareness and understanding among the general public on all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence.

In 2018 Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia also adopted communication strategy for 2018-2020, which defines the communication vision and mission of Gender Equality Council, as well as its goals, principles and tasks, identifies targeted audience, major issues of concern to be addressed by the awareness raising campaigns.<sup>28</sup>

While service provision is critical to effective response on violence against women, the best way to end it in a long-term is to prevent it from happening via addressing its root-causes and transforming attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate such violence.

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<sup>27</sup> Articles 1(3); 2(3); 3(2)

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.parliament.ge/en/ajax/downloadFile/87001/2018\\_01\\_18\\_GEC\\_Communication\\_Strategy\\_ENG](http://www.parliament.ge/en/ajax/downloadFile/87001/2018_01_18_GEC_Communication_Strategy_ENG)

The Department of Gender Equality of the Public Defender’s Office was established on May 15, 2013. In December, 2018 due to reorganization of the Public Defender’s Office is called “Gender Department.” Its mandate includes, *inter alia*, monitoring protection of the right to gender equality, as well as examining individual complaints concerning related rights violations and issuing recommendations. It also engages in research, promotes gender equality issues in the activities of the Public Defender, raises public awareness of gender equality issues in Georgia, and issues annual and issue-specific reports on women’s rights. Article 14 of the Gender Equality Law recognizes the two key functions performed by the Public Defender’s Office: monitoring gender equality issues and addressing individual complaints concerning rights violations.

Charged with inter-agency coordination, monitoring the implementation of laws within the Executive branch and the development of national action plans on gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence and women, peace and security, the new Inter-Agency Commission complements the work of the Parliamentary Gender Equality Council. The Public Defender’s Office plays the crucial role of independent monitoring on the full range of gender issues.<sup>29</sup>

Collecting and providing access to sex disaggregated data is a key priority in advancing gender equality. Gender statistics is the statistics on the status of women and men in all spheres of public and economic activity. It represents one of the key instruments to reveal characteristic traits of women and men. The gender statistics is aimed at providing impartial data on the actual situation with regard to the status of women and men and gender equality.

Article 5 of the Gender Equality Law states: “Official statistical reports on gender issues shall contain sex-disaggregated data”. Without disaggregating statistics by gender and other categories, it is impossible to determine issues of concern related to gender equality and develop evidence-based policies to address them. Article 6(3)(a) and (c) of the Law on Elimination of Violence/Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence oblige the State to maintain “relevant statistics” and to analyze, study and assess “the factors that provoke domestic violence” as a preventive mechanism of violence and domestic violence.

National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat), the legal entity of public law, is an institution established to produce the statistics and disseminate the statistical information according to the Georgian legislation. National Statistics Office of Georgia was established by the Law of Georgia on Official Statistics. “Women and Men in Georgia” is the statistical publication dedicated to gender problems produced by GeoStat with the support of different donors including the UN Women, Swedish Development Agency (SIDA). Up until 2018 GeoStat produced 10 “Women and Men in Georgia” statistical publication dedicated to gender equality challenges. The statistical data reflects the key trends of gender equality in Georgia every year. The publication is aimed at raising the level of public awareness of gender problems and developing targeted state policies in the field of gender equality. The data is based on the surveys conducted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia and administrative sources. The sex-disaggregated statistics presented in these reports are an important indicator of Georgia’s development, apart from being a reflection of the situation regarding women and men in the country. In 2015 and 2017 “Woman and Man” has

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<sup>29</sup> Details about Georgia’s national machinery please see in Section III

been expanded with number of new, important indicators, including: asset ownership, entrepreneurship, violence against women, agriculture, domestic tourism and ICT.

Since 2014 UN Women has been supporting the advancement of gender statistics in Georgia. GeoStat took its work on gender statistics to another level by launching an electronic Gender Data Portal at the end of 2018. The portal was developed in cooperation with UN Women. In 2018 UN Women supported the assessment of the National Statistical System from the gender perspective in Georgia, with the aim of identifying gaps and opportunities for the improvement of methodology, collection, distribution and application of sex-disaggregated data for informed policymaking.

*National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017* conducted by GeoStat in partnership with UN Women with EU financial support constitutes the first nation-wide research on violence against women to be conducted in Georgia since 2009 and explores the prevalence of domestic violence, non-partner physical and sexual violence, as well as perceptions and awareness of women and men on gender and violence in Georgia. For the first time in Georgia, the study also generated data on prevalence of sexual harassment and stalking at the national level.

Annex XXX of the Association Agreement between Georgia and European Union includes list of EU directives, which are related to changes to be made in different legislation of Georgia. EU Directive 2006/54/EC indicate that “Harassment and sexual harassment are contrary to the principle of equal treatment between men and women and constitute discrimination on grounds of sex. . .”<sup>30</sup> In addition, Article 26 of the Directive 2006/54/EC requires prevention of discrimination from the member states and determines that “Member States shall encourage, in accordance with national law . . . to take effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, in particular harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace, in access to employment, vocational training and promotion”. EU Directive 2004/113/EC determines that member states shall develop legislation that prohibits and eliminates discrimination based on sex in the access to and supply of goods and services. Article 3 of Directive 2004/113/EC specifies the scope and determines the application of this directive to “all persons providing goods and services, which are available to the public irrespective of the person concerned as regards both the public and private sectors, including public bodies, and which are offered outside the area of private and family life and the transactions carried out in this context”. CEDAW General Recommendation #19: Violence against Women recommends state parties to take “Effective legal measures, including penal sanctions, civil remedies and compensatory provisions to protect women against all kinds of violence, including inter alia violence and abuse in the family, sexual assault and sexual harassment in the workplace”.<sup>31</sup> Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence obliges parties to the convention to “take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is subject to criminal or other legal sanction.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> DIRECTIVE 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)

<sup>31</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation #19: Violence against Women; paragraph 24, subparagraph “i”

<sup>32</sup> Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Article 40

In order to align Georgian legislation with the above-mentioned international obligation, the Parliament of Georgia approved a bill on sexual harassment. According to the amendment approved in May 3, 2019 legal framework of Georgia now includes the definition of Sexual Harassment. Changes to the Labor Code classify sexual harassment as a form of unlawful discrimination at workplace, and define the term as “an unwelcome sexual conduct aiming at/or causing intimidating, hostile, humiliating or degrading environment.”

The amendments bill mandates the Public Defender to examine alleged cases of sexual harassment, seek explanations from employers and issue recommendations. The Public Defender is also entitled to refer the cases to court, shall it decide that recommendations have not been fulfilled. Another batch of amendments, introduced to the Administrative Offenses Code, sets penalties for sexual harassment in public spaces. The law uses identical definition of the term as in the Labor Code, but clarifies the meaning of “sexual conduct,” which is understood as verbal and/or physical conduct of sexual nature.

The innovative e-learning course for the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace was launched in fall, 2017 by the Civil Service Bureau of Georgia and the Public Defender’s Office (PDO). The e-learning course was developed by UN Women and funded by the European Union. The e-learning course aims to raise awareness and promote the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace. Although the course is designed primarily for civil servants the private telecommunications company GeoCell also joined the launch with the message that they will implement the course internally, hopefully inspiring other private sector actors to do the same. Representatives of the Government, Parliament, public agencies and the private sector are committed to promoting the e-learning course. The course is available at [sexualharassment.ombudsman.ge](http://sexualharassment.ombudsman.ge).

In 2013 Parliament of Georgia introduced new provision in labour code of Georgia, concerning antidiscrimination in pre-contractual relations based on different grounds, including sex. In 2017, Georgia was obliged to make amendments to ensure compliance of Georgian legislation with EU directives. Directives describe obligation of the state to protect individual equality rights, define relevant responsible authorities and establish sanctions for violations. In order to reflect these directives in Georgian legislation, package of amendments was elaborated and adopted by the Parliament, which includes below listed legislative acts:

- Organic Law of Georgia “Labor Code of Georgia”;
- Law of Georgia “On Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination”;
- Law of Georgia “On Public Service”;
- Law of Georgia “On Gender Equality”;

Amendments include protection of equality of individuals during labor and pre-contractual relations,<sup>33</sup> education, social protection and healthcare spheres,<sup>34</sup> sets prohibitions on directing one individual to discriminate the other,<sup>35</sup> obliges employer to protect individual equality principles in labor relations, as well as in pre-contractual relations- this includes vacancy announcement and

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<sup>33</sup> In 2013 introduced new provision in paragraph 3 of Article 2 concerning antidiscrimination in pre-contractual relations based on different grounds, including sex.

<sup>34</sup> Law on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination, Article 2, paragraph 10

<sup>35</sup> Ibid; Article 2, paragraph 5

prohibition of discrimination during interview, ensuring access to supplier or services, including provision and access to financial services and insurance benefits without gender-based discrimination.<sup>36</sup> Protection of equality principle of persons in labor and employment in the public sector is strengthened by the obligation of the public entity to improve awareness among the public officials on issues of discrimination. The law of Georgia on Public Service was amended in 2017 and according to this amendment public entity is obliged to take measures to ensure equal treatment of persons employed and to include provisions prohibiting discrimination in internal rules and other documents and to ensure their enforcement”.<sup>37</sup>

In Georgia, women’s participation in decision-making processes remains very low. Under Georgian law men and women have equal rights as voters and candidates. While women may have the formal right to participate in politics, the structure of the electoral system impedes their equal participation. In 2016, amendments were made to the law on Gender Equality to include a requirement for each municipality or city council (sakrebulo) to form a gender equality council charged with promoting gender equality and countering gender discrimination at the local level.<sup>38</sup> By 2019 Gender equality councils are created in all 64 city councils (sakrebulo) and person responsible for gender equality issues are identified in all municipalities in Georgia.

Election Administration of Georgia (CESKO) carries out relevant activities based on equality principles. The Election Administration recognizes gender inequality in political participation as a serious challenge to Georgia’s democracy and long term development. In 2011, the Central Election Commission established Gender Equality Council, which is responsible for creating and implementing the Gender Equality Policy of the Election Administration, supports implementation of gender equality related recommendations elaborated by the Government of Georgia and international organizations. Administration drafted Strategic Plan for 2015-2019<sup>39</sup> and annual action plans.<sup>40</sup> One of the strategic objectives is to support the development of an environment with greater gender equality, through the implementation of gender equality policy, encouraging women’s participation in political and public life.<sup>41</sup> Under the action plan the training program for female candidates, conduct of gender audit, and creation of new informational resources for publishing gender disaggregated election data is envisioned.<sup>42</sup>

Several attempts have been made since 2015 to introduce diverse mandatory quotas for Parliament and on party lists. In 2015, *the Task Force for Women’s Political Participation*<sup>43</sup> submitted a legislative proposal introducing mandatory gender quotas for proportional lists for parliamentary elections, with a target of 50% gender balance. The initiative did not envisage any special measures for majoritarian representation system. The proposal was rejected by the Legal Issues Committee, without presenting it to the plenary session. Simultaneously, in 2015, an alternative legislative initiative was submitted to Parliament by two MPs, requiring that among every three candidates in the proportional lists, a candidate of the less-represented sex be included. For the first time in Georgian Parliament’s history, the initiative on gender quotas was discussed on the plenary session

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<sup>36</sup> Law on Gender Equality and Law on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination, Article 9<sup>1</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Law of Georgia on Public Service, Article 56, paragraph 3

<sup>38</sup> Law on Gender Equality, Article 13

<sup>39</sup> Election Administration of Georgia 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, available on the link below: [http://cesko.ge/res/docs/STRATEGICPLAN2015-1019\\_ENG.pdf](http://cesko.ge/res/docs/STRATEGICPLAN2015-1019_ENG.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Administration of Georgia 2015-2017 Action Plan, available on the link below: <http://cesko.ge/eng/static/1527/samoqmedo-gegma>

<sup>41</sup> Election Administration of Georgia 2015-2019 Strategic Plan Goal #4; pg. 16

<sup>42</sup> Administration of Georgia 2015-2017 Action Plan, Objective 3.4; pg 17

<sup>43</sup> The Task Force for Women’s Political Participation was set up in March 2014, bringing together more than 20 organizations working on women’s political participation, both local and international, with the aim of ensuring that gender quota is introduced in the legislation.

of Parliament, however the voting never took place. The most recent initiative, in June 2017, involved 37000 citizens' signatures and efforts of several women's rights groups in support of 50% mandatory gender quotas for parties' proportional lists for parliamentary and local elections. It introduced mandatory requirement for parties and blocs to prepare gender balanced lists for elections where every other candidate is of a different sex, and replace any elected member who abandons his/her mandate with the next successful candidate on the party list who is of the same sex. The proposal was registered by the Bureau of the Parliament of Georgia, and the parliamentary process was initiated in the 2017 session. Parliament of Georgia has rejected a bill on mandatory gender quotas with the support of only 66 MPs, while it needed at least 75 in order to proceed. If it had been approved, share of women in the 2020 Parliament would have been at least 26%.

The obligation to ensure gender equality is established by many international agreements and UN treaty bodies. Adoption of temporary special measures, including statutory quotas, 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 is part of the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee.<sup>44</sup> In its Concluding Observations, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) recommended that Georgia strengthen "efforts to achieve equitable representation of women in decision-making positions in legislative and executive bodies, including in Parliament and at the highest levels of the Government, within specific time frames."<sup>45</sup> Since the recently adopted Constitution transitions Georgia to proportional representation system at the earliest in 2024, it is of increased importance to adopt mandatory gender quotas aimed at narrowing the gender gap in political decision making.

The National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia 2014-2020 is a key policy document that promotes a human rights-based approach in all policy development and implementation, including considering the different needs of women and men in any given situation. Objective 14 (of 23) is dedicated to the "Promotion of gender equality, protection of women's rights and prevention of domestic violence, as well as the consequences resulting from such violence". With a view to achieving the long-term goals, the strategy envisages implementation of effective measures across all spheres to ensure and promote the concept of gender equality; In particular, encourage greater involvement of women in political life, as well as decision-making process; ensure prompt and effective response to all reported cases of gender discrimination; ensure the full compliance of existing mechanisms with international standards for the protection and assistance of victims of domestic violence; conduct awareness-raising campaigns, especially for civil servants, on issues of gender equality and domestic violence; ensure access to legal protection, psycho/social rehabilitative facilities and shelters for victims of domestic violence.

Two stand-alone National Action Plans and one chapter of the Human Rights Action Plan: Gender Equality Women's Empowerment for supporting gender equality and women's empowerment approved by the government include: National Action Plan on the Implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and the National Action Plan on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims/Survivors covering period from 2018 to 2020. The Government formed the

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<sup>44</sup> CEDAW, Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia, CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, 24 July 2014, para 17 and 25

<sup>45</sup> HRC, CCPR/C/GEO/CO/4, August 19, 2014, para 7(a).

Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues represents an accountability mechanism for the advanced implementation, monitoring and coordination of drafting the National Action Plans on Gender Equality, Violence against Women/Domestic Violence and the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Thus, the development of both action plans and mentioned chapter has been coordinated by the Commission, which comprises deputy ministers and gender focal points from line ministries as well as the Thematic Consultative Working Group with representatives from municipalities, civil society and international organizations.

The 2018-2020 National Action Plan of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security was approved by N173 Decree of the Government of Georgia on April 10, 2018 and represents third action plan since 2011, when Georgia developed its first National Action Plan and the subsequent, the second NAP for 2016-2017. The NAP has been drafted by the Government of Georgia with UN Women technical support in broad consultations with national partners, line ministries and state institutions responsible for NAP implementation and civil society organizations, in particular those representing IDP and conflict affected women. The 2018-2020 National Action Plan represents the state instrument for taking consolidated and coordinated actions to deliver on the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. It should also be seen as part of the Government of Georgia's commitments to human rights, gender equality, women's empowerment, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The 2018-2020 NAP is harmonized with the Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights and aligned with the relevant objectives, targets and indicators of the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>46</sup> The action plan includes four impact areas: participation, prevention, protection, and effective implementation and monitoring of the action plan. These impact areas unify 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; 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. Security and physical and psychological well-being of women and girls is ensured; 5. Socially and economically empowered IDP and conflict-affected women, girls and their family members; 6. Goals and objectives of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) are integrated in the national policies and sectoral strategies of state institutions.

The 2018-2020 National Action Plan on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims/Survivors (DV/VAWG NAP) covers the issues of violence against women and girls (VAWG) more broadly than its predecessor for period of 2016-2017. It constitutes a national framework document that combines the measures to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. Deriving from the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), ratified by Georgia in 2017, the VAWG/DV NAP takes into consideration the gendered nature of domestic violence and addresses the phenomenon of violence against women and girls in a holistic manner.

To ensure efficient implementation of the VAWG/DV NAP 2018-2020, clear cut indicators, baselines and targets have been determined on the outcome and output levels to allow for proper

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<sup>46</sup> 2018-2020 National Action Plan on the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security : page 2

monitoring and evaluation of results. Experience gained from drafting, implementing and evaluating the first five action plans was analyzed in detail during the development of the 2018-2020 Action Plan.<sup>47</sup> Representatives of state agencies in charge of the implementation of the plan, as well as those of civil society and international donor organizations, were actively involved in drafting the Action Plan.

The future plans and main direction of the state policy with regard to supporting gender equality and women empowerment by the Government of Georgia and the Parliament are well established in the National Human Rights Action Plan of the Government of Georgia for 2018-2020 and the action plan of the Gender Equality Council of Parliament of Georgia.

Gender Equality Council Action Plan for 2018-2020 was approved on April 17, 2018. The main objectives of the Action Plan include defining gender equality policy and effectively implementing the state concept on gender equality, elimination of legislative gaps and improvement of legislative framework aimed at gender equality, ensuring coordination and cooperation between state mechanisms of gender equality at different levels of government, ensuring effective operation of Gender Equality Council of the Parliament, raising awareness and sensitivity about gender equality and monitoring of implementation of state policy on gender equality.

Gender Equality Council plans to approve the new state concept on gender equality in Georgia by the end of 2019 which has not been updated since its adoption in 2006. Gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessments, gender audits and gender-responsive budgeting constitute internationally recognized tools for fostering gender equality. Government of Georgia plans to develop tools on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting, a training module for public officials to introduce common approach throughout the state institutions, gender training of human resources managers of the public institutions and ensuring equal access for men and women to participate in vocation trainings. Gender Impact Analysis (GIA) methodology will be institutionalized in the Parliament. GIA was launched in 2017 and the gender analysis of two draft laws was completed – Law of Georgia on Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, Precursors and Neurological Assistance” and Labor Code.<sup>48</sup> Georgia, based on the International Labor Organization standards, is planning to develop and pilot the pay gap calculation methodology and to institutionalize methodology for gender analysis of the state budget. In addition, legislative amendments to bring the legislation of Georgia in compliance with the international obligations will be introduced, including the definitions of rape and sexual assault to bring them in line with the Istanbul Convention definitions.

In 2018 State Audit Office of Georgia conducted the effectiveness of audit of domestic violence protection and prevention mechanisms. During the audit following state institutions were audited: Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues, Ministry of Internal Affairs and LEPL Social Service Agency. The purpose of the audit was to study productivity and effectiveness of domestic violence prevention and response mechanisms. The assessment criteria applied by the State Audit Office was the Due Diligence Standard which helps to evaluate state obligations regarding the domestic violence. The audit covered period from 2015 to April 2018. The audit only focused on prevention and protection mechanisms and did not apply to the rehabilitation services for victims provided by the state.

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<sup>47</sup> The previous action plans covered the following periods: 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2015 and 2016-2017.

<sup>48</sup> Assessment of work performed by the Gender Equality Council, page 12



Effectiveness audit revealed certain areas of improvement in the work of the audited state institutions and underlined the importance of expansion of services of social workers during the holidays, weekends and after working hours through on duty social worker mechanism which shall be introduced by the LEPL Social Service Agency, improvement of access to information on the history of violence by the police officers to better assess risk and respond accordingly, registration of protective and restrictive orders in the electronic database, improvement of public awareness about the matter. The resolution of all these issues will support victim assistance process.

Achieving gender equality on the way to building a democratic state has been challenging for Georgia. Although the Georgian government has made significant positive attempts to elaborate and implement gender equality policies and has translated international obligations, it clearly understands that greater commitments are needed to implement these policies and legal frameworks in order to meet country's international obligations including Beijing Platform for Action.

## Section II - Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

### 1. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

The right to equal pay for equal work has been established by international legislation. ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration (No. 100), which is fundamental convention of ILO and Georgia is party to since 1993, requires States to “ensure the application to all workers of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value”.<sup>49</sup> The EU-Georgia Association Agreement and 2017- 2020 Agenda obliges Georgia to integrate International Labor Organization standards into national legislation.

Article 7(a)(i) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides that “fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work”.

Effective economic empowerment for women occurs when women are able to fully enjoy array of human rights and are able to improve their economic status and wellbeing. UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment recognizes that “empowering women economically is not only the ‘right thing to do’ to honour the world’s commitments to human rights, it is also the ‘smart thing to do’ for development and economic growth”.<sup>50</sup>

The Georgian economy is characterized by both horizontal segregation in which women tend to work in less profitable sectors of the economy, and vertical segregation, in which women tend to occupy lower-paying positions than men within the same sector. As a result of such segregation, women earn on average less than men. In 2017 the average nominal monthly salary for women in Georgia constituted 770 GEL while for men it was - 1197 GEL.<sup>51</sup> The minimum wage regulations are outdated and require critical review, with some sectors like education being an exception where new set of rules were introduced to establish minimum wages.

Georgia has one of the most liberal labor codes, not only in the region, but globally and according to Heritage Foundation, Georgia ranks 17th globally on Labor Freedom Index. In Georgia, women mainly occupy lower-level support positions. Women tend to dominate in the teaching, social services and healthcare fields, while men predominate in management-level positions in government and the private sector, especially in the energy, information technology and construction sectors.<sup>52</sup>

Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia started to work on development of methodology to calculate pay gap. The working meeting was held on October 2, 2018 and the methodology of calculation of pay gap and importance to decrease the gap was discussed. It has been decided that GeoStat with the assistance of UN Women will analyze the first wave of Labour Force Survey (LFS) and will conduct survey on gender pay gaps by positions, which will be published in May 2019; By June 2019, within the framework of tripartite cooperation (Trade Union, The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour,

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<sup>49</sup> Article 2(1), ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

<sup>50</sup> Leave no one behind a call to action for gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment; pg.5

<sup>51</sup> GeoStat, <http://geostat.ge/gender/doc/W&M%20GEO-2018.pdf>; page 66

<sup>52</sup> GeoStat, Women and Men in Georgia, 2017

Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and ILO) the methodology to calculate equal pay for equal work in private sector will be developed in accordance with ILO recommendations and all the outcomes will be presented for discussion in order to achieve overall consensus on the topic.<sup>53</sup>

Georgia's total unemployment rate was 13.9%, in 2017.<sup>54</sup> It decreased by the 0.7 percentage points comparing to 2014 data, which composed 14.6%.<sup>55</sup> In 2017, 58% of women were considered as economically active, compared to 75% of men.<sup>56</sup> In 2017 compared to 2013 the number of economically active women increased by 3%, and for men decreased by 2%. In the same time period the number of employed women and men increased by 5% and 2%. In 2017 the share of women in the total number of employed is 48%, while the share of men is 52%.<sup>57</sup> In 2017, 12,7% of women are unemployed comparing to 15% of men.<sup>58</sup> In 2017, "the highest level of economic activity among women is observed in the 45-54 year old age group (77%). The employment rate is the highest (69%) in the same age group, while being the lowest (26%) in the 15-24 age group. As regard the unemployment rate, the latter is the highest among women aged 15-24 (33%).<sup>59</sup> "Similar to women, the highest unemployment rate among men is observed in the 15-24 year old age group (26%)."<sup>60</sup> "The largest share of employed constitutes the population with the general secondary education. In 2017 36% of employed women had higher education and men 39% had general secondary education."<sup>61</sup> The share of unemployed women is the highest for women with higher education and for men with general secondary education. Thus, in 2017 around 42% of unemployed women had higher education and 41% of unemployed men had secondary education.<sup>62</sup>

Occupations are strongly segregated by gender, with a much higher share of men in stereotypically male professions, such as engineering, construction, energy, transport and communications, gas, and water supply. The majority of women is employed in jobs with a caring or service dimension. Women account for around 75% of employees in the health care and social sectors, 60% of people working in the hospitality sector, and 84% of school teachers. Fewer than 10% of women work in construction, while 23% are employed in transport and communications. Many women also work in the informal sector and in unpaid subsistence farm work.<sup>63</sup>

In 2014, the Government approved an Action Plan on Gender Equality Policy (2014-2016), one component of which aimed to secure "gender equality in the economic field". The National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights (2014-2016; 2016-2017 and 2018-2020) contains a section on "Gender equality and women's empowerment", which addresses the promotion of women's economic empowerment, to be achieved through business education and capacity-building support, including in agriculture and agri-business, increasing women's participation in agricultural cooperatives and ensuring their involvement in rural development.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Gender Equality Council Report on Implementation of 2018 Action Plan; pg. 8

<sup>54</sup> Geostat, Statistics Database, [http://pc-axis.geostat.ge/PXWeb/pxweb/ka/Database/Database\\_\\_Social%20Statistics\\_\\_Labour/LFS\\_by\\_age\\_groups.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=277a4803-d140-4158-b0a4-0e0550888b2e](http://pc-axis.geostat.ge/PXWeb/pxweb/ka/Database/Database__Social%20Statistics__Labour/LFS_by_age_groups.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=277a4803-d140-4158-b0a4-0e0550888b2e)

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*

<sup>56</sup> GeoStat, Women and Men in Georgia, 2018 pg. 49

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*; pg. 50

<sup>58</sup> Geostat, Statistics Database

[http://pc-axis.geostat.ge/PXWeb/pxweb/ka/Database/Database\\_\\_Social%20Statistics\\_\\_Labour/LFS\\_by\\_sex\\_and\\_urban-rural\\_areas.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=e7601ea3-da9f-4b25-8c88-3f37bcb9b8c](http://pc-axis.geostat.ge/PXWeb/pxweb/ka/Database/Database__Social%20Statistics__Labour/LFS_by_sex_and_urban-rural_areas.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=e7601ea3-da9f-4b25-8c88-3f37bcb9b8c)

<sup>59</sup> GeoStat, Women and Men in Georgia, 2018 pg. 51

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*; pg. 52

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*; pg. 52

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*; pg. 56

<sup>63</sup> Georgia – Country Gender Assessment; December 2018; pg. 15

<sup>64</sup> See, Activities 13.1.4.1-13.1.4.5, Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights for

In December 2017 Georgian Parliament adopted package of legislative amendments to make its laws in compliance with the international standards and obligations and to strengthen laws, policies and practices that prohibit discrimination of women in labour relations, prevents sexual harassment in the workplace.

In 2019 the Law of Georgia on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination was amended and now it covers labor and pre-contractual relations, education, social protection and healthcare spheres,<sup>65</sup> sets prohibitions on directing one individual to discriminate the other,<sup>66</sup> obliges employer to protect individual equality principles in labor relations, as well as in pre-contractual relations- this includes vacancy announcement and prohibition of discrimination during interview, ensuring access to supplier or services, including provision and access to financial services and insurance benefits without gender-based discrimination.<sup>67</sup>

In 2017 the law of Georgia on Public Service was amended and according to this amendment public entity is obliged to take measures to ensure equal treatment of persons employed and to include provisions prohibiting discrimination in internal rules and other documents and to ensure their enforcement”.<sup>68</sup>

According to the Constitution of Georgia the state shall support promotion of the employment of its citizens.<sup>69</sup>

The Gender Equality Council of the Parliament with technical support from USAID funded Promoting Rule of Law in Georgia (PROLoG) was the author of the amendments to the Labour Code according to which sexual harassment at workplace is defined.

With support of UN Women, in 2017 online course on sexual harassment at work has been elaborated. This course is available at Public Defender’s official website. It shall be highlighted that, based on Public Service Bureau recommendations, number of public service representatives have completed the course.<sup>70</sup>

The Ministry of Defence of Georgia amended the Disciplinary Code of the Defence System by Governmental Decree No. 537. Article 501 of the Code introduced for the first time the notion of sexual harassment within the Defence System of Georgia and articulated sanctions for the perpetrators. The Ministry of Defence of Georgia adopted set of procedures that outlines how to make and handle complaints about unacceptable behavior, including bullying, sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual abuse. There are several ways of filing complaints on different forms of discrimination at the Ministry of Defence, including through the Inspectorate General or via hotline, e-mail and a box for complaints. It is important to have clear and standardized procedures for filing and addressing such complaints. Such mechanism is of paramount importance for protecting and promoting gender equality in the security sector and armed forces.

Article 27(1), (2) of the Labour Code provides for 730 calendar days of maternity leave upon the employee’s request, 183 of which will be paid; 200 days can be paid in the event of complications

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2016-2017.

<sup>65</sup> Law on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination, Article 2, paragraph 10

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*; Article 2, paragraph 5

<sup>67</sup> Law on Gender Equality and Law on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination, Article 9<sup>1</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Law of Georgia on Public Service Article 56, paragraph 3

<sup>69</sup> Constitution of Georgia; Article 5 – Social Status; paragraph 4

<sup>70</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia -Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*; pg. 39

with the pregnancy or multiple births. However, in the private sector, the provision of maternity leave is at the discretion of the employer. There is one-time payment from the State in the amount of 1000 GEL<sup>71</sup> established for the child delivery. The Labor Code prohibits concluding a labor contract with pregnant or breastfeeding women for performing hard, hazardous, and dangerous work.<sup>72</sup> Same prohibitions apply to the work during night hours and overtime employment, unless there is consent from the employee.<sup>73</sup> In Addition, the breastfeeding mother who has a baby up 1 year old is entitled to request and receive additional break not less than 1 hour, which is considered to be the working hour and shall be reimbursed.<sup>74</sup>

Law on Public Service of Georgia allows its employees to keep the salary and pardons the time missed from work used for the medical checkup and examination during the pregnancy in case of prove by medical documents.<sup>75</sup> The Labour Code prohibits termination of employment during maternity leave and considers terminating labour relations to be inadmissible during the period maternity, newborn adoption leave of absence, and child care additional leave of absence after a female employee notifies the employer about her pregnancy.<sup>76</sup> Article 111(2) of the Law on Public Service precludes dismissal of an elected or appointed “official” at the national and sub-national level who is pregnant or raising a child up to three years of age.

Retirement age for men and women is differentiated in Georgia. Women are allowed to retire and receive an old-age pension from age 60. The respective age for men is 65. According to GeoStat data in 2017 the number of retired women in Georgia was 462400 and number retired men – 204500. Number of retired women is significantly higher than men and out of 100 retired person 65-70 are women.

During 2006-2015 period labor inspection service was abolished and there was not labor supervisory body in Georgia. In 2015, with the purpose to ensure the compliance with international standards of safe labour practices the Government established a Labour Conditions Inspection Department under the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia which is responsible for enforcing occupational safety and health provisions.

Georgia is rich in agricultural tradition, which is an integral part of its history, mentality and cultural heritage. Agriculture played an important role in formation of the Georgian statehood and contributed much to its economic development. 43.4% (more than 3 million hectares) of the whole territory of Georgia is designated as agricultural land, which also includes pastures and meadows.<sup>77</sup> Agriculture still accounts for about 52% of the country’s labor force while 98% of farmworkers are considered self-employed.<sup>78</sup> Agriculture thus represents an important sector of economy employing majority of the active population. The income gap between urban and rural residents widened substantially.

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<sup>71</sup> Order #231 of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia

<sup>72</sup> Labour Code of Georgia; Article 4, paragraph 5

<sup>73</sup> Ibid; Article 17, paragraph 2; Article 18

<sup>74</sup> Ibid; Article 19

<sup>75</sup> Law on Public Service of Georgia Article, Article 41<sup>1</sup> paragraph 5

<sup>76</sup> Labour Code, Article 37(3)(c); Article 36(2)(g)

<sup>77</sup> Strategy for Agricultural Development in Georgia 2015-2020, p. 12.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. pg.17

The Strategy of Agricultural Development of Georgia 2015-2020 provides a vision for the development of the agricultural sector in Georgia and considers seven main directions of development. The strategy mentions gender in two directions: Direction 1 – increasing the competitiveness of those employed in the agrarian sector, and Direction 2 – institutional development. The development of cooperatives is planned under the first direction, which states that the development of cooperatives improves the involvement of women in social and economic activities. The development of information databases and gender disaggregated data collection is planned under the second direction.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, the National Action Plan accompanying the Strategy contains two references to gender: a recommendation to collect gender-disaggregated data for the development of a market information system, and a recommendation to involve women in the development of agricultural cooperatives.

Georgia's Rural Development Strategy 2017-2020 lists its three priorities: Economy and competitiveness, Social conditions and living standards and Environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources. It references women in one priority area: social conditions and living standards. Objective 1 reads: "Raising awareness in innovation and entrepreneurship as well as promotion of cooperation through contributing to the skills development and employment issues (especially for young people and women)". Objective 3 reads: "Local population engagement. Increase the involvement of rural population (especially youth and women) in the identification of local needs and the determination of solutions to these needs".

The accompanying Action Plan foresees 70 newly constructed or rehabilitated kindergartens. Provision of affordable kindergarten schools is vital to encourage more women to enter the formal market. One researcher in Georgia determined that women dedicate 13 times more time to housework than men".<sup>80</sup> This results in increased pressure on women to accomplish a greater workload and limits opportunities to attend qualification courses or to build their professional capacity in general. It is particularly difficult for women who have taken time off to have a child to remain competitive.<sup>81</sup> Women are expected to undertake the majority of unpaid care work within the household, and there are few examples of men and women sharing care responsibilities.<sup>82</sup>

The regional development strategies of Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Samegrelo, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Shida Kartli for the years 2014-2021 present thorough descriptions of local problems. Kakheti Regional Development Strategy document mentions gender equality challenges to be addressed in two spheres: the gender wage gap and the feminization of migration. Kvemo Kartli and Samegrelo strategies provide data on women in decision-making bodies and contain a goal on "planning and implementing gender equality supporting activities".

Although there are no legal barriers for women to be registered as landowners, restricted access to productive resources, such as agricultural land, is identified as one of the causes of financial difficulties for rural women.<sup>83</sup> Compared to men, women's agricultural participation occurs on a smaller scale, often as contributing family members.<sup>84</sup> Georgia's women are legally entitled to

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> USAID, Article 42, *Gender Discrimination in Labour Relations*, 2014, p. 60

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 2014, p. 64

<sup>82</sup> (Georgia – Country Gender Assessment; December 2018; pg.14)

<sup>83</sup> UN Women, *Gender Assessment of the Agriculture and Local Development Systems*, 2016

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

own and inherit land and property, but customary practices usually give men privilege in property inheritance, ownership, and administration. According to Article 19, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, “the right to property and inheritance shall be recognized and guaranteed”. The Civil Code of Georgia regulating private property, family and personal relations is based on the principle of equality.<sup>85</sup>

The rate of land ownership is higher for men: the 2014 agricultural census found that 70% of total agricultural holdings were operated by men: of 642,209 holdings, women held only 198,446. UNDP, *Gender and Employment in the South Caucasus and Western CIS*, conducted in 2015 revealed that woman’s parcels of land are smaller than men’s. The preference for passing land and property to sons rather than daughters is particularly high among ethnic minority families.<sup>86</sup>

It has been established according to the Pilot Survey on Measuring Asset Ownership and Entrepreneurship from a Gender Perspective in Georgia conducted in 2018 by GeoStat with the support of Asian Development Bank that the gender gap in the ownership of agricultural land is manifested in the fact that men are more than twice as likely to be documented owners as women. The incidence of ownership of livestock among men are 41.6% and 38.6% for women. The gender gap is relatively moderate since livestock in the households is not owned personally but mostly belongs to the household.<sup>87</sup> The gender gap favoring men was particularly evident in relation to alienation rights on agricultural land, large agricultural equipment and other real estate where the gender differences exceeds 10 percentage points. The exclusive right to sell or bequeath the asset turned out higher among men than among women owners for all asset categories. More women as compared to men reported not having the right to sell or bequeath the assets that they owned. It was found that in some cases even though women are considered owners, they still have limited influence on the decision to sell or bequeath the asset.<sup>88</sup> The pilot survey attempted to estimate gender disparities with relation to distribution of wealth. It was found that men held more of the wealth in the form of dwellings compared to women: 51.5% of the wealth was attributed to men and 48.5% to women as reported owners, whereas in terms of documented ownership the percentage distribution of wealth turned out to be 65.0% for men and 35.0% for women. The difference in wealth distribution is more distinct in rural areas: 59.1% of wealth belonged to men as reported owners, while the wealth gap for documented owners is more profound and men’s share constitutes 73.9%.<sup>89</sup>

Data collected through the pilot survey represented the first step of collecting individual ownership data and provided first-time indicators on incidence and distribution of ownership for different types of assets. Valuable insights gained from this initiative will help GeoStat in planning its future activities in relation to asset ownership and gender indicators. The pilot survey has also provided substantial inputs for the development of the United Nations methodological guidelines on the subject of producing data on ownership of assets from a gender perspective, which will provide a standardized framework for collection of comparable statistics in this area.

Inequalities in women’s involvement in agricultural production can be attributed, in part, limited access to basic services and social infrastructure and barriers to credit. Traditional gender roles

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<sup>85</sup> Civil Code of Georgia, Article 1

<sup>86</sup> Georgia – Country Gender Assessment; December 2018; Asian Development Bank; pg. 15

<sup>87</sup> GeoStat Pilot Survey on Measuring Asset Ownership and Entrepreneurship from a Gender Perspective GEORGIA; pg. 8

<sup>88</sup> Ibid; pg. 9

<sup>89</sup> Ibid; pg. 9

exclude women from decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihoods, and the burden of unpaid work prevents them from moving to active, income generating involvement in agricultural business.<sup>90</sup> Gender stereotypes further prevent women from participating in planning and decision-making processes at all levels of public life.

The participation of women in the decision-making process is low in municipalities – especially in the villages. According to a survey conducted in six regions of Georgia, women’s employment in the Sakrebulo is only 9%. In general, women are more passive in the decision-making process on the community level. This fact is conditioned by their own perception of what a woman’s role is in society, which often pertains to activities within family.

Many women also work in the informal sector. Farm work undertaken by women includes managing crops and livestock, dairy production, and processing. UN Women study found that, on average, women engage in agricultural work 80 days per year more than men. On top of that, women do multiple household tasks that increase the gap even more.<sup>91</sup> However, this work often goes unrecognized and is undervalued because it is not remunerated.

There are no legal barriers preventing women from obtaining access to credit, loans are *de facto* less accessible to women as many do not possess land or property to serve as collateral.<sup>92</sup> In Georgia, women are more often co-owners of property than outright owners, and property is generally registered under men’s names.<sup>93</sup> Women more frequently obtain microfinance loans, which do not require substantial collateral. Significantly, microfinance institutions offer comparatively expensive credit.

One of the key components of gender equality is economic strengthening of women which cannot be achieved without strong support from the state. Activity 13.1.4.3 of the National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights foresees “support in increasing women’s involvement in agrobusiness projects,” by increasing the “accessibility of financial resources.”

Government of Georgia is implementing a program for training/retraining and increasing the qualification of job seekers, which aims at training and retraining the job seekers, placing them at the corresponding internships, therefor increasing the competitiveness on the local market and thus promoting their employment. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia has approved list of most desired professions,<sup>94</sup> which is part of the list for the job seekers state program professions. In addition, The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia also approved a registry for the vocational educational institutions and training programs.<sup>95</sup> The Social Service Agency of the Ministry of Health provides the display of the job seeking individuals on the following website –<http://worknet.gov.ge> where the beneficiaries will undergo trainings with the different industries in various specialties. The program is financed by the government-issued vouchers, and the maximum value of each beneficiary, in accordance with

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<sup>90</sup> UN Women, *Gender Assessment of the Agriculture and Local Development Systems*, 2016, p. 5

<sup>91</sup> UN Women. 2016. *Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems*. Tbilisi

<sup>92</sup> *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations* (2018), volume 2. Pg. 38

<sup>93</sup> UN Women, *Accessibility of Microfinance Institution Services for Women: Existing Barriers and Opportunities*, 2013, p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> Full approved list can be found at [http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01\\_GEO/Dasaqmeba/Samush-Madziebl/08-10-2018.pdf](http://ssa.gov.ge/files/01_GEO/Dasaqmeba/Samush-Madziebl/08-10-2018.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> [http://ssa.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=GEO&sec\\_id=1215](http://ssa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=1215)



the profession is 1000 GEL. In case of internship the candidate receives 200 GEL monthly for maximum 3-month period. Main goal of the program is to provide professional trainings in the fields highly demanded by the labor market and/or provide internship for employment seekers in order to increase their competitiveness and support future employment. Preconditions for obtaining services of State programs on training and qualification of employment seekers includes: presentation of basic education completion certificate, but this limitation does not apply to women, who were not able to complete basic education course due to early marriage. Also, in case of even opportunities, women are given priority and granted a right to participate in the program.<sup>96</sup> In 2017, 2290 employment seekers participated in the program, 1612 participants were women. In the scope of the above-mentioned program, 334 women were employed in 2017.<sup>97</sup>

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development in association with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia launched the state program "Produce in Georgia", the main objective of which are: promotion of entrepreneurship in Georgia; stimulating local production - especially in least economically developed regions; new enterprises development; creation of new jobs; and increase export potential. Although this program is not designed to address gender issues directly, it creates new opportunities for women. In 2015-2018, the number of beneficiaries within the framework of the Micro and Small Entrepreneurship Promotion Program of Georgia "Produce in Georgia" amounted to 9389 people, including 3783 women that makes 40.3% of total applicants.<sup>98</sup>

The LEPL Georgia Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia seek to promote financing of innovative projects and start-up business by entrepreneurs. In 2016, 35% of the GITA project beneficiaries were women:

- Micro Grants Program: 17 (20%) women among 84 beneficiaries; In January 2017 - 3 women out of 12 beneficiaries (25%);
- "Start-up Georgia" program: 4 (20%) female beneficiaries out of 20 high-tech idea startups;
- 140 (34%) belong to the woman out of the 420 applications submitted to Industrial Laboratory;
- 93 (45%) women out of 205 participants of the project "Start Business with Fab Lab";<sup>99</sup>

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, its LEPL Agency for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives (ACDA) has been working on strengthening the role of women in agricultural cooperatives. Set-up and development of Agricultural Cooperatives will foster economic growth, promote employment of rural population and prevent rural migration. During 2015-2016, Agricultural Cooperatives Development Agency has implemented special measures, including trainings for women and encouragement of cooperatives established by the women. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, 13482 shareholders are represented in 1352 registered agricultural cooperatives and 3299 are women. In 295 agricultural cooperatives chairperson is a woman. Total of 77 women's cooperatives are registered.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid*

<sup>97</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia -Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*

<sup>98</sup> Information provided by the LEPL "Enterprise Georgia"; letter№ EG-04/434; date: March 29, 2019

<sup>99</sup> Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia 2016 Progress Report on National Action Plan of 2014-2016 for the Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia

<sup>100</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*

The projects initiated by the Ministry include:

- Preferential Agro Credit Project - 7% of the project beneficiaries were women;
- Promoting 2016 spring works for Small Farmers - 34% of beneficiaries were women;
- Agro-Insurance - 3129 women received agro-insurance to cover risk related expenditures;
- Plant the Future - 35 project beneficiaries, including 9 women.<sup>101</sup>

In November 2015, the National Agency of Public Registry of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia launched the project "Gender and Property", which aims to inform the public about the principles of gender equality and equal rights in distribution of property. One of the main policies of the project is informing the citizens about their rights under the legislation and raising awareness of equal rights in property ownership by organizing regular information meetings in regions. According to official data of the National Agency of Public Registry during 2010-2014 totally 131 9155 property right of physical persons were registered out of which 743888 were men (56.4%) and 575267 were women (43.6%). Women are behind men in all regions of Georgia with regard to property registration, in some municipalities this data is minimum (Dmanisi, Bolnisi, Marneuli, Khulo, Lentekhi, Shuakhevi, Tslaka, Mestia, Gurjaani and Kvareli).<sup>102</sup>

Mercy Corps, financed by SDC and in partnership with other organizations, started implementing rural development program with increased gender mainstreaming in Samtsekhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli in 2012. Their activities aimed to address the problems of low involvement of women in decision-making processes as well as limited access to municipality services. Since then, 13 women's rooms were established in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. These rooms: a) are located in municipality buildings, b) have a manager who is financed by the municipality, and c) are equipped with computers, internet access, a library and children's corners. This way, women who come to the municipality for their business can use the facilities of these rooms and receive consultations on other municipality services. They are also intended to serve as meeting points for women who, as opposed to men, often do not have a public place to gather.<sup>103</sup> To locate these rooms in municipality buildings and to allocate municipality funds for their maintenance are good grounds for their sustainable development.

One of the grassroots initiatives to create self-help groups organized by the local NGO TASO Foundation and supported by UN Women was directed to overcoming the underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes. A total of 52 groups were created: 13 groups in Shida Kartli, 20 groups in Kvemo Kartli, and 19 groups in Samegrelo. The members of these groups are mostly women. They carry out different activities such as vaccinating livestock, providing access to drinking water, infrastructure activities such as renovating kindergartens and education center facilities, as well as leisure time activities such as holding poetry gatherings. These groups were provided with working space or equipment such as an office, a computer and internet access. Besides these tangible results, other outcomes of this initiative are that beneficiaries became active in community development and united their efforts. Moreover, some members of these groups developed community groups that apply for and receive funds from other sources to implement small-scale projects. For example, in the village Orsantia, located in Samegrelo, the process of

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<sup>101</sup> Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia 2016 Progress Report on National Action Plan of 2014-2016 for the Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia; pg. 17

<sup>102</sup> <https://napr.gov.ge/p/1113>

<sup>103</sup> *Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems*

self-help groups' establishment went on from the year 2010 to the year 2015 in two phases. Currently, there are 340 members in these groups. Members of self-help, community and local government groups underwent trainings of various types. The women became knowledgeable about issues of local governance and budgeting, and actively defend their position in the community.<sup>104</sup> The TASO Foundation, with the support of UN Women, went further by establishing working groups consisting of members of local councils with the aim of implementing gender responsive budgeting. This initiative supported the enactment of a municipal decree in five municipalities of Georgia, creating the legal grounds for the establishment of GRB Working Groups in these municipalities. The municipal Working Groups and the Community Committees jointly work on gender mainstreaming of the local budgets.<sup>105</sup>

In 2018, the Office of the State Minister in partnership with the Academy of the Ministry of Finance, conducted a training course “How to Start and Develop Business” for 16 women residing in Kvemo Kartli region and 14 women from the Pankisi Gorge. As a result of the training the participants were given the opportunity to expand theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills of entrepreneurship, also elaborate specific business- plans. The successful projects were financially supported by the UN Women (Tbilisi Office); A large scale door-to-door information /awareness raising campaign is regularly conducted for ethnic minority women on state programs and services as well as various issues (women’s rights, antidiscrimination, domestic violence, early marriages, human trafficking, Georgia’s European integration process, etc.).

In order to increase employment opportunities for young representatives of ethnic minorities and support their engagement and civil integration process, in December 2017, upon initiative of State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, amendments were made to ordinance of the Government of Georgia N40, dated June 18, 2014 “On Approval of Rules and Conditions for Internship at State Agencies”. In particular, procedures for representative of ethnic minorities to participate in internship at state agencies have been refined. According to the amendments, students representing ethnic minorities, who have completed “Georgian Language Educational Program” will eligible for internship at state authorities, will gain experience and develop professional skills. The entire process will support engagement of young generation, especially girls.

## **2. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services**

The Constitution of Georgia guarantees everyone’s rights to live in a healthy environment.<sup>106</sup> Right to the protection of health is protected by the Constitution which ensures “the right of a citizen to affordable and quality health care services”.<sup>107</sup> According to the Constitution the State shall exercise control over all health care institutions and the quality of medical services and the state shall take care of human health care and social protection through regulation of subsistence minimum and decent housing, protection of welfare of the family.<sup>108</sup> In addition the state takes obligation under the Constitution to establish a healthy lifestyle.<sup>109</sup>

Article 9 of the Gender Equality Law, covering healthcare and social security, states in full:

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., pg.19

<sup>105</sup> ibid

<sup>106</sup> Constitution of Georgia Article 29; paragraph 1

<sup>107</sup> Ibid; Article 28; paragraph 1

<sup>108</sup> Ibid; Article 28; paragraph 2 & 3

<sup>109</sup> Ibid; Article 5; paragraph 7

1. General and equal access to medical care shall be provided to the population without discrimination.
2. Special measures taken for promoting the health care of mothers and children, family planning and protecting women's reproductive rights, also, state policy protecting pregnant women and maternity and other measures taken on the basis of gender peculiarities shall not be considered discriminatory.

The National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia 2014-2020 envisages several strategic direction one of which is “to Ensure access, especially by vulnerable groups, to the right to health” and the state takes responsibility to take effective measures to ensure access to the right to health for vulnerable groups by consolidate resources available to the state to maximize enjoyment of the right to health; Ensuring access to the right to health, without discrimination, and implementing effective measures to ensure access to the right to health, especially for vulnerable groups.<sup>110</sup>

Adoption of Maternal & New-born Health Strategy 2017-2030, by Government of Georgia Decree #459 on October 6, 2017 is a significant development with respect to sexual and reproductive health policy. This strategy defines 14 year policy for maternal and newborn healthcare, family planning, sexual and reproductive healthcare. Main aim of this strategy is evidence-based and effective intervention in order to ensure maternal and newborn protection and health protection; also, strengthening related reproductive health sphere and ensuring access to high quality universal/comprehensive healthcare. Task of the above-mentioned strategy for 2030 is to ensure proper health conditions of maternal and newborns, family planning, sexual and reproductive healthcare. In this direction, special attention is paid to accessibility of information and services.

The Action Plan (2017-2019) of the Strategy lists specific activities in the areas of: (i) maternal and newborn health; and, (ii) reproductive health and family planning, in order achieve following objectives:

- Ensure women's full access to and utilization of evidence-based pre-conception, ante-natal, obstetric, neonatal, and post-partum care that meet their needs;
- Improve awareness and knowledge among the general population about healthy behaviours, high quality medical standards and the rights of patients;
- Provide easy accessibility of family planning services for all who need them;
- Ensure that the quality of family planning services meets international standards.<sup>111</sup>

The new Maternal and Newborn Health Strategy aims to reduce the maternal mortality ratio from 32 per 100,000 live births in 2015 to 25 by 2020, and to 12 by 2030.<sup>112</sup>

The primary reasons for maternal mortality in Georgia are: (i) the low quality of antenatal and perinatal care; (ii) a weak transportation system; (iii) a weak regulatory and monitoring system; (iv) the lack of referral mechanisms in maternal healthcare services, such as emergency obstetric care; and, (v) the shortage of trained professionals in maternity houses and consultation centers, especially in the regions.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia 2014-2020; Pg. 22

<sup>111</sup> Georgia Maternal & New-born Health Strategy, p. 1;

<sup>112</sup> Maternal Mortality Indicator in the Maternal and Newborn Strategy – 1.5. Target, p. 8.

<sup>113</sup> PDO, *Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2017, p. 74.

Although maternal mortality appears to be in decline in Georgia, it still exceeds EU and some CIS States.<sup>114</sup> According to the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group, Georgia belongs to category B countries, due to its lack of a comprehensive system to register maternal mortality.<sup>115</sup> In 2013 MoLHSA issued order N01-30/N “On the form and rule of obligatory reporting of mothers’ and children mortality/still birth cases”.<sup>116</sup> MoLHSA and Georgia’s National Center for Disease Control and Public Health launched an electronic registry “Mother’s and neonate’s health surveillance system,” covering all cases of pregnancy, delivery and postpartum abortion, including maternal deaths, stillbirths and early neonatal death, a functioning and user-friendly health information system to assist in data collection.<sup>117</sup>

Sexual and reproductive health services are integrated in the public healthcare system through family planning centres (FPCs) to provide ante- and post-natal services.<sup>118</sup> FPCs are designed to provide consultations on contraception, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The Strategy currently provides that the MoLHSA will “facilitate development/adoption and active use of nationally approved clinical guidelines and protocols for each component of the Reproductive health and family planning services.”<sup>119</sup> It further notes that there “no internal or external clinical audit-quality assurance mechanisms in place.”<sup>120</sup> As a rule, the State Regulatory Agency for Medical Activities is responsible for controlling the quality of medical services provided, (including the services rendered within the framework of State healthcare programs).<sup>121</sup>

CEDAW Committee urged the State in its Concluding Observations to ensure “access by adolescent girls and young women to sexual and reproductive health services by eliminating prejudices, training medical personnel and enhancing the number of obstetric health facilities and their equipment”.<sup>122</sup>

According to the Law on the Rights of the Patient, adolescent patients (14-18 years old) have a right to provide informed consent to receive counselling on the methods of non-surgical contraception without parental notification.<sup>123</sup> Georgia’s National Youth Policy for 2015-2020<sup>124</sup> recognizes the importance of information on sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people. The new Maternal and Newborn Health Strategy provides for the development, piloting and implementation of a school-based healthy lifestyle education program. Georgia does not have youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, including on family planning.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Public Defender’s Office, *Gender Equality and Women’s Rights*, 2015, p. 19.

<sup>115</sup> WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, World Bank, *Trends in Maternal Mortality*, 1990 – 2015, available at: <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality-2015/en/>

<sup>116</sup> Public Defender’s Office, *Gender Equality and Women’s Rights*, 2015, p. 18.

<sup>117</sup> Maternal and Newborn Health Strategy, pg. 21.

<sup>118</sup> Public Defender’s Office of Georgia *Human Rights in the Context of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well-being in Georgia: Country Assessment (PDO Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health)*, November 2017, pg. 43.

<sup>119</sup> Georgia Maternal & New-born Health Strategy, pg. 34;

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*; pg. 19;

<sup>121</sup> Order N01-64/6 of the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs on creation and affirming the regulations of the LEPL State Regulation Agency for Medical Activities, 2011.

<sup>122</sup> CEDAW, Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia, CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, 24 July 2014, para 31(c).

<sup>123</sup> Art. 41.1, Georgian Law on The Rights of the Patients.

<sup>124</sup> Approved by Government Decree #553 Decree, 2014.

<sup>125</sup> PDO, *Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2017, pg. 54.

State healthcare programs are implemented by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and its legal entities. In the scope of universal healthcare delivery and C sections are financed. State program for maternal and newborn healthcare is available. In the scope of the program, below listed services are provided:

- Antenatal care;
- Detection of Hepatitis B and C, HIV infection/AIDS and syphilis in pregnant and prevent transmission of Hepatitis B from mother to a child;
- Providing pregnant with pteroyl glutamic acid;
- Providing relevant medication to pregnant with acidotic anemia;
- Special treatment of pregnant with syphilis.

Contraceptives are available by prescription in Georgia.<sup>126</sup> They are not subsidized by the State's health program, including the Universal Health Care Program. In recent years, international donors, such as UNFPA and USAID, have been the only providers of free modern contraception to those most in need.<sup>127</sup> In 2015, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) five-year stock of contraceptives was provided free of charge, to the first aid medical treatment facilities across country: combined oral contraceptives, progesterone pills, condoms. Women's consultation centers were provided with Implanon and intrauterine devices (IUD).<sup>128</sup>

The Law on Healthcare provides that abortion can be carried out for any reason if the pregnancy does not exceed 12 weeks.<sup>129</sup> From 12 to 22 weeks, abortion is allowed only on the grounds of listed medical conditions (therapeutic abortion) and for social reasons, including if pregnancy is the result of rape or if the patient is under 15 or over 49 years of age. In cases of rape, it is required that the crime of rape be confirmed by court in the first instance.<sup>130</sup> Abortion is permitted after 22 weeks due to medical conditions, and only upon the decision of a medical commission.<sup>131</sup> It is prohibited to terminate a pregnancy after 22 weeks for non-medical reasons.<sup>132</sup>

Since 2014, the Law on Healthcare requires mandatory counselling and a five-day waiting period before obtaining an abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.<sup>133</sup> An Order of the Minister of Health provides for reducing the waiting period to three days, if a woman applies for abortion during the 12th week of pregnancy and the term is expiring.<sup>134</sup> The Order attempts to strike a balance during the preliminary interview and pre-abortion counseling by the physician, by requiring both that the counseling prioritize the protection of the life of the fetus, and that the decision to obtain an abortion shall be the prerogative of the women.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid, pg. 48.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, , pg. 52.

<sup>128</sup> VI Periodic Report of Georgia -Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; pg.20; paragraph 229

<sup>129</sup> Article 139(2)(a), Law on Healthcare

<sup>130</sup> Article 140(2), Law on Healthcare; Order №01-74/n of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 October 2014, Tbilisi, On the Approval of the Rules of Artificial Termination of Pregnancy, Annex N1, Article N2.b. Order №01-74/n of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 October 2014, Tbilisi, on the Approval of the Rules of Artificial Termination of Pregnancy, Annex N5.

<sup>131</sup> Article N1 of Annex N4 of Order №01-74/6 of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 October 2014, Tbilisi, on the Approval of the Rules of Artificial Termination of Pregnancy.

<sup>132</sup> Order №01-74/6 of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 October 2014, Tbilisi, on the Approval of the Rules of Artificial Termination of Pregnancy, Annex N6.

<sup>133</sup> Article 139(2)(b), Law on Healthcare.

<sup>134</sup> Article 3 of Annex N1 of Order №01-74/n of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 October 2014, Tbilisi, on the Approval of the Rules of Artificial Termination of Pregnancy.

October 7, 2014, decree N01-74/N, of the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs “On Approval of the Rules of Artificial Termination of Pregnancy” defines rules for pre-abortion consultation/interview, according to which, “interview is an interactive process and includes provision of patient with assistance, additional information and professional opinion, by means of sympathy and interchange”; Informed consent on provision of surgical medical services for artificial termination of pregnancy” and “Informed consent on provision of medicine services for artificial termination of pregnancy”, which serves to fully inform the patient on possible complications following the abortion. Based on this decree, section 14, it is prohibited to terminate pregnancy on the grounds of child sex selection, except for the cases when, it is required to avoid sex related hereditary disease. Abortion related health complication cases are financed in the scope of universal healthcare system. “Abortion Procedure”- Patient’s Version of Protocol”, approved by the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Ministerial decree N01-123/O, dated July 28, 2014 is designated especially for the patient and aims to provide comprehensive information.

The sex ratio at birth (SRB) for 4-year-olds averaged 108.5 boys for every 100 girls in 2015.<sup>135</sup> The most recent measurement of SRB in Georgia was produced by a UNFPA commissioned study comparing the data of the 2014 general population census to the 2016 birth registration information provided by the civil registry. According to 2016 data, among the 56,569 registered births, there were 28,887 male births and 27,682 female births – a distribution corresponding to normal SRB of 105 male births per 100 female births.<sup>136</sup>

The issue of sex-selective abortion has drawn the attention of UN treaty bodies and special mandate holders. The *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences* welcomed the adoption of Order n°01-74/6 of 2014 which regulates the termination of the pregnancy and prohibits in its paragraph 14 of the first addendum the termination of pregnancy for the reason of sex selection.

With technical and financial support provided by UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Bank, work on elaboration of informational-educational events for prevention of sex-based selection of fetus has been completed. Campaign includes several directions: national level media campaign and local communication campaign in Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli Regions. In 2017, around 10 meetings were organized with population in Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions, which further expansion in 2018; In addition, two informational meetings with initial healthcare and reproductive healthcare service providers were held at Kvemo Kartli. These meetings aimed at raising medical personnel awareness on prevention of sex-based selection of fetus and providing them with importance of ethics related to application of technologies. In the scope of the campaign, special photo project was prepared “Girl is Born”. Main goal of the campaign was to show the society life of the families, who only have girl children and emphasize equality of both genders. Photo exhibition was held in Tbilisi and Marneuli, with support and participation of local government.

According to annual abortion rates in Georgia the number of abortions in all age groups is decreasing comparing to around 33500 in 2014 and 24900 in 2017.<sup>137</sup> Abortion rates are higher among marginalized women, such as rural and less-educated women, as well as among women of Azeri descent.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> GeoStat Data of 2015

<sup>136</sup> Ch. Guilimoto & S. Tafuro, *Trends in Sex Ratio at Birth in Georgia*, pg. 28.

<sup>137</sup> [http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=196&lang=geo](http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=196&lang=geo)

<sup>138</sup> NCDC, *Reproductive Health Survey*, 2010, pg. 9.

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b># of registered abortions</b>	33.469	32.428	28.720	24.937
<b>Up to 15 years</b>	20	9	19	1
<b>15-19 age group</b>	1387	1321	919	596
<b>20-44 age group</b>	31850	30938	27659	24145
<b>45 and up</b>	212	160	123	195

According to GeoStat data the share of population under absolute poverty line has decreased by 2% during last five years and is 21.9% in 2019 comparing to 23.5% in 2014. Women are more among the subsistence allowance beneficiaries and the deference between men and women beneficiaries has not changed since 2011.<sup>139</sup>

Targeted social assistance is a special cash assistance programme aimed at reducing levels of poverty of the most vulnerable households in the country. The programme is operated since 2006 and is based on the assessment of households using special methodology that uses Proxy Means Testing formula and assesses households with “wellbeing score”. Since 2015 with the support of World Bank and UNICEF, the revised methodology of assessment and assistance scheme was introduced. New methodology is oriented on family income (or property bringing income), consequently, beneficiary can become a family having no income or income bringing property. Assistance is provided based to the gradation system- families, having lower scores receive more financial support. Additionally, a new child cash benefit was introduced.

Families, whose rating score is less than 30001 - the amount of the allowance is 60 GEL per family member monthly; the rating score for families from 30001 to 57001 - the amount of the allowance is 50 GEL monthly for each family member; the rating score for families from 57001 to 60001 - the amount of the allowance is 40 GEL monthly for each family member; the rating score for families from 60001 to 65001 - the amount of the allowance is 30 GEL monthly for each family member; the rating score for families from 65001 to 100001- the amount of the allowance is 50 GEL monthly for each family member under age 16.

In 2015 the status of single parent was determined by the amendments and changes to the Civil Code of Georgia. According to the new definition the single parent is a person who has a child out of wedlock and there is no information about the other parent in the child birth certificate, or a person who was not in registered marriage at the moment of child adoption. It is important to note that the status of single parent is deprived when child reaches age of 18.<sup>140</sup> According to the amendments made to the Civil Code of Georgia in December 2017 the marriage of a parent cannot be grounds for the deprivation of status of a single parent. Single parents do not receive state assistance despite the provision in the law that social and legal guarantees of single parents shall be determined by the Georgian legislation.<sup>141</sup> In case single parent wants to receive state support he/she shall be granted the status of socially vulnerable.

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<sup>140</sup> Civil Code of Georgia, Article 1191<sup>1</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, Article 1191<sup>1</sup>, paragraph 5



Under the Tax Code of Georgia single mother is exempt from payment of income tax on taxable income up to 3000 GEL earned during the calendar year.<sup>142</sup> A person having three or more dependent children under age 18 who permanently live in high mountainous settlements are exempt from the payment of income tax on the taxable salary received from the budgetary organization and person with one or two child under age 18 pays reduced income tax (50%) on the taxable salary income of up to 3000 GEL received from the budgetary organization.<sup>143</sup> It is important to underline that according to the information provided by the Public Service Development Agency after June 16, 2015 when the amendments to the Civil Code entered the legal force up until April 4, 2019 there was only one decision made regarding the status of single father, but applications of 3565 single mothers and 18 adopting women were approved. According to the Decision #27 of the Legal Aid Service Board adopted on September 9, 2015 in exceptional cases public lawyer shall be appointed to a single mother who has juvenile children and are not registered in the Unified Database of the Socially Vulnerable Families.

The state provides free legal aid for the socially vulnerable. Representation in the courts is provided to the socially vulnerable people free of charge in the criminal cases, where mandatory defense requirement applies, in certain category of civil and administrative cases. The service is equally accessible for both men and women. An insolvent person is a member of family registered in the unified database of the socially vulnerable families, whose social-economic ranking point is 70 thousand or less, besides, socially vulnerable person is also considered insolvent in case of holding 100 thousand or less points and if they belong to one of the categories listed by the Resolution N424 of the Government of Georgia.

The State program aiming supporting of improvement of demographic state started in June 1 of 2014 in regions where population growth was not determined. The amount of assistance is 200 Gel in high mountain regions and 150 Gel in other regions. The State gives assistance to the family for the 3<sup>rd</sup> or more new born up to 2 years age.

In the frames of the same program, according to the Georgian law on “Development of Mountainous Regions”, children born after January 1, 2016 also gain the right to receive the monetary social assistance, whose one of the parents has permanent resident status of living in mountainous region. Payment for the first and the second child consists of 100 Gel per month for one year duration, on the third and following child – 200 Gel for 2 years.

The Georgian legislation, as well as international standards guarantee equal access to education. Constitution of Georgia ensures the right to education for all, right to receive education and to choose the form of education.<sup>144</sup> Primary education is free in Georgia and fully funded by the State and citizens have right to state-funded vocational and higher education. Elementary and basic education are compulsory.<sup>145</sup> Law on General Education determines that state shall ensure the openness of general education and equal access to it for all during the entire life.<sup>146</sup>

Article 4(2)(b) of the Gender Equality Law guarantees without discrimination “equal access to education for men and women and free choice of education at any stage of learning”. Focusing on

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<sup>142</sup> Tax Code of Georgia; Article 82; paragraph 2

<sup>143</sup> Tax Code of Georgia, Article 82; paragrap2

<sup>144</sup> Constitution of Georgia, Article 27; paragraph 1

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, Article 27; paragraph 2

<sup>146</sup> Law on General Education; Article 3; paragraph 2.a

vocational and higher education, Article 7 further declares rights pertaining to vocational and higher education, including the sciences:

1. Everyone shall have the right to freely choose a profession and specialty according to their abilities. Such equality shall be ensured through equal access, without discrimination, to general, vocational and higher education.
2. The State shall ensure that equal conditions are created for men and women to acquire general, vocational and higher education in all kinds of educational establishments, and to participate in educational and scientific processes.<sup>147</sup>

Article 9(8) of the Law on Education provides that “pupils shall have the right to be protected from improper treatment, neglect and abuse,” With respect to a mechanism for filing complaints, Article 12(1) states: “In order to protect their rights and freedoms, pupils, parents and teachers shall have the right to appeal unlawful and other wrongful acts of teachers and the school, as well as to receive full compensation for any inflicted damage”. Article 13 does prohibit discrimination but makes no mention of the forms of discrimination. The relevant subsections provide: “4. It shall be inadmissible for schools to use their powers and resources in a way to directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils, parents, teachers or their associations. 5. Any differentiating act or an exception shall be considered as discrimination, except for the cases where such act or exception is fair and reasonable and ensures free development of and equal opportunities for each person and group.”

During past years, Georgia made significant progress in reforming educational and science system of the country. Providing quality, accessible and inclusive education is one of the priorities of Georgia, what is expressed in increasing mobilization of financial resources. In 2018, financial resources mobilized for education and science amounts in 186.2 million Georgian Lari, what shows 7% increase compared to previous year and 89% increase compared to 2012.<sup>148</sup>

Georgian culture places a high value on education. Primary and secondary school enrollment rates are high for both male and female students. The strong tradition of education, coupled with mandatory primary schooling, has resulted in near universal primary school enrollment. Despite overall high enrolment rates for primary and secondary school generally, the level of school attendance is lower among children from low income families: 84%.<sup>149</sup>

The vast majority of teachers in Georgia are women, while senior school administration positions are predominantly held by men.<sup>150</sup>

In 2017, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture And Sport of Georgia has elaborated 5-year strategic document and 2-year action plan. These documents are based on ongoing reforms, education, science and training sphere achievements and challenge analysis. Strategy covers all spheres of education and science: early/pre-school childcare and education, general, vocational and higher education projects, education, science and studies for adults. Strategy document includes lifelong learning principles and connection between different stages of education is ensured. Document is in compliance with UN Sustainable Development Goals. Document

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<sup>147</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o8i\\_NCAFaG2lnAivUCZo-8zdsM4\\_T7wX/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o8i_NCAFaG2lnAivUCZo-8zdsM4_T7wX/view); page 6

<sup>148</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*; pg. 59

<sup>149</sup> World Bank, Gender Data Portal, available at: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/georgia>.

<sup>150</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*;

considers human rights, including requirements envisaged in Convention on elimination of all forms of violence against women.

In Georgia, early marriage is associated with poverty and low social status. Primarily practiced within certain ethnic and religious communities, early marriage occurs throughout Georgia. In 2015, approximately 408 persons between the ages of 13 and 17 interrupted the secondary education because of the marriage; 168 dropped out at the age of 18.<sup>151</sup> Another factor leading to child marriage and the subsequent drop-out rate is the lack of information about sexual and reproductive health. The absence of information on reproductive health leads to an increased probability of girls becoming pregnant, which in turn is one of the reasons for early marriage.

According to the Public Defender's Report on the Human Rights Situation in Georgia (2017) during 2016-2017 school year the status of 3454 juveniles at mandatory basic education stage were terminated and in case of 2259 juveniles after the completion of basic education. The most frequent (1695) reason for termination of pupil's status is the immigration abroad. The highest data of school dropout is revealed in Tbilisi (2274), Kvemo Kartli (1259), Adjara (441) and Kakheti (511). The data of Kakheti, Adjara and Kvemo Kartli are very interesting because according to applications submitted to the Public Defender's Office the majority of school dropouts due to early marriage and labor are registered in these territorial units.<sup>152</sup>

LEPL Education Management Informational System under the Ministry has developed statistics for children leaving the schools on the grounds of early marriage. LEPL Education Management Informational System is collecting quantitative indicators and statistics for girls leaving school on the grounds of early marriage. The data of girls who left the school on the grounds of marriage provided by them according to the calendar years and age of girls for the period of 2014-2018 is the following:

Year	Age at identified year		
	<18	18	>18
2014	235	51	21
2015	390	161	75
2016	201	116	89
2017	88	57	38
2018	77	46	21

According to the Public Defender's Special Report Early Marriage: Challenges and Solutions the school dropout due to early marriage are very frequent and the most alarming are the facts of school dropout prior the completion of basic education stage. Students married in early age have an opportunity to continue educational process or acquire education via alternative means- distance learning.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Public Defender's Office, *Special Report: Early Age Marriages: Challenges and Solutions*, 2015, pg. 5, 6.

<sup>152</sup> Public Defender's Report on the Human Rights Situation in Georgia (2017) pg. 252

<sup>153</sup> Law of Georgia on General Education, Article 6<sup>1</sup>

Activity 1.3.5 of the National Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women and Domestic Violence calls for awareness raising among teachers on the issue of child marriage. Recent amendments to the Civil Code removed all exceptions to the minimum age of marriage at 18, and the Criminal Code was amended to criminalize forced marriage. Article 172 of the Code of Administrative Offences foresees fines for parents failing to assume their “duties to raise, educate a minor and to provide him/her with dwelling, food and other conditions necessary for normal development”. In addition to the reporting requirements under the Criminal Code, Article 172 establishes an administrative offence for failure to detect and report instances of child abuse. Article 30(g) of the Law on Education further empowers local self-government authorities to: “take measures determined by the legislation to ensure school attendance by pupils”. Article 5(10) of Ordinance № 437 authorizes educational institutions to refer cases of child abuse, including early and child marriage, to the competent authorities.

Public awareness and access to information on reproductive and sexual health and rights as well as services and programs available in the country remains low. Information about reproductive health is very limited within the context of formal education, and consequently youth lack information about access to contraception and abortion, existing regulations and family planning services. The Public Defender’s Office has stated: „The level of awareness of our population in the direction of reproductive and sexual health and rights is quite low. Unwanted pregnancies, their termination and the frequent facts of complications as a result of termination among teenagers is related exactly to the lack of access to information, low level of public education on sexual and reproductive health rights, and a widespread negative opinion toward gender equality.<sup>154</sup>

Human rights, gender equality, healthy life-style and reproductive health are integral part of the school curriculum in Georgia. Gender equality principles are included in different subjects at schools in Georgia. Subject “Me and Society” (III-IV grades) designated for elementary stage students includes gender quality issues. Student acquires knowledge on gender equality based on the examples of family and school: “why and how shall we value work of all family members (mother, father, sister-brother, and grandmother-grandfather)? Why school shall provide equal opportunities and conditions for girls and boys? “

For basic level education (VII-IX grades), citizenship (civil education) educational plan was elaborated. This plan concentrates on gender equality and raising awareness of young generation on early marriage. Central importance is given to providing education on human rights and responsibilities, as well as principles of democracy. One of the most important principles is equality, which implies that every citizen is equally valuable, everyone shall have equal opportunities and rights, discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, sex (gender), and ethnic belonging shall be eliminated. Education plan also includes topics related to early marriage. This topic is represented in the form of civil identity, personal development and human rights context. In particular, early marriage is discussed as possible violation of human rights and factor preventing from personal development. General principles of UN Resolution N1325 (“Women, Peace and Security”) are introduced in the scope of the plan.

Biology program for VIII grade, aspects related to early marriage, pre-mature pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STI) symptoms and causes are highlighted. Biology course for IX grade

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<sup>154</sup> Public Defender’s Office, *Gender Equality and Women’s Rights*, 2015, pg. 17

covers topics related to early marriage, pre-mature pregnancy and risks related to premature sexual relations and physiological dysfunctions. This program also includes consideration of the role of reproductive health in human's life and future generations.

Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia in partnership with the UN Women and the European Union support initiatives that aim to raise awareness among the youth on gender equality and domestic violence issues. One such initiative is the project "10 Lessons of Safety", implemented in 54 public schools throughout Georgia. The training programme aims to prevent crime among minors and raise their awareness on public order and safety issues, including gender equality and domestic violence. Almost 5,000 students attended the programme. Within the framework of the project, trained staff of the patrol police, Emergency Management Agency and Emergency and Operative Response Center 112 delivered 10 lessons on public order and safety issues. Through a guidebook prepared for this purpose, they informed the students about such topics through the use of respective role plays, Q&A sessions, exercises and other educational activities, as well as sharing many interesting cases from their practical experience. 108 patrol-inspectors delivered the training on gender equality and domestic violence issues within the framework of the project, and 600 copies of the guidebook "10 Lessons of Safety" were distributed to help all participating instructors inform the children about discrimination, types of violence, domestic violence and bullying, and other topics in language accessible to children.

One of the elements of learning culture of democracy and human rights is supporting social unity and inter-cultural dialogue, protection of the values such as human rights, supremacy of law, democracy, violence free environment, ethnic diversity and equality, including gender equality. For this purpose, in 2018, Teacher Professional Development Center has initiated program on "Supporting Democratic Culture and Human Rights Education". Main goal of the program is to support democracy culture and human rights learning at general education facilities. In the scope of the program it is planned to elaborate training module for teachers on democracy culture and human rights; organize studies, meetings and conferences; elaborate supportive materials (guidelines/handbooks/films and etc.) for teachers and other individuals engaged in educational process.

It shall be highlighted that, from October 2015 till December 2016 "Subprogram on Parents' Education and Engagement" was implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia. Program aimed raising parents' awareness regarding the risks related to early marriage. Meetings/public lectures were systematically held in the regions of Georgia, where facts of early marriage often observed. Representatives of Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, psychologists, local police officers and social workers participated in the meetings. Major topic of the discussion was early marriage and related health complications, also legal aspects. 21 public meetings were organized in Lagodekhi, Sagaredjo, Marneuli, Bolnisi, and Gardabani, Dmanisi municipality villages (Kabali, Karajala, Uzuntala, Lambalo, Duzagrama, Kalinino, Kesalo, Amamlo, Karabulakhi, Talaveri, Bazaklo, and Pantiani).

In December 2016 thirty-four trainers of the Teachers' Professional Development Center (TPDC) underwent intensive trainings on gender equality issues during two sessions organized jointly by UN Women and Millennium Challenge Account - Georgia (MCA-Georgia). The trainers applied newly acquired knowledge to the continuing education of public-school teachers and principals throughout the country. The training programme focused on the topics of women's rights and

gender equality, implicit and explicit gender bias in education, non-discriminatory teaching practices, gender-sensitive attitudes and non-stereotypical ways of thinking. Trainees also engaged in a gender analysis exercise, reflecting new knowledge and discussing its further use. UN Women and MCA-Georgia signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2015 to cooperate on issues related to mainstreaming gender in education.

Teacher's Professional Development Center of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, has elaborated a training program on "Bullying Prevention in Schools and a Culture of Tolerance Development". Training has two major directions: "Violence" and "Domestic Violence". Totally 634 teachers from civil education system attended this training from 2016. They learn the grounds of violence and its forms, types of domestic violence, influence of stigma and stereotype mindset on violence and bullying. While working on the above-mentioned topics, women's rights related issues were considered as well.

Women's engagement in information and communications technology (ICT) is important for their own success, as well as for the progress of companies specialized in this field and for the entire industry as a whole. However, fewer women are employed in the ICT sector globally - Georgia included - despite it being one of the most demanded and highly paid fields. This disparity stems largely from the stereotype that ICT work is still considered to be a "man's job". With the purpose of reducing these inequalities and supporting women's engagement in ICT, UN Women began implementing a new initiative in partnership with the Innovative Education Foundation, GeoLab and universities aimed at providing free training courses in website development and social media marketing for women aged 18-35 in five regions in western Georgia. As a first step in the implementation of this initiative, a Training of Trainers was held at Ilia State University in Tbilisi. Fourteen participants from various regions of Georgia deepened their knowledge in teaching website development and social media marketing, which they will then share among the women in their regions starting in March, 2019

### **3. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes**

*"Violence against women not only causes physical and psychological harm but also has serious consequences for women's ability to participate fully in the social, political and economic life of the country. During last several years Georgia has made significant advances in combating violence against women and it has been praised by the US Department of State in Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018. US Department of State Georgia Human Rights Report underlines that "Prosecution Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs took significant steps to address domestic abuse and gender-based violence."<sup>155</sup>*

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<sup>155</sup> Georgia Human Rights Report pg. 33 available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/289375.pdf>

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia in order to increase the efficiency of the response from police at the forefront of the law enforcement system established the Human Rights Protection Department within its structure. The Department has been established on the basis of the ministerial order on 12 January 2018 to ensure timely response and effective investigation into the following crimes: 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. The core functions of the Department is to monitor the process of investigation and administrative proceedings regarding the above-mentioned crimes; identify the gaps; and prepare and enforce measures to enhance law enforcement's role in eliminating them. The Department also analyzes the statistics related to the investigation process and related administrative procedures. As of May 1, 2018, specialized investigators on violence against women and domestic violence issues handle the cases.

A new ministerial decree issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia on 13 July 2018 introduces a milestone policy shift in police response against domestic violence. The change requires police officers to fill out a risk assessment checklist to evaluate risks for lethality and re-abuse by perpetrators in order to identify and protect at-risk victims. The reform ensures improved safety planning for victims, with the ultimate aim of saving more lives.

The domestic violence risk assessment tool, effective as of September 1, 2018 enables police officers to document the history of violence suffered and evaluate risks for lethality and re-offence using a standardized methodology. The tool further informs the police, prosecution and courts during the investigation and pretrial stage to place appropriate restrictive measures against perpetrators and protective measures for survivors. It will further help the prosecution to build stronger cases for adjudication and thus achieve proportional sanctions for the crime.

The checklist was developed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the technical and financial support of UN Women and the European Union within the framework of the “Unite to Fight Violence against Women” project and in partnership with the US-based organization Global Rights for Women. The tool is entirely based on global research and studies on domestic violence risk assessment and is informed by internationally established standards and best practices. The draft version of the checklist was piloted in early summer 2018 to generate feedback from practicing officers in the field. The lack of standardized domestic violence risk assessment methodology was repeatedly identified as a major gap in effective police response to domestic violence in the Public Defender's 2015 and 2016 special reports on violence against women in Georgia. According to the Effectiveness Audit Report of Protection from Domestic Violence and Preventive Mechanisms issued in February 2019 by the State Audit office of Georgia the challenge is the filling out the checklist fully by the police officers.<sup>156</sup>

**The enforcement of the risk assessment tool will be followed by the introduction of GPS electronic monitoring bracelets for perpetrators. The Ministry of Internal Affairs will implement this** important and innovative project in cooperation with UN Women and the EU. The use of electronic bracelets will be complementary to the risk assessment tool: police officers will use the electronic bracelets as an alternative form of punishment for control purposes in high-risk cases and when the perpetrator is not imprisoned. This is an additional step forward in the prevention and elimination of reoffending.

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<sup>156</sup> *Effectiveness Audit Report of Protection from Domestic Violence and Preventive Mechanisms*; February, 2019; pg. 5

One of the novelties introduced is a new feature of the mobile application for 112 - the Emergency and Operative Response Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The 112's mobile app is a free, innovative and high-tech service, and its biggest advantage is in determining a user's location. The app includes such features as silent alert and chat; if the user cannot talk, or if making a call would be too dangerous, then s/he can use the silent alert or chat options. Such functionality is especially important in cases of domestic violence. It should be pointed out that as soon as the SOS button is tapped, the user's GPS coordinates are sent immediately to an operator in order to determine his/her location and then send the police to the exact address. "Useful Tips" menu of the 112 app now has a new section on domestic violence. It will help interested individuals easily find information about different types of domestic violence in addition to what to do if they or someone they know are experiencing domestic violence. The app also provides exhaustive information about state services available for the victims of violence: shelters, crisis centers and a hotline (116 006). Information is available in Georgian, English and Russian languages. This was possible through the support provided to national partners by UN Women through UN Joint Programme supported by the government of Sweden.

The classification of income calls at emergency number 112 is based on the information provided by the caller. The 112 operator determines the type of incident in the program, which is important to prioritize the case and determine resources needed to respond to the incident. Not always is possible to determine the gender of caller and due to this fact, the income calls received by 112 are not disaggregated by gender. One of the incident types related to violence is "conflict/domestic violence". This type unifies all forms of family conflicts which is broader than legal definition of domestic violence and calls registered under this type of crime does not necessarily reflect the exact cases of domestic violence related calls, but it is interesting to know that under incident type "conflict/domestic violence" the statistics for the last three years is the following: 2016 – 19078 calls; 2017 – 20720 calls; and 2018-20496 calls.<sup>157</sup>

The Ministry of Internal Affairs made significant improvements in responding to the domestic violence cases and establishing new mechanisms in recent years but there are some important areas that require attention among which are improvement of restriction order monitoring mechanism, taking into account history of violence when assessing the risks of violence and planning responding measures, appropriate registration of restrictive and protective orders in the police database. These measures will help police officer to better evaluate risks which will improve the quality of victim protection and help police to make informed decision. It is recommended for the police to develop the instruction for diversion of perpetrator from home, which remains to be significant problem and police officers are forced to take victim and child to the shelter.<sup>158</sup>

In light of the risk assessment tool, the Department also elaborated monitoring mechanism of restrictive orders. The mechanism provides instruction of the police to monitor obedience of requirements of restrictive order, via keeping vigorous communication and conducting visits to the victim and the offender according to the level of risk set by the protocol of the restrictive order.

Both instruments, risk assessment mechanism and monitoring tool were integrated in the protocols and adopted by the Ministerial order in July, which entered into force on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

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<sup>157</sup> Information provided by the MIA 71900521257 letter; February 28, 2019

<sup>158</sup> Effectiveness Audit Report of Protection from Domestic Violence and Preventive Mechanisms; February pg. 35



In order to fix the gaps identified during the monitoring process, the Department elaborated 4 **recommendations on domestic violence** and gender based violence. These recommendations are:

- ✓ Recommendation on the issues related to the restrictions of restrictive orders;
- ✓ Recommendation on the protection of the statutory victims, after the offender is released from prison;
- ✓ Recommendations on the obligatory issuance of restrictive orders in parallel with investigation;
- ✓ Recommendations on conducting interview with the victim.

Along above-mentioned list, guidelines on the investigation of gender based and domestic violence were elaborated by the department and disseminated to the relevant departments of MIA.

Prosecutor's office applies strict criminal law policies in cases of women murder, when the crime is committed with the signs of domestic violence. While there is no written law or protocol precluding the use of plea agreements and diversion in cases on domestic violence/violence against women, prosecutors have reportedly been verbally instructed not to offer plea agreement in cases of femicide and diversion in cases of domestic violence or violence against women. There has been no single case of a plea agreement entered for last 2 years in cases of femicide.<sup>159</sup> Starting from 2014 till nowadays, all cases of women murder have been resolved, all offenders have been identified and subject to relevant sentence.<sup>160</sup>

In 2018, General Prosecutor's order determined specialized prosecutors and prosecutor-investigators in order to carry out efficient investigation of domestic violence-based crimes, provide effective support to state prosecution. These prosecutors have completed specialized training course on domestic violence. The course covers the psycho-emotional aspects of working with survivors, witnesses and perpetrators of domestic violence and provides an overview of current domestic and international legislative frameworks related to domestic violence. The training course has been developed with the support of and in close cooperation with UN Women component of UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality supported by the government of Sweden. In 2018 three specialization courses were conducted on the issue of domestic violence and violence against women, within the ambit of which 83 employees of the prosecution service were trained. For the time being, there are 155 specialized prosecutors and prosecution service investigators in total. As of 1 May 2018, only specialized prosecutors and investigators handle the cases of domestic violence in Georgia.

As a result of the preventive measures taken and the improvement of the quality of prosecutorial supervision, the rate of reporting domestic violence by victims/survivors and the rate of launching criminal prosecutions have increased significantly - more than five-fold since 2014, amounting to criminal charges against 3955 individuals in 2018. (The rate of requesting detentions as a restrictive measure has increased significantly, from 14% in 2014 to 90% in 2018 (over nine months)). The Prosecutor's Office pays special attention to each case and any past incidents of

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<sup>159</sup> *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations* (2018), volume1; pg. 79

<sup>160</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*; pg. 25; para 135

violence for the purposes of detecting different forms of violence as well as determining systemic violence. Detection of psychological violence has improved, while detection of sexual violence remains a challenge. Notwithstanding the significant progress, when compared to previous years, the issue of identification of gender-based discrimination motive in violence against women and domestic violence cases remains as challenge, with only three such cases in 2016 and 111 cases in 2018.

For 2014-2018 years criminal proceedings have been initiated against 343 individuals and 359 women have been recognized as victims based on the Articles 137- 141 of Criminal Code (Crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability). During the same period of time criminal proceedings have been initiated against 350 individuals and 316 women have been recognized as victims for the above-mentioned offence, which was committed on the grounds of domestic violence.

Prosecutor's office has witness and victim coordinator's office since 2011. With the support of United States Embassy, concept on engagement of coordinators in cases of domestic violence has been elaborated and 26 individuals have been trained on the topics related to domestic violence, trafficking and child exploitation. The number of beneficiaries of services of victim and witness coordinator office is increasing every year. In 2016 totally 8573 individuals have used the services and in 2017 the number of beneficiaries (witness, victim and applicant) increased up to 9913 and 9292 individuals have used the services of witness and victim coordinator in 2018.

In March 2019 with support of the Council of Europe, a joint three months training course has started for representatives of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs on issues violence against women and domestic violence. Distant learning will be held through HELP e-programme of the Council of Europe and it aims to assist representatives of the law enforcements to get acquainted with the European standards for human rights protection. Trainings course developed by the Council of Europe aims to enhance the quality of the response to cases of violence against women and providing victims with access to justice during prosecution of accused persons. The course consists of 7 modules and covers international as well as European legal frameworks, standards of Istanbul Convention and Case Law that aims prevention of violence against women and girls and their protection from violence. In 2018 two learning courses were conducted for the prosecutors using the European Council HELP distance learning platform on the topic of combatting domestic violence and violence against women. Within the ambit of the said training course 32 prosecutors were trained. The training course included United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, on women, peace, and security.

National study on Violence against Women in Georgia 2017 constitutes the first nation-wide research on violence against women conducted in Georgia since 2009 and explores the prevalence of domestic violence, non-partner physical and sexual violence, as well as perceptions and awareness of women and men on gender and violence in Georgia. For the first time in Georgia, the study also generated data on prevalence of sexual harassment and stalking at the national level.

The study was implemented throughout 2017 and combined quantitative and qualitative research methods. In total, 6,006 women aged 15-64 and 1,601 men aged 15-64 were interviewed across the country. If one combines all forms of violence, the study found that one in every four women has experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime. Among those, 73% of women have experience psychological violence, 54% of women experienced economic violence and some 31% women have experienced physical violence from an intimate partner, over 15 000 have

experienced physical violence and 9% of women in Georgia have admitted to being subjected to sexual violence during their childhood, before the age of 18. In Georgia, 20% of women have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime and 10% of women have experienced sexual harassment at workplace. It is important to note that according to the survey 36% of women who experienced physical or sexual violence have never told anyone about it.

The study findings indicate that women and men show a high degree of tolerance and acceptance towards the use of physical violence against women in relationships, and they also share inequitable views on sex and sexual violence. Of those surveyed, almost one quarter of women (22%) and one third of men (31%) believe that wife-beating is justified under certain circumstances. Moreover, almost one quarter of all women (23%) and nearly half of all men (42%) believe that a wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees. 33% of women and 50% of men still believe that domestic violence is a private matter and others should not intervene. Gender attitudes in Georgia appear to be considerably more conservative than in many other parts of Europe.

The study indicates some positive trends as well. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of women who have reported to the police an act of violence committed by an intimate partner: 18% in 2017, compared to 1.5% in 2009. Also, the percentage of women who believe that domestic violence is a private matter and that no one should interfere has decreased from 78% in 2009 to 33% in 2017. The study shows that women in Georgia are at greatest risk of violence from male intimate partners. Women also experience violence by non-partners, particularly in the form of sexual harassment and stalking.

Nevertheless, there have been clear positive improvements in attitudes and practices since the 2009 study in Georgia: Gender attitudes are less conservative. Men and women in the younger generation show more non-discriminatory attitudes. There has been a decrease in the rate of women who stayed with violent husbands because they believed the violence to be normal. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of women who have experienced intimate partner violence who have reported it to the police. 77% of population of Georgia is aware that there are laws protecting victims of domestic violence, services for survivors of violence and anti-violence/domestic violence campaigns. All of this suggests that the concerted efforts to raise awareness and promote women's empowerment and rights in the country over the past decade are having a positive impact.

The study was carried out by UN Women in Georgia in partnership with the National Statistics Office in the framework of the project "Unite to Fight Violence against Women" generously supported by the European Union. The National Study on Violence against Women provides baselines for a number of SDG indicators and it allows to measure over time the effectiveness of state policies and development interventions in this field.

The Government of Georgia has demonstrated its political commitment to addressing discrimination and eradicating violence against women and girls recognizing domestic violence as a problem of public concern. To ensure development of a comprehensive legislative framework for the prevention and elimination of domestic violence, including establishment of efficient mechanisms for the protection of, assistance to and rehabilitation of the victims/survivors, as well as public awareness raising, and its due enforcement, the Government has adopted special action plans. To date, six National Action Plans on the Measures to be implemented to Eliminate Domestic Violence (DV NAP) have been adopted since 2007.

In 2016 the Government of Georgia made important step forward by expansion of the scope of the National Action Plan on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims/Survivors, which significantly broadens the obligations undertaken by Georgia, as well as ensure increases protection of DV victims/survivors. Previous National Action Plans adopted in Georgia have focused solely on domestic violence. The VAWG/DV NAPs for 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 cover violence against women more broadly, including both, domestic and sexual violence issues.

The National Action Plan for 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and protection of victims/survivors foresees activities related to prevention, awareness raising, the establishment of a national referral mechanism, the establishment of a crisis center, the expansion of a hotline and the establishment of a system for data collection, making legislation and state policy documents in compliance with the international standards, creation of cooperation platform with local municipalities, measures supporting change of attitudes, social norms and behaviors towards the domestic violence and violence against women.

The 2018-2020 NAP envisages institutionalizing an electronic monitoring system for high-risk offenders and launching behavior correction programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence. As for the 2018-2020 NAP on the Implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, significant importance is paid to its localization in cooperation with local self-government to reach out to the beneficiaries in a more tangible manner.

The process of drafting the actions plans is coordinated by Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues. The Inter-agency Commission collects relevant documents such as PDO reports, studies of local and international organizations. The Plans take into account key international commitments of the government of Georgia concerning VAWG: the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, CEDAW Committee recommendations, as well as UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, where one of the key targets is to eliminate all forms of VAWG by 2030. Than the meetings with the representatives of state and non-state organizations are held, for instance in order to draft NAP for 2018-2020 three meetings were held in 2017 and meetings in 2018 and recommendations were presented by non-governmental and international organizations and PDO.<sup>161</sup>The Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues is responsible for coordinating the implementation of both plans in close cooperation with line ministries and state agencies.

According to the Effectiveness Audit Report on Protection from Domestic Violence and Preventive Mechanisms issued in February, 2019 by the State Audit Office of Georgia the action plans shall be supported by the relevant analysis and data, monitoring and coordination; Function of the Inter-agency Commission shall be strengthened, there are cases when some activities are not fulfilled under the stated timeframe and their implementation is postponed for future.<sup>162</sup> One of the main issues regarding the functioning of the Commission is that the Inter-agency Commission does not have sufficient human resources to analyze and determine optimal number

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<sup>161</sup> *Effectiveness Audit Report of Protection from Domestic Violence and Preventive Mechanisms*; February 2019 pg.38

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, pg.6

of activities, which is the most important precondition for the success of result-oriented planning.<sup>163</sup>

The advancement of fight against domestic violence was supported by the major steps made by Georgia including adopting a series of amendments in 2017 to bring the legal framework into alignment with the international standards set forth in the Istanbul Convention. These amendments included, *inter alia*: adopting definitions of violence against women and stalking, criminalizing forced sterilization and female circumcision, providing for temporary residency for foreign women who are victims of violence, ensuring that victims of violence are notified prior to the release from custody of the perpetrator, and expanding the list of aggravating circumstances related to gender-based violence. Parliament adopted amendments enabling courts to take away the right to carry firearms from persons convicted of domestic violence.

The Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence was first established in 2006 and has undergone a series of amendments to strengthen its provisions, most recently in 2017. According to the law, Article 10(2), (3) provides for the issuance of temporary restraining and protective orders, to be issued by judges and police, respectively. Article 12(1) establishes the temporal limit of protective orders as six months; Subsection (2) of that Article provides for their extension to a maximum of 3 months, thus providing for a total of 9 months protection. There are three alternative sanctions for breaches of a protective or restraining order. Article 9 of the Law provides that breach of restraining and protective orders is to be governed by administrative law, civil law and criminal law.

Article 20 of the Domestic Violence Law foresees the passage of a Government decree requiring domestic violence perpetrators against whom a protection order has been issued must undergo a correctional treatment program. At present, the only program for perpetrators is provided by the Ministry of Justice for those persons serving a custodial or conditional sentence, the latter being administered by the Probation Agency. Since 2016, penitentiary system operates several programs, which are oriented on violence against women and domestic violence. These programs include behavior correction for perpetrators of domestic violence and reduction of repeated violence crimes, rehabilitation program for female victims of domestic and sexual violence, psych-social training “Stigma and Discrimination”- one chapter of this training is fully dedicated to raising awareness on domestic violence and violence against women.

In its Concluding Observations, the Human Rights Committee recommended that the State ensure “effective implementation of legislation to combat domestic violence and access of victims to effective remedies and means of protection”.<sup>164</sup> Yet, upon ratifying the Istanbul Convention, Georgia made one five-year reservation to Article 30(2), which provides:

*Adequate State compensation shall be awarded to those who have sustained serious bodily injury or impairment of health, to the extent that the damage is not covered by other sources such as the perpetrator, insurance or State-funded health and social provisions. This does not preclude Parties from claiming regress for compensation awarded from the perpetrator, as long as due regard is paid to the victim’s safety.*

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., pg.39

<sup>164</sup> Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Georgia*, CCPR/C/GEO/CO/4, para 9(b).

This reservation will expire in September 2022. In 2016, the Georgian Administrative Procedure Code was amended in order to allow the courts to consider claims for the allocation of compensation in a simplified procedure in accordance with the jurisprudence of UN Human Rights treaty bodies.<sup>165</sup> However, in addition to determining the amount of compensation to be awarded, the Code provides for the possibility for courts to, in the alternative, deny the request for compensation ordered by the treaty body in accordance with the requirements of the Code;<sup>166</sup>

The number of restrictive orders in domestic violence cases issued by the police gradually increased comparing to 2014 (817), 2016 – 3089, 2017– 4370 and almost doubled in 2018 comparing to previous year and comprises 7646.<sup>167</sup> The Information-Analytical Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs collect data since 2017 on restrictive orders issued on the grounds of facts of violence against women which was 26 in 2017 and increased up to 205 in 2018.<sup>168</sup> The majority of perpetrators in both domestic violence as well as violence against women cases are men. The data show that during 2015-2017 the number of restrictive orders issued by police increased minimum by 35%. The increasing number of restrictive orders is caused by active response to violence cases by the police. During 2015 – July 2018 the monitoring of restrictive orders was not properly performed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Due to poor monitoring police was informed regarding the violation of conditions of restrictive order only in case victim reported it. Along with the enactment of risk assessment tool the rule of monitoring of requirements and obligations determined under the restrictive order is enforced.<sup>169</sup>

Article 11<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code envisaged criminal liabilities for domestic crimes. Statistic data of the court demonstrates increasing dynamics of cases considered by the Common Courts. The statistics provided by the judiciary states the following: 2014 - 378 individuals convicted in 373 cases of domestic crime and 36 were sentenced to imprisonment; 2015 - 773 individuals were convicted in 760 cases and 105 were sentenced to imprisonment; 2016 - 834 individuals were convicted in 822 cases and 116 were sentenced to imprisonment, 2017, rate of domestic crime has increased and court has considered 1080 cases and 1096 individuals have been convicted and 297 were sentenced imprisonment, the numbers has doubled comparing to previous year and in 2018 constituted 2085 cases, with conviction of 2115 persons and imprisonment used against 608.<sup>170</sup>

One of the main functions of the State funded Legal Aid Service is the prevention of domestic violence and protection of the social rights of the victims of domestic violence and violence against women. The Legal Aid Service provides the victims of domestic violence/violence against women and possible victims with free legal consultation, drafting of legal document and court representation for the protection of the rights when court hears the case of issuing protective order, despite the insolvency status of a victim of violence or domestic violence.<sup>171</sup> In addition victim of the domestic violence is entitled to receive free legal aid in civil and administrative cases that are

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<sup>165</sup> See Chapter VIII14, Administrative Procedure Code of Georgia

<sup>167</sup> Information provided by MIA71900521257, issued on February 28, 2019

<sup>168</sup> Ibid

<sup>169</sup> *Effectiveness Audit Report of Protection from Domestic Violence and Preventive Mechanisms*; February, 2019, pg.29

<sup>170</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*; pg. 24 and letter of the Supreme Court #P-145-19, issued on February 25, 2019

<sup>171</sup> According to the changes introduced in 2018

related to the fact of domestic violence despite the insolvency of a victim.<sup>172</sup> According to the information received from the State funded Legal Aid Service during 2014-2019 (first quarter) totally 84 beneficiaries were provided with the court representation on protective and restrictive orders out of which 43 were juveniles and 616 legal consultations on restrictive and protective orders were issued by the lawyers of the legal aid service.

Under the initiative of the Office of the State Minister, in cooperation with the Legal Aid Service, information/awareness raising campaign on the issues of domestic violence and state services, is held in the districts, densely populated by ethnic minorities, such as Kvemo Kartli – Tsalka, Samtskhe- Javakheti – Ninotsminda, Kakheti – Iormughanlo, Akhalsopeli;

On November 10, 2017 the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs elaborated Ministerial Order N01-64N on “Minimum Standard Requirements for Crisis Center Establishment and Functioning”. Minimum standards envisaged in the decree are compulsory for all service providers, regardless of their organizational-legal and property form, providing psychological - social services, first and emergency medical support and legal aid to the victims/survivors of domestic violence and their dependents.

On September 6, 2016 the first state-run crisis center for the victims of domestic violence in Georgia based in Tbilisi and the nation-wide domestic violence hotline 116 006 was launched. Tbilisi crisis center has the possibility to accommodate alleged victims of domestic violence until the official domestic violence victim status is granted that entitles beneficiaries to be transferred to state-run shelters. The victims not willing/needing to be placed in a crisis center or shelter can visit the center for other services such as psycho-social rehabilitation, legal aid, first aid/emergency medical assistance during the working days. The crisis center can accommodate 18 persons at once, including children and persons with special needs (disabilities). The services provided by the crisis center include psychological-social rehabilitation services, food four times a day, legal aid, translator/interpreter services as required, adequate, relevant, safe accommodation; hygiene supply; and clothing as required.

In 2016 with the supports of UN Women component of UN Joint Programme supported by the government of Sweden was possible to improve material-technical base of 116-006 hotline: small communication center has been established, which is equipped with variety of function, including conversation recording, responding to multiple incoming calls, starting conference for 3 individuals, day and night regime of operations. Starting March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 hotline is available in Georgian and other 7 foreign languages: English, Russian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Arabic and Persian Languages.

Starting from 2017 crisis center services are available for victims/survivors of violence against women, sexual violence, human trafficking and violence in Kutaisi; in 2018, Crisis Center was opened in Gori and Ozurgeti and in 2019 Crisis Center was opened in Marneuli. According to the current situation, 5 (five) State Shelters for Victims of Violence in different regions and 5(five) Crisis Centers are available. Since July 2017 victims of sexual abuse have been provided with the services of Shelters and Crisis Centers under the State fund. The agreement has already been reached with the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour,

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<sup>172</sup> Law on Legal Aid Service; Article 5, paragraph 2<sup>4</sup> and 2<sup>5</sup>

Health and Social Affairs of Georgia that the government will fully take over funding of the crisis center in Ozurgeti in 2020.

Shelter sustainability and uninterrupted functioning is ensured by LEPL State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking based on the state budgetary assignments.

In line with efforts to support the process of decentralizing service provision for the survivors of violence, crisis centers in Telavi and Zugdidi have been set up jointly by a local NGO Women's Consultation Center Sakhli in collaboration with respective local municipalities with the support of UN Women and the Swedish Government. Funding for Telavi and Zugdidi crisis centers will be provided by the local municipalities as of 2021.

LEPL State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and active cooperation with the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and with the purpose to implement the recommendations of the World Health Organization has elaborated guidelines (standard operational procedures for healthcare services interdisciplinary response) on identification, treatment principles and referrals for physical, psychological and sexual violence against women. These guidelines support the first and second level employees to identify and provide relevant support to female victims of the violence. Also, in the scope of standard operational procedures, post coital interventions to avoid possible pregnancy after sexual violence and post-exposition interventions and testing-treatment mechanisms (minimum package) for sexually transmitted infections (STI) were elaborated and consequently approved by Ministerial decree.

The Office of the State Minister with support of the US International Development Agency (USAID) and UN Association in Georgia "Tolerance, Civic Awareness and Integration Support Program" in cooperation with the State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking has implemented the Project "Youth for Gender Equality". The members of mobile group, established in the framework of the Project, conducted 120 trainings in 68 villages of 3 regions (11 municipalities, 3465 beneficiaries);

During 2016-2018 the Fund has organized a project - "Reducing Domestic Violence in Georgia". The project was funded by USAID. A training module on violence against women and domestic violence prevention/elimination and social work for victims of violence was prepared in the scope of the project and in cooperation with LEPL Social Service Agency. Around 244 social workers (employed at LEPL Social Service Agency, Fund and other non-governmental organizations providing services) were trained in 3 groups. In addition informational meetings were held in Tbilisi and other regions of Georgia with different target groups: teachers, students of higher educational institutions, representatives of ethnic minorities, internally displaced people, population in rural areas, Pankisi gorge population, residents of the villages bordering the administrative borders. Totally 1900 participants attended the meetings during 3 years of project implementation and got familiar with the domestic violence related issues, including preventive measures and services available at the fund.



According to Article 18 of the Organic Law of Georgia on the Public Defender, employees of the Department of Gender Equality of the Public Defender's Office shall monitor the service centers (shelters) for victims of human trafficking and domestic violence. In 2016, 2017 and 2018 Gender Equality Department of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia, with the technical assistance of UN Women, carried out a monitoring in state shelters for domestic violence and human trafficking victims at Tbilisi and Batumi, as well as the service centers for victims of domestic violence in Kutaisi, Gori and Signaghi and crisis service centers for victims of violence in Tbilisi, Gori and Kutaisi. The quality of service delivery, beneficiaries' needs and performance of duties by personnel were assessed within the framework of the monitoring. Special attention was paid to the issue of provision of psychosocial rehabilitation programs for the beneficiaries and their readiness for living independently after leaving a shelter.<sup>173</sup>

The monitoring showed that most of the beneficiaries were satisfied with shelter services and positively evaluated the efforts of the administration and personnel; the beneficiaries feel safe and constantly supported in the shelter.<sup>174</sup> Medical examination of victims upon admission to the shelter remains to be problematic, as the examination is mostly limited to an oral inquiry. The limited number of psycho-social rehabilitation, educational and employment programmes, and in some cases their absence, is still a problem in the shelters. It is important to support victims' education, which would enable them to enroll in the employment programmes and get ready to live independently.<sup>175</sup>

The Public Defender of Georgia, with the support of UN Women, has been implementing a detailed analysis of the court decisions on femicide since 2016. The purpose of the analysis is to evaluate the true dimensions of the femicide problem, the protection or prevention measures applied and the shortcomings that have occurred resulting in the failure to protect women.

While analyzing 11 femicide cases that occurred in 2016, the PDO found that 6 of the 11 women had appealed to the police for protection prior to the femicide occurring. The analysis further found that most perpetrators had no education beyond secondary school and were unemployed. The report also underlines that the gendered nature of violence and discrimination suffered by the victims is not adequately reflected in court judgments.

The number of femicide cases increased in 2017. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the murders of 26 women were reported in 2017, of which 14 were committed by family members. In 2017 Some 15 cases of the attempted murder of women were reported, of which 12 were committed in the context of domestic violence. Also, of the five instances of induced suicides, two took place because of domestic violence. In 2018 the number of femicide cases decreased by 58% and there was not even one case of murder of wife or former wife by a husband or former husband. During 10 months in 2018 totally 11 women were killed out of which 5 were killed by family members.<sup>176</sup>

In 2017, the Public Defender established femicide monitoring mechanism consultation council within the Gender Equality Unit. As part of the monitoring process, the Public Defender's Office

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<sup>173</sup> Information is available on the following website: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/eng/190306081201spetsialuri-angarishebi>

<sup>174</sup> Public Defender's Monitoring Report in State Shelters for Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Victims, 2018; pg. 5

<sup>175</sup> Public Defender's Monitoring Report in State Shelters for Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Victims, 2018; Pg. 6

<sup>176</sup> Ministry of Internal Affairs website <https://police.ge/ge/2018-tsels-58-it-shemtsirda-qalta-mkvlelobebis-machvenebeli-kholo-qmris-mier-tsolis-mkvlelobis-arts-erti-faqti-ar-dafiqsirda/12131>

analyzes relevant court decisions in detail to evaluate the real scale of the problem of femicide, the applied measures of protection and prevention and the obstacles to addressing the issue. In addition, the Public Defender's Office studies available statistical data and information on investigations and criminal prosecutions conducted by law enforcement agencies. Femicide Monitoring Reports were published by the Public Defender's Office in 2016 and 2017. The Consultation Council meets once every two months and the members of the council along with the PDO staff are the representatives of local and international non-governmental organizations working on violence against women and domestic violence issues, including UN Women.

One of the priorities of the Government of Georgia is to combat human trafficking, especially, proactive identification and punishment for trafficking cases against women and girls. Four special mobile groups of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are operating since 2013 and their major function is proactive examination of areas and identification of human trafficking facts in the areas of high-risk all-around Georgia. In 2018, as a result of sustainable and well-coordinated anti-trafficking policy led by Justice Ministry and Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Georgia received high ranking and maintained place among Tier 1 countries in the Trafficking in Persons Annual Report of the US State Department published on June 28, 2018. Georgia maintains the place among Tier 1 countries since 2016. The report states that the Government of Georgia fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts by updating law enforcement guidelines for victim identification, including on the treatment of victims, screening for indicators at border posts, and victim-centered interview practices. The government identified more victims and continued to provide comprehensive care.<sup>177</sup>

The Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons and articles 143<sup>1</sup> and 143<sup>2</sup> of the Criminal Code criminalized all forms of trafficking and prescribes penalties ranging from 7 to 20 years imprisonment or life imprisonment. The law defines trafficking broadly to include buying, selling or any illegal transaction in relation to a person without the purpose of exploitation. In 2018, the government investigated 21 new cases (21 in 2017). In 2018 the government prosecuted three defendants for sex trafficking, 2 for forced begging of minors and 2 for selling of minor compared to four for sex trafficking in 2017. In 2018 the government convicted six traffickers (2 in 2017); traffickers received sentences between 7 and 15 years imprisonment.<sup>178</sup> In 2018 mobile groups and task force checked 97 risk places/organizations and screened 413 individuals working at hotels, bars, nightclubs, and bathhouses for trafficking indicators and another 30 individuals begging in the streets deemed as "high-risk" for human trafficking .

The Ministry of Justice continued to issue grants for NGOs. In 2017 government issued grants to organize awareness-raising activities in 10 cities and separately provided a new allocation to two NGOs to identify and support the reintegration of t children in street situations.

The government operates two specialized shelters in Tbilisi and Batumi and provides medical aid, psychological counseling, legal assistance, childcare services, reintegration support, and a one-time financial payment of 1000 Lari (\$380) to victims. Victims could initially stay at the shelter for three months, which could be extended upon the victim's request. The government-run shelters staff includes a nurse, social worker, lawyer, and psychologist. The shelters offer separate sections

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<sup>177</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report; Pg.194; <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/282801.pdf>

<sup>178</sup> Information provided by the Ministry of Justice of Georgia

for men, women, and children. Shelter staff shall chaperone victims when leaving the shelter but victims could request to leave the shelter unchaperoned. In addition to equal services for domestic and foreign victims, the government makes foreign trafficking victims eligible for renewable one-year residence permits with the ability to seek legal employment. The law prohibits penalizing trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. The Prosecutor General's Office's Victim-Witness Coordinators provide counsel to victims from the beginning of the investigation through the end of the court proceedings.

Over the past five years, Georgia is a source, transit, and destination country for women and girls subjected to sex trafficking and men, women, and children subjected to forced labor.<sup>179</sup> The statistical information for 2010-2018 shows that women from Georgia are subjected to sex trafficking within the country, in Turkey, and, to a lesser extent, in the United Arab Emirates.<sup>180</sup>

In accordance with new edition of Article 140 of the Criminal Code, sexual intercourse with one under sixteen is punishable. It shall be highlighted that, sanctions defined by this article is very strict and implies 7 to 9 years of imprisonment; in cases with aggravating circumstances from 8 to 10 years of imprisonment. During 2014-2018, criminal proceedings on the grounds of Article 140 of the Criminal Code were initiated against 478 individuals, 500 females were recognized as victims. From 2015, according to the Article 150<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code, forced marriage is punishable. Criminal proceedings on the grounds of Article 150<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code were initiated against 4 individuals, 3 females were recognized as victims.<sup>181</sup>

The Human Rights Committee called upon Georgia to develop strategies for combating patriarchal attitudes, gender stereotyping, early marriage and sex-selective abortions among others impediments to gender equality.<sup>182</sup> The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UNSR on VAW) noted in her report on Georgia that among the factors that most likely increase the risk of intimate-partner violence are discriminatory gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes, women's low awareness of their rights and the occurrence of child and forced marriages.<sup>183</sup>

The issue of child marriage has gained recognition in Georgia during the last few years as a result of evidence-based advocacy by the Public Defender's Office, and international and civil society organizations.<sup>184</sup> Research findings indicate that child marriage is not a rare occurrence in Georgia, and is linked to gender inequality, among other factors.<sup>185</sup> The number of parents who were still minors when registering the birth of a child also declined from 1,449 in 2015 to 1,278 in 2016. However, the figures for the number of minor parents having children considerably exceed the figures on early marriage, clearly indicating that the phenomenon continues with such marriages not being registered.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid; Pg.196;

<sup>180</sup> Information provided by the Ministry of Justice of Georgia;

<sup>181</sup> *VI Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*; pg. 31; para 176

<sup>182</sup> CCPR/C/GEO/CO/4, p. 4;

<sup>183</sup> A/HRC/32/42/Add.3, paras. 24-25;

<sup>184</sup> Public Defender's Office, *Special Report: Early Age Marriage: Challenges and Solutions (PDO Early Age Marriage)* 2016. UNFPA, *Child Marriage in Georgia*, 2014.

<sup>185</sup> PDO, *Early Age Marriage*, 2016, p. 10; PDO, *Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2017, p. 96.

<sup>186</sup> Public Defender's Office, *Special Report on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*, 2016, p.35.

According to the Civil Code of Georgia the legal age of marriage for persons is 18 years,<sup>187</sup> which means that marriage prior to that age is null and prohibited. Forced marriage, including non-registered one is a crime, whereas coercion of the minor into marriage is an aggravating circumstance.<sup>188</sup> Both parents of the girl as well as the groom would be held criminally responsible.

A Governmental Order #437 regulates referral procedures for cases of violence against children, which authorizes educational institutions (schools) to refer the case to the competent authorities.<sup>189</sup>

In 2017, nation-wide qualitative research on child marriage was commissioned by the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) with the support of UNFPA. The preliminary findings of the research identified attitudes, societal norms and diverse practices related to child marriages.<sup>190</sup>

Qualitative data collection took place in urban and rural areas of 10 regions and the capital of Georgia. The findings indicated that early/child marriage was common and frequent across the country, including in the capital, Tbilisi.<sup>191</sup> Education and marriage were generally seen by respondents as two opposite ends of a continuum, with many girls leaving school if they married early. Part of the reason for this juxtaposition was a challenge of balancing the roles and responsibilities expected from young girls after marriage. Secondary or higher education for boys was privileged over education for girls, and often poverty and financial challenges acted as barriers against girls' secondary or higher education.<sup>192</sup> Roles and responsibilities after marriage were predominantly distributed along gendered lines. Decision-making around household finances, continued education, and family planning were often in the hands of husbands and responsibilities for women were rooted in norms around women seen predominantly as caregivers expected to take care of their children's daily needs.<sup>193</sup> The research confirms the role of traditional gender stereotypes, and social norms related to sexual relations.<sup>194</sup>

Since 2015, a Task Force on the Issues of Early Marriages has been summoned under the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, which is mandated to refine policy recommendation, identify necessary interventions and activities for the implementation of policy recommendations, as well as to improve the application of the child referral procedures. Task Force has found that there is a need to: (i) invigorate policies aimed at the prevention and eradication of the harmful practices; (ii) strengthen inter-agency coordination in the implementation of specific activities; and, (iii) raise public awareness on harmful practices in order to transform existing social norms and attitudes. As of 2017, The Government extended the mandate of the Task Force to cover FGM issues.

Government of Georgia leads the EVAWG Task Force, which consists of the relevant Government and public entities, representatives of local and international civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors and UN agencies. The role of the Task Force is to support the Government

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<sup>187</sup> Civil Code of Georgia; Article 1108,

<sup>188</sup> Criminal Code of Georgia Article 1501,

<sup>189</sup> Article 5.10, Government Order #437 of 2016 on the Referral Procedures in Case of Violence against a Child.

<sup>190</sup> Exploring Early/Child Marriage in Georgia: Preliminary Results from a Qualitative Research, Sponsored by UNFPA

<sup>191</sup> Ibid; pg.5

<sup>192</sup> Ibid; pg.7

<sup>193</sup> Ibid; pg.9

<sup>194</sup> Ibid

within the frameworks of the UN Joint Program for Gender Equality and UNICEF, Preliminary Findings – 6th of December 2017.

in coordinating development efforts for enhanced implementation of its obligations under international and national commitments for preventing and combating violence against women and girls.

FGM is reportedly practiced among the Avar community in the Kakheti region of Georgia.<sup>195</sup> The Prosecutors Office of Georgia has also confirmed that FGM occurs among the Avari community living in Kvareli, Kakheti region.<sup>196</sup> There are no specific statistics on the practice of FGM in Georgia.<sup>197</sup> While the local population in villages of Tivi, Saruso and Chantliskure indicate that FGM is no longer performed, there is credible information to suggest that local communities have been covering up information on FGM due to the increased interest from society and the media.<sup>198</sup> As of May 2017, the new Article 133<sup>1</sup> of Criminal Code prohibits female genital mutilation on any grounds, including both forceful acts as well as mutilation conducted with the woman's or girl's consent. The Article provides for the criminal responsibility of the person performing the cutting as well as any person coercing a woman/girl to undergo FGM, including family members. According to UNFPA study the interviewees remarked that transition to adulthood is not marked by any specific rituals, though, in Muslim communities, boys get circumcised between the ages of 7-12 years. There was consensus among the respondents that girls did not experience FGM/C. Older women in Avar all share that they have undergone FGM/C, particularly that which is classified as Type Ia: removal of the clitoral hood or prepuce only. However, key informant interviews indicated that the perceived reduction of FGM/C was only a result of legal penalties which may have driven the practice underground. Others note that FGM/C has declined but only because the woman who would do the cutting in the village has died.<sup>199</sup>

The legal framework for media in terms of gender issues is defined by the Georgian Law on Broadcasting and the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters adopted by the Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC).

The Georgian Law on Broadcasting obliges Public Broadcasting “to reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age, and gender diversity in programs.”<sup>200</sup> According to the same law, broadcasting license holders shall avoid: “broadcasting programs containing apparent and direct threat to incite racial, ethnic, religious or other hatred and which are of a discriminatory nature or encourage violence towards any group,<sup>201</sup> broadcasting programs that are intended to abuse or discriminate against any person or group on the basis of disability, ethnic origin, religion, opinion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or any other feature or status.”<sup>202</sup>

The “Code of Conduct for Broadcasters” adopted by the Georgian National Communications Commission, (GNCC) obliges broadcasters to abide by broadcasting principles and” accommodate interests of various social groups regardless of their political affiliation, cultural, ethnic, religious and regional backgrounds, language, age or gender.”<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Institution for War and Peace, FGM uncovered in Georgia, 2016 available at <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/fgm-uncovered-georgia>.

<sup>196</sup> Letter from the Prosecutors Office of Georgia, No: 08-2/504, as cited in PDO, *Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2017, p. 117.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid

<sup>198</sup> Ibid

<sup>199</sup> Exploring Early/Child Marriage in Georgia: Preliminary Results from a Qualitative Research, Sponsored by UNFPA; pg. 6

<sup>200</sup> *Law on Broadcasting* Article 16, Content Obligation “h”

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., Article 56. Prohibitions; paragraph : 2

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., Article 56. Prohibitions; paragraph : 3

<sup>203</sup> *Code of Conduct for Broadcasters*, Article 3; paragraph 1.b

The guidelines for reporting crime and anti-social behavior require from broadcasters “not to disclose the identity of victims of sexual abuse, unless victims give their consent and disclosure complies with the public interest.”<sup>204</sup>

Broadcasters shall be careful when making a decision to broadcast shocking images and shall make careful judgment about the use of offensive languages.<sup>205</sup> The code lists factors that broadcasters shall consider and take into account when deciding on portraying violence, these factors include: “violence in daily life: domestic violence. . . Incidents where elderly, disabled people, women and children are the victims; verbal and physical aggression; sexual or any other violence should not be condoned”.<sup>206</sup>

Broadcasters shall refrain from publishing any material likely “to incite hatred or intolerance on the grounds of race, language, gender, religious convictions, political opinions, ethnic origin, geographic location, or social background.”<sup>207</sup>

The Law of Georgia on Advertisement determines that advertisement shall not encourage citizens towards “violence, aggression and chaos, or any other dangerous actions, that can damage the health or security.”<sup>208</sup>

On December 4, 2009 around 139 journalists signed and approved common principles of professional conduct and by signing this statement they became the members of the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, a self-regulatory body. Article 7 of the Charter determines that journalist shall understand the importance of journalistic work and “shall take all efforts to avoid discrimination of any person by race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religious, political and other opinion, national or social origin or any other feature”.<sup>209</sup>

In 2017 the Charter in order to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media, adopted Guidelines on Coverage of Gender Issues. The Charter acknowledges the role media can play to destroy gender roles and stereotypes and encourages them to strike a balance between the respondents, fights against women and men roles established in the society, use of stereotype language. The guidelines encourage media to cover issues related to the state policy on gender equality, gender discrimination, violence against women, and use of gender stereotypes by the representatives of government and public officials, cases of sexual harassment, discrimination in labour relations, women political representation.<sup>210</sup>

It is crucial to have all necessary services for victims of domestic violence and violence against women available in the country but the best approach to combat and prevent violence from happening is to change the public attitudes and perceptions. UN Women has been supporting national partners in Georgia including women’s organizations and state institutions, to conduct a series of awareness-raising interventions and campaigns targeted towards the public and decision makers at all levels, aimed at changing the attitudes, values and structures that sustain inequality and discrimination. Some of the highlights of these awareness raising initiatives include UN Women’s partnership with sports to promote zero tolerance for VAWG/DV and involving

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., Article 50; paragraph 5

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., Article 56

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. paragraph 7

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., Article 31. Principle of diversity, equality and tolerance

<sup>208</sup> Law on Advertisement, Chapter 2; Article 4; paragraph 11

<sup>209</sup> Journalist Ethic Charter, Article 7

<sup>210</sup> <https://www.qartia.ge/ka/sakhelmdzghvanelo-tsesebi1/article/34573-genderuli-sakithkhebis-gashuqeba>

Georgian Rugby Union and rugby players, a world champion in kickboxing, as well as the Georgian Football Federation; establishment of New social movement - "CHVEN (WE) – Men Against Violence", which has united prominent Georgian men and was launched on 7 December 2015. The aim of the movement is to support the fight against domestic violence and violence against women and girls, while also seeking to contribute to the achievement of gender equality in Georgia through working with youth, conducting awareness raising initiatives, sports activities and other interventions. The Georgian Rugby Union has been a long-standing partner for UN Women in the framework of the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality supported by the government of Sweden. This cooperation is aimed at increasing men's engagement in the fight against violence against women and girls. The Rugby players have devoted a number of international matches to the cause of ending violence against women and girls in the framework of the UN Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign and have joined "HeforShe" campaign soon after its launch in 2014.

In line with the commitments undertaken by the Government of Georgia under Article 13 of the Council of Europe Convention on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and to ensure synergies and maximize effectiveness of the Government's outreach efforts on violence against women, Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues in partnership with line ministries and state agencies engaged in the national response to violence against women and with the support of UN Women and the European Union implemented a comprehensive governmental campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2018."

The campaign was implemented from 25 November to 10 December 2018 and focused on promoting zero tolerance for VAWG and increasing awareness of the laws and services available for victims/survivors. The overarching theme of the campaign was that ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a national priority and that the Government of Georgia is committed to supporting victims and holding perpetrators accountable.

The campaign was implemented in line with the National EVAW Communication Strategy and Action Plan developed and adopted in 2018 by the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues with the support of UN Women and the European Union.

During the campaign workshops were conducted for government officials and community members in general. Study cards and orange ribbons were distributed at these workshops thus encouraging community dialogue and raising awareness about the responsibility of each individual in safeguarding their communities from violence.

→ 11 training were conducted by LEPL Training Center of Justice of Georgia in Batumi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi, Gori, Tsnori, Rustavi, Tbilisi respectively, reaching approximately 135 people. Orange ribbons, posters and fact sheets were handed out to training participants and generated a lot of discussion;

→ Civil Service Bureau of Georgia conducted training of public servants on code of conduct including on sexual harassment and distributed special announcement on Sexual Harassment online course among all public servants;

Throughout the 16 Days Campaign, community group discussions and meetings were used to reach specific members of the community. Some state agencies used this opportunity to gather in-depth information on the perceptions of violence against women and stated that this would be useful in their agencies programming. Totally, 64 community group meetings and discussions held in different regions of Georgia.

State agencies this year used media to call for everyone to advocate for non-violent behavior. Media campaigns were held in Social media with special logos and hashtags - such as #GeorgiaAgainstVAW, #endingVAWisajointresponsibility, #GeorgiaCares and others - that were designed by the Government for this occasion. Social Media campaign was widespread, and hundreds of people get involved.

LEPL Training Center of Justice of Georgia and The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia launched two different essay competitions on Violence against Women. The main aim of this kind of activity was to raise awareness about violence against women and to emphasize that it is a problem for us all, even the youth and to show the importance of peace and kindness in relationships.

the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia with the support of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues and UN Women ensured involvement of various sportsmen in the campaign. Totally 116 sportsmen joined the campaign „Sportsmen UNiTE against violence against women”. 2 matches were live streamed on public broadcasting and on YouTube channel. Before the match sportsmen wore t-shirts with special logos and message: „Sportsmen UNiTE against violence against women”.

In addition, in February-November 2017, the Ministry of Justice conducted a large-scale social campaign named "Act-On." The social campaign aimed at prevention of violence against women through various activities, such as information meetings with youth (886 participants), dissemination of video clips via TV and social media, etc.

Apart from it, within the social campaign a website [www.imoqmede.ge](http://www.imoqmede.ge) has been created through which everyone can anonymously report about the alleged violence against women and/or domestic violence.

GoG acknowledges the importance of awareness raising campaign to efficiently address the violence against women and gender based violence. For this purposes, in 2015 the Ministry of Justice issued the one-off grant of 15.000 GEL to non-governmental organization to promote their engagement in the preventive activities on violence against women and to strengthen cooperation with NGOs in this field.

Within the framework of the Grant project of the Ministry, multilingual brochures (Georgian, Russian, English, Azerbaijani and Armenian) on violence against women and domestic violence were produced.

#### **4. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions**

Women’s equal political participation and representation in decision-making bodies in Georgia requires their increased presence in political and governmental institutions. In Georgia, women’s participation in decision-making processes remains very low in the legislative and executive



branches of government, both at the central and sub-national levels. It ranks 124<sup>th</sup> among 193 countries in the worldwide classification of women in national parliaments - an indicator for women's political participation.<sup>211</sup> According to the World Economic Forum's, *Global Gender Gap Report* for 2017, Georgia ranked 114 on political empowerment among 144 countries.<sup>212</sup>

Women constitute the majority of the population in Georgia: 52.3%.<sup>213</sup> Women account for 53, 76% (men, 46,24%) of the electoral body.<sup>214</sup> During local self-governance elections of 2017, from 3 440 123 registered voters, 53.7% were women. 791 993 women participated in elections (first round), what constitutes to 49.38% of women voters. However, women comprise only 15% of the seats in Parliament; 85% of the seats are held by men. Since Georgia's independence, women's participation in Parliament has increased slightly. 73 members of the 150-seats in Parliament are allocated from single-mandate constituencies, known as "majoritarian" electoral districts. There are only 5 women majoritarian candidate out of 73 MPs. Among 6 deputies Chairperson of Parliament 2 are women, including the first deputy chairperson.

The Parliamentary Elections in October 2016 was a step forward for women's political participation considering that previous Parliament had a fewer number of women. In 2012-2016, there were only 18 women MPs in Georgia, accounting for as low as 12% of all 150 MPs. Following the elections in 2016, 24 women were able to gain seats, accounting for 16% of the total number of MPs. The number of women MPs remained 22 after the process of formation of the government, after some candidates turned down their Parliamentary seats and Presidential Elections in 2018.

On December 16, 2018 Salome Zourabishvili has been sworn into office as Georgia's first woman President. Zourabishvili won the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the 2018 Georgian Presidential Elections becoming president elect with 59% of the votes.

Based on the analysis of proportional and majoritarian lists submitted to the CEC, number of women among candidates nominated for the 2016 parliamentary elections had increased compared to the previous parliamentary elections in 2012. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, women's share among candidates registered for the proportional component was 37%, for the majoritarian component – 17.52% (17.65% in lists nominated by parties and blocs, and 15.09% in lists nominated by initiative groups). In the 2012 parliamentary elections, share of women among candidates for the proportional component was 31.3%, meaning that share of female candidates for the proportional component in the 2016 elections was 6% more, and 13.35% for the majoritarian component – 4% less than in 2016.<sup>215</sup>

For 2016 parliamentary elections under the proportional representation system the ruling party, that has constitutional majority at the Parliament- Georgian Dream - nominated a total of 155 candidates, including 18 women (11.61%) and 137 men (88.39%), and for the parliamentary elections under the majoritarian representation system, it nominated 72 candidates including 5

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<sup>211</sup> See, Inter-Parliamentary Union, available at: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

<sup>212</sup> World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report*, 2017, available at: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2017/dataexplorer/#economy=GEO>.

<sup>213</sup> GeoStat, Census 2015

<sup>214</sup> Data of Central Election Commission of Georgia. <http://cesko.ge/statistic/>.

<sup>215</sup> GYLA, *Women in Georgian Politics – analysis for women's engagement in political/electoral processes during the 2016-2018 election cycle in Georgia*, 2017, p. 36

women (6.94%) and 67 men (93%). Placement of women candidates is as important as their number. Georgian Dream had 4 women among the first group of ten candidates, 2 women among the second group of ten candidates.<sup>216</sup> United National Movement didn't ensure gender balance in groups of ten candidates. In particular, in the top two groups of ten candidates it had 3 women per group, but in subsequent groups it had one or two women at most.<sup>217</sup>

Percentage of women in Parliament, 1992-2016<sup>218</sup>

<i>Parliamentarian Elections</i>	<i>% of women in the Parliament</i>
1992	6.22%
1995	6.64%
1999	7.17%
2004	9.33%
2008	6%
2012	12%
2016	15%

The statistics show that women's representation rate in Georgian Parliament increased following every Parliamentary election, but the increase was very slow and incremental. The Parliamentary Elections in 2012 were an important step forward for women's political participation as it increased women's representation to 12%.

Election Administration of Georgia (CESKO) carries out relevant activities based on equality principles. 2015-2019 strategic plan<sup>219</sup> and annual action plans<sup>220</sup> elaborated by the administration, imply balanced gender and equality-based environment along with other aspects. Election administration also has a gender equality policy<sup>221</sup> document, according to which, three major target groups of the administration are as follows: women voters, women candidates and election administration female staff.

CESKO has Election System Development, Reform and Training Center (Training Center) and during elections 2016-2017 it launched training program for potential women candidates. 53 potential women candidates representing different political parties and initiative groups participated in the training held during 2016. One candidate was later elected based on proportional system. 69 potential women candidates participated in training launched in 2017. From this number, 16 women were elected, 3- were elected based on majoritarian system.<sup>222</sup>

Through training center Election Administration issues grants to NGOs on the topics defined as annual priorities. In 2016-2017 support for women's participation in Parliamentary Elections of

<sup>216</sup> GYLA, *Women in Georgian Politics – analysis for women's engagement in political/electoral processes during the 2016-2018 election cycle in Georgia*, 2017, p. 38

<sup>217</sup> Ibid; p. 39

<sup>218</sup> Ibid; p. 13

<sup>219</sup> Election Administration of Georgia 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, available on the link below: [http://cesko.ge/res/docs/STRATEGICPLAN2015-1019\\_ENG.pdf](http://cesko.ge/res/docs/STRATEGICPLAN2015-1019_ENG.pdf)

<sup>220</sup> Administration of Georgia 2015-2017 Action Plan, available on the link below: <http://cesko.ge/eng/static/1527/samoqmedo-gegma>

<sup>221</sup> Gender Equality Policy Document of Election Administration is available on the link below: <http://cesko.ge/res/docs/GenderEquality-EngForWeb.pdf>

<sup>222</sup> VI Periodic Report of Georgia -Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; pg. 57

Georgia 2016 and local self-governing body elections in 2017, was prioritized and training center has funded 19 local non-governmental organization projects. Total budget of projects was 555 783 Georgian Lari. Project covered all regions of the country (except for occupied territories). Target groups were: representatives of ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, internally displaced persons and women from rural-mountainous areas, along with other important topics, gender equality module was included in the program. In addition, Election Administration has provided trainings for central and regional media representatives. Training highlighted importance of gender equality principles in Election Administration activities.

It is important to note that Central Election Commission processes gender segregated data which is available on the website at <http://cesko.ge/statistic/>. By segregation of information on gender basis, administration creates important instrument for establishment of gender balanced election environment and provides additional information resources for all individuals engaged in election process.

To provide a more illustrative picture of women's political participation in Georgia, it is important to analyze representation of women in other political institutions, including the executive and local self-government authorities. There are four female ministers in the government of 12 ministers, including the Prime Minister. As to the state representatives, none of the nine governors are female. Furthermore, women are also under-represented in local self-government bodies. Following the 2017 municipal elections, women make up 13.4% of local legislative bodies (Sakrebulo)<sup>223</sup> and women's representation was only 11.3% in Sakrebulo elected in 2014. All five mayors of the self-governing cities (Tbilisi, Rustavi, Kutaisi, Poti, Batumi) are men and out of 59 mayors of self-governing communities, only one is a woman. There are only two women at the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara which is comprised of 21 members.<sup>224</sup> Women comprise 29%, and men 71% of employees in the civil service.<sup>225</sup>

The positive exception to the low level of women's participation is the judiciary. By October 2018 women make up 53.3% - out of 306 active judges are women.<sup>226</sup> In addition, 4 out of the 9 judges on the Constitutional Court are women.<sup>227</sup> There are 4 women judges at the Supreme Court, where currently seat 11 justices. First Deputy Chief Justice is also a woman. The position of a Chief Justice is vacant, there used to be female chief justice during 2015-2018. Despite the high female representation in the judiciary they are not equally represented on managerial positions - only 4 women are court chairperson out of 26; only 2 women are chairs of chambers out of 9 and only men are chairs of collegiums.<sup>228</sup>

On December 8, 2017 Parliament of Georgia elected Nino Lomjaria as Public Defender of Georgia for 5 years term. It is important to note that Public Defender's Office is the leading state entity with the women representation and promotion. Out of three deputies of the Public Defender two are women and female representation on managerial positions at PDO is 55.6%. The gender balance of all employees at the public defender's office is 70% women and 30% men.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> The Central Election Commission of Georgia, *Gender Statistics of Elections*, available at: <http://cesko.ge/statistic/>

<sup>224</sup> The Supreme Council of Adjara at: <http://sca.ge/geo/static/107/umaghlesi-sabchos-tsevrebi>

<sup>225</sup> Civil Service Bureau, 2016, p. 21, available at: <http://csb.gov.ge/uploads/2017book.pdf>.

<sup>226</sup> Supreme Court of Georgia website <http://www.supremecourt.ge/news/id/1815>;

<sup>227</sup> <http://www.constcourt.ge/ge/court/judges/CurrentJudges/0/>

<sup>228</sup> Supreme Court of Georgia website <http://www.supremecourt.ge/news/id/1815>;

<sup>229</sup> Public Defender's Official web site <http://ombudsman.ge/geo/genderuli-meinstrimngi-sakhalkho-damtsvelis-aparatshi>

Although the Election Code is gender-neutral and does not provide any mechanism for strengthening women’s participation, women’s political participation in the legislative branch can be attributed, in part, to the electoral system. The Election Code of Georgia establishes a mixed electoral system: 73 members of the 150-seats in Parliament are allocated from single-mandate constituencies, known as “majoritarian” electoral districts. The remaining 77 seats are allocated from party lists in a national proportional system. As noted by the OSCE:

*Proportional-representation systems – in which parties present lists of candidates provide greater incentives for parties to include more women among their candidates to attract a broader base of voter support. Proportional systems are also more conducive to implementation of affirmative-action measures than are majority systems.*<sup>230</sup>

By adopting Constitutional changes in 2017 existing electoral system will be reformed to make it more just and fair and according to the new Constitution, the country will transition to fully proportional parliamentary representation beginning from 2024. The 2020 Parliamentary polls will be held using the current mixed electoral system.

In all the Parliamentary elections in Georgia, more women MPs have been elected via proportional party lists than in majoritarian districts. The difference between the two systems has been significant over the last three elections.

Comparison of Parliamentary election results between proportional and majoritarian systems<sup>231</sup>

<b>Parliamentarian Elections</b>	<b>% of women elected via proportional list</b>	<b>% of women elected via majoritarian system</b>
2008	10.67%	1.33%
2012	14.29%	9.59%
2016	23.38%	8.20%

In 2011, Article 30(7<sup>1</sup>) was added to the Organic Law on Political Associations of Citizens, which provided an additional 30% of funding for including three women out of every ten candidates listed.<sup>232</sup> The financial incentives regulation does not require that women be positioned among the top ten candidates on the party lists, and their lack of financial resources impedes their political participation.

In the 2014 local elections, two political parties received the additional State financing pursuant to Article 30(7<sup>1</sup>).<sup>233</sup> In the 2016 Parliamentary elections, five political parties’ lists reflected the

<sup>230</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Handbook for monitoring women’s participation in elections*, 2004, p. 21.

<sup>231</sup> GYLA, *Women in Georgian Politics – analysis for women’s engagement in political/electoral processes during the 2016-2018 election cycle in Georgia*, 2017, p. 25.

<sup>232</sup> Article 30(7<sup>1</sup>) of the Law on Political Associations of Citizens reads: “A party receiving funding under this article shall receive a bonus of 30% of the basic funding if, in the election list presented by this party or by the relevant electoral bloc (in the case of local self-government elections, in all party lists) at the elections based on the results of which they received funding, at least 30% of female candidates are included in the first, second and every subsequent 10 candidates.”

<sup>233</sup> The United National Movement, and the bloc United Democratic Movement.

quotas set forth in Article 30(7<sup>1</sup>), but only one party, the Alliance of Patriots, actually obtained seats in Parliament that were designated to women.<sup>234</sup>

In the 2017 local elections, only 36.85% women candidates were presented in the proportional lists of local legislative bodies (Sakrebulo) and 16.5% women as majoritarian candidates. Among the mayoral candidates of five self-governing cities, only 22.92% were women. Out of mayoral candidates of 59 local self-governing municipalities, only 12.15% were women. As for the candidates for the office of Tbilisi Mayor, 15.38% were women.<sup>235</sup>

The third attempt to introduce diverse mandatory quotas for Parliament and on party lists was made in 2015, in which *the Task Force for Women's Political Participation* submitted a legislative proposal introducing mandatory gender quotas for proportional lists for parliamentary elections, with a target of 50% gender balance. The initiative did not envisage any special measures for majoritarian representation system. The proposal was presented to two parliamentary committees. The Human Rights Committee adopted the proposal and transmitted it to the Legal Committee, which rejected it without presenting it to the plenary session. Simultaneously, in 2015, an alternative legislative initiative was submitted to Parliament by two MPs, requiring that among every three candidates in the proportional lists, a candidate of the less-represented sex be included. For the first time in Georgian Parliament's history, the initiative on gender quotas was discussed on the plenary session of Parliament, however the voting never took place.

The most recent initiative, in June 2017, involved 37 000 citizens' signatures in support of 50% mandatory gender quotas for parties' proportional lists for parliamentary and local elections. The proposal was registered by the Bureau of the Parliament of Georgia, and the parliamentary process was initiated in the 2017 session. Parliament of Georgia has rejected a bill on mandatory gender quotas with the support of only 66 MPs, while it needed at least 75 in order to proceed.

National Human Rights Action Plan, Activity 13.1.7.1, calls for initiating "legislative amendments in order to increase the representation of women in elected bodies".

Women are well represented in civil society organizations in Georgia and women oftentimes occupy senior positions within the Civil Society sector.

The Interagency Human Rights Council was created in order to elaborate and implement a united state policy in the field of human rights. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister of Georgia. The authority of the Council is defined through the Government [Decree](#) N551 of December 13, 2016. The objectives of the Council include elaboration and implementation of a unified state policy of the Government of Georgia in the field of human rights; Elaboration and discussion of the Human Rights Action Plan and its submission to the Government for approval; Coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plans.

The Council discusses, approves and presents to the Government the statements and recommendations prepared in relation to the Human Rights Action Plan. The Council is authorized to create thematic working groups in order to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the

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<sup>234</sup> Transparency International Georgia, *Political Campaign Finance in Georgia*, 2017, p. 52.

<sup>235</sup> The Central Election Commission of Georgia, *Gender Statistics of Elections available at: <http://cesko.ge/statistic/>*

Human Rights Action Plan; Council meets once in every 6 months and the meetings are chaired by the Prime Minister of Georgia; Every year, no later than March 15 the annual report on the implementation of the Human Rights Action Plan is presented to the Council, which is submitted to the Parliament of Georgia by the GoG no later than March 31.

The Human Rights Secretariat of the Administration of the Government of Georgia administers and provides organizational and analytical support to the activities of the Council. The Human Rights Secretariat is a structural unit of the Administration of the Government of Georgia, which ensures the coordination of executive branch in the process of elaboration and implementation of the state policies of the Government in the field of human rights. In addition to coordinating state agencies, the Secretariat also ensures the involvement of the civil society, academia and international organizations in the process of elaborating, implementing, and monitoring of documents that define human rights policy. The Secretariat was established in 2014. The Secretariat coordinates the activities of thematic groups created within the Council and prepares reports on the implementation of action plans.

In June 2017, the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues was established pursuant to Decree #286. An inter-ministerial body located in the Executive branch, the Commission was created in order to meet the requirements of Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention. The Inter-Agency Commission's existence and mandate is reflected in Article 12, paragraph 6 of the existing Law on Gender Equality.

On April 11, 2018 the Government of Georgia approved the NAP on the Implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security; and the NAP on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The two NAPs consider lessons learned from the implementation of the previous phases of the 2016-2017 plans, as well as respond to key international commitments undertaken in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment. These include commitments under the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (also known as the Istanbul Convention), as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Universal Periodic Review and commitments assumed under the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16.

The Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues is responsible for coordinating the implementation of both plans in close cooperation with line ministries and state agencies.

The plans were developed in broad consultation with national partners from the line ministries and key public institutions responsible for their implementation, as well as with development partners and the representatives of civil society and grass-roots groups. This is critical to ensure that the plans are realistic and effectively address the challenges to achieve gender equality and empower women in Georgia.

The 2018-2020 National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors) constitutes a national framework document that combines the measures to eliminate and prevent violence against women and domestic violence. The Action Plan sets out the goals, objectives and activities

that respond to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council and the recommendations contained in the reports of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The Action Plan also responds to the requirements of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). The Action Plan envisages introducing a risk assessment methodology in responding to domestic violence cases, institutionalizing an electronic monitoring system for high-risk offenders, and launching behavior correction programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence, approval of the National Referral Mechanism, development of a unified statistical standards. It takes into consideration the gendered nature of domestic violence and addresses the phenomenon of violence against women and girls in a holistic manner. To ensure efficient implementation of the VAWG/DV NAP 2018-2020, clear cut indicators, baselines and targets have been determined on the outcome and output levels to allow for proper monitoring and evaluation of results.

The 2018-2020 National Action Plan of Georgia for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) constitutes a whole of government approach to integrating gender perspectives in the security sector and in decision-making processes, using a gender lens in peace negotiations, protecting the rights of women and girls and promoting their meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution.

The Government of Georgia has been implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda since 2011, when Georgia developed its first National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent resolutions on WPS. Following the adoption of the second NAP (2016-2017), the Government formed the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues – an accountability mechanism for the advanced implementation, monitoring and coordination of drafting the National Action Plans on Gender Equality, Violence against Women/Domestic Violence and the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Thus, development of the third NAP (2018-2020) has been coordinated by the Commission. The NAP development process concluded after several phases of wider consultation and validation with the public. Civil society has played an important role in the development of the NAP. In 2018-2020 NAP significant importance is paid to its localization in cooperation with local self-government to reach out to the beneficiaries in a more tangible manner.

UN Women's [Study](#) conducted globally in 2015 on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 recommended that countries with a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS NAP) support and invest in participatory processes, social accountability tools and localization initiatives. At the national level, monitoring reports produced by the Public Defender's Office of Georgia<sup>236</sup> and the NGO Women's Information Center also recommended that the Government of Georgia localize its third WPS NAP (2018-2020). The localization process is being carried out in 10 Georgian municipalities - Dusheti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Khashuri, Sachkhere, Stepantsminda, Tsalenjikha, Tskaltubo and Zugdidi - selected for either their proximity to the occupied territories or their high concentration of IDPs.

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<sup>236</sup> Information is available on the following website: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2019042317463258695.pdf>

The 2018-2020 National Action Plan of Georgia for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security covers 6 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
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. Security and physical and psychological well-being of women and girls is ensured
5. Socially and economically empowered IDP and conflict-affected women, girls and their family members
6. Goals and objectives of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) are integrated in the national policies and sectoral strategies of state institutions

In light of marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Georgia joined the pledges made by the UN Member States to accelerate the implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the national level in April 2019. According to the pledge the government has committed by 2020 to:

1. Integrate goals and objectives of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the national policies and sectoral strategies of state institutions;
2. Ensure localization of the National Action Plan of Georgia (on the level of local municipalities) for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (NAP);
3. Increase capacity-building of the security sector, specialized units, Special Tasks Department, peacekeeping personnel, law enforcement and Legal Aid Service employees on preventing, and responding to Sexual Gender Based Violence, including in conflict and post-conflict situations;
4. Ensure IDP and conflict-affected women's needs, priorities and recommendations are reflected in the official negotiation processes;
5. Continue regular dialogues with women's CSOs around the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs);
6. Ensure the increase of women's participation in GID up to 50%;
7. Monitor and analyze achievements and challenges of the NAP on UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and ensure the dissemination of the findings;
8. Ensure active engagement of IDPs, conflict-affected women and girls and CSOs in the development and implementation of relevant policies;
9. Institutionalize gender advisers throughout system of the Ministry of Defense;
10. Introduce Sexual Harassment complaints mechanism by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The major objectives of the most recent, 2018-2020 action plan of the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia are identification of main directions of state policy on gender equality; Improvement of legislative framework and state mechanisms of gender equality; Raising



awareness about Gender Equality. According to the action plan the Council plans to draft new state concept on gender equality in Georgia, to institutionalize Gender Impact Analysis (GIA), gender analysis of the state budget, develop the Pay Gap calculation methodology, advocating legislative changes supporting women's increased political participation by introducing mandatory gender quotas.

The national human rights institution responsible for protection, monitoring and promotion of human rights in Georgia is the Office of the Public Defender. The Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia oversees the observance of human rights and freedoms in Georgia. It advises the government on human rights issues. It also analyses the state's laws, policies and practices, in compliance with the international standards, and provides relevant recommendations.

The powers and functions of the Public Defender are defined in the 1996 Organic Law on the Public Defender of Georgia. The Public Defender exercises its functions independently and is bound only by the Constitution, international treaties and agreements of Georgia, and by the universally recognized principles and rules of international law, the Organic Law on Public Defender of Georgia, and other legislative acts.<sup>237</sup> Any influences or interferences with the Public Defender's activities are prohibited and punished by law.<sup>238</sup> The Public Defender undertakes educational and public awareness activities in the field of human rights and freedoms, and lodges complaints in the Constitutional Court of Georgia in case the human rights and freedoms as envisaged by the Georgian Constitution are violated by a normative act. The Public Defender is further authorized to exercise the Amicus Curiae function at the Common Courts and the Constitutional Court of Georgia. Public Defender independently, either on her own initiative or based on received statement or complaint, examines the human rights situation and facts of human rights violation. In March of each calendar year the Public Defender submits to the Parliament annual report on the situation of human rights and freedoms in the country.

The Public Defender exercises the functions of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), envisaged by the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).<sup>239</sup> Based on the Law on "Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination", the Public Defender is designated as an equality body, whose one of the main functions is to supervise the implementation of the law.<sup>240</sup> In 2014 the Public Defender of Georgia was named as the structure for ensuring implementation, promotion and protection of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.<sup>241</sup>

The Public Defender of Georgia ensures effective protection of persons from discrimination under international agreements recognized as binding by Georgia and recommendations of the United Nations Organization and monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe.<sup>242</sup>

The Public Defender monitors issues related to elimination of all forms of discrimination and ensures equality by examining statements of possible victims and study of the facts of direct or indirect discriminations, trying to settle a case by mutual agreement between the victim of

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<sup>237</sup> Organic Law on the Public Defender of Georgia, Article 4, paragraph 1

<sup>238</sup> Ibid; Article 4, paragraph 2

<sup>239</sup> Organic Law on the Public Defender of Georgia, Article 3<sup>1</sup>, paragraph 1

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, Article 3, paragraph 1<sup>1</sup>

<sup>241</sup> CRPD Article 33, paragraph 2

<sup>242</sup> Organic Law on the Public Defender of Georgia, Article 3<sup>1</sup>, paragraph 4

discrimination and alleged discriminator, producing appropriate recommendations to restore rights of victims, providing relevant institutions with proposals on preventing or combating discrimination, recording and analyzing statistical data on facts of discrimination.<sup>243</sup> Article 14 of the Gender Equality Law recognizes the two key functions performed by the Public Defender's Office: monitoring gender equality issues and addressing individual complaints concerning rights violations.

Any person or group of persons can lodge either individual or collective applications with the Public Defender requesting her finding on discrimination. A special form is available on the Public Defender's official website that assists applicants in formulating their request fully and comprehensively, indicating factual circumstances and if need be, involving organizations active in non-discrimination field as representatives. Besides, applicants are entitled to lodge applications electronically or via post, through social media or hotline and in any form, including handwriting. Furthermore, applicants can come to the Public Defender's Office in person and write an application on the spot. There is a 6-month term for the Public Defender's Office to consider a discrimination case. This term can only be extended for another three months in some cases.<sup>244</sup>

The Public Defender is the first state institution that established structural unit on gender equality issues. The Department of Gender Equality of the Public Defender's Office was set up in May, 2013 . Its mandate includes, *inter alia*, monitoring protection of the right to gender equality, as well as examining individual complaints concerning related rights violations and issuing recommendations. It also engages in research, promotes gender equality issues in the activities of the Public Defender, raises public awareness of gender equality issues in Georgia, and issues annual and special reports on women's rights issues.

Under the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination,<sup>245</sup> the Public Defender of Georgia annually develops and publishes the Special Report on Fight against Discriminationits Prevention and Situation of Equality in Georgia. Up to date four documents in this series were published. In addition, since 2016 Public Defender's Office develops monitoring reports of shelters and crises centers for the victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. Separate monitoring reports are dedicated to status of women and juvenile prisoners; women and children in conflict affected zones; monitoring of enforcement of gender equality policy; monitoring of femicide cases in 2016 and 2017.<sup>246</sup>

Public Defender's Office has nine regional representations. Gender Specialist's position was introduced in the regional offices. Currently gender specialists are in four regions offices: Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Samegrelo and Adjara and the vacancy is available at Samtskhe-Javakheti office. It is important to underline the sustainability of this initiative, although since September 2017 the gender specialist position was supported by the UN Womenproject „Unite to Fight Violence against Women” funded by the European Union in Guria regional office the position became part of the staff from April 2019. Gender specialists are professional focal points at the PDO's regional offices and are focused on strengthening efforts on promoting gender equality and women's rights. They provide counseling in individual cases, collect information and evidence, observe trends,

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid; Article 14<sup>1</sup>

<sup>244</sup> *Special Report on the Fight Against Discrimination, its Prevention and the Situation of Equality*, 2018; pg. 6

<sup>245</sup> The Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, Article 7

<sup>246</sup> Reports can be found at <https://sites.google.com/view/geoombudsman2/reports/special-reports/gender-department?authuser=0>

describe the general situation in the region, and organize awareness-raising meetings and activities. In addition, the gender specialists speak minority languages, which is an additional advantage in communicating with victims/survivors of violence. Most referrals are made about domestic violence. Early marriage is another issue of concern. Outlawing marriage for those under 18 years of age has made a positive impact, but minors getting engaged remains a problem.<sup>247</sup>

## **5. Peaceful and inclusive societies**

The current human rights situation in the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region of Georgia has largely been shaped by the conflicts of the 1990s and August 2008 Russia-Georgia war. 25 years have passed since Georgia faces unresolved conflicts. At the 11th anniversary of Russian military aggression, de-facto annexation is still in progress; militarization of the occupied territories continues; fundamental principles of international law, human rights and freedoms are being violated openly and gravely, including ethnic discrimination of Georgian population of Gali and Akhgori districts, Russification policy and attempts of erasing Georgian traces, restrictions of the right to receive education in native language and to move freely, division of population living on both sides of occupation line by barbed wires and other artificial barriers, illegal detentions and infringement of the right to life, pressure on and intimidation of people. The society faces humanitarian challenges.

The conflicts particularly affect women and expose them to increased risk of violence. This problem is aggravated by a lack of proper protection mechanisms, crisis centers, and psychological rehabilitation services. Due to the occupation by the Russian Federation human rights are seriously violated in occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region”

With the adoption of landmark UN Security Council’s Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000, the global women, peace and security (WPS) agenda has gained significant normative strength, the international community recognized the important role women play in conflict resolution and tasked participating countries with taking measures to encourage women’s participation in all types of representative bodies and mechanisms for conflict resolution.

In addition, the Resolution highlights the need for consideration of women’s needs in the process of conflict resolution negotiations. The new international model of war and peace with respect to women is composed of three parts: protection during military confrontations; participation in the process of prevention and avoidance of conflicts; and participation in the decision-making process regarding conflict resolution and matters of peace.

For Georgia – as a country where 20% of its territory is still occupied by the Russian Federation and where more than 53% of the officially registered 283,058<sup>248</sup> internally displaced persons (IDPs) are women – UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security and its related resolutions are of paramount importance.

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<sup>247</sup> <http://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/08/public-defenders-office-enhances-work-on-gender-equality-in-the-regions-of-georgia>

<sup>248</sup> As of March 2019

In order to achieve implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010) and 1960 (2011), a National Action Plans for the period from 2012 to 2015; 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 were adopted in accordance with the statute of the Parliament of Georgia on “Women, Peace and Security” issued on 5 May 2011. It is noteworthy that the 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 National Action Plans were adopted as a result of consultations with the appropriate institutions tasked with its implementation, twenty-five gender focal points from the line ministries, as well as state institutions and civil society. These action plans took into consideration lessons learned from the implementation of the previous NAPs, the findings and recommendations from civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Public Defender’s monitoring reports of the NAP (2016-2017), as well as respond to key international commitments and commitments assumed under the nationalized Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16.

The third generation NAP development process was launched in August 2017 by the coordination mechanism formed at the executive branch, the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues . The Government has invited CSOs to provide their recommendations on several occasions, including a drafting workshop along with implementing state agencies. Senior level decision makers and deputy ministers from the line ministries, including Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia ; and the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, who also serve as members of the Inter-Agency Commission, participated in the discussion session and confirmed the readiness of their respective state agencies to push forward the WPS agenda.

To better reflect the needs of conflict-affected and IDP women in this policy document, consultative meetings were held with the women and girls living in the villages adjacent to the occupation lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region- Anaklia, Ganmukhuri, Khurcha and Perevi – by the Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues, Ms. Sopio Japaridze, who leads the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues. In addition to human security-related issues, women shared the health-care and socioeconomic challenges they face on a daily basis. Another objective of the visit was advocacy for the localization of the NAP and discussing the mechanisms for improved coordination between the central government and regional self-governance bodies for its implementation. Thus, meetings were held with the local municipality representatives in Zugdidi and Sachkhere to further identify their role in the development and implementation process of the NAP in partnership with civil society organizations and municipal gender equality councils.

NAP for 2018-2020 is the product of complex work and represents an important policy instrument, which provides space for meaningful involvement of women’s organizations and women’s voices, including IDP and conflict-affected women. The NAP’s goals, objectives and indicators have been significantly improved in order to better monitor and report on the NAP’s progress. Now with the Inter-Agency Commission in place, the Government is well positioned to adopt a more strategic approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2018-2020 NAP.

Women’s participation is relatively low in main Russian-Georgian negotiation format –Geneva International Discussions (GID) and non-political format created under the GID – Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism Format (IPRM)”. IPRM meetings with the representatives of de facto Abkhazia government were suspended during 4 years and restored in 2016. However,

since June 2018 Gali IPRM meeting is still halted due to the decision of de facto authorities and the Russian Federation. The Geneva International Discussions, co-chaired by the UN, EU and OSCE, have been conducted four times per year since 15 October 2008, following the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. The Discussions take place in two parallel working groups, one dealing with security and stability, and the other with humanitarian issues, including the issues of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Women's meaningful participation in negotiating peace and conflict resolution is one of the most fundamental components of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Indeed, between 1990 and 2017, women still only comprised 2% of mediators, 5% of witnesses and signatories and 8% of negotiators.<sup>249</sup> The [Report](#) of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, issued on 9 October 2018, reconfirms the representation of women in peace and security efforts as one of the essential measurements of commitments related to WPS.<sup>250</sup> Ten years on since the launch of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) on the conflict in Georgia, women are still generally underrepresented around the negotiating table. Currently, among the Georgian participants of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), women comprise slightly over 30 per cent. Despite positive trends, attaining women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations, conflict resolution and related political processes still calls for further efforts. The Government of Georgia, in its National Action Plan for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2020), has committed to increase the number of women negotiators.

Georgian government firmly commits to deliver on the Women, Peace and Security agenda and to increasing women's representation in peace negotiations. Advancing the capacity of women in negotiation and mediation is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) commitment under Georgia's 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 NAP on Women, Peace and Security. The MFA also plans to integrate the principles of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) et al. in the training modules offered to career diplomats at the Ministry's Diplomatic Training Centre.

To improve this indicator further in 2017, the Levan Mikeladze Diplomatic Training Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in cooperation with Folke Bernadotte Academy, UN Women and the Swedish Embassy initiated a series of capacity development interventions to train trainers on high-level negotiation and mediation skills. The participants have been women public servants who are either already engaged in formal negotiations or will soon take on important roles as negotiators and mediators. The first round of training of trainers on high-level negotiation and mediation skills was held in November 2017 in Tbilisi. During two days participants learned role of women in peace negotiations, gendered dimensions of conflict and respective conflict analysis, multitrack engagement and inclusive mediation process design. On 4 and 5 May 2018, a second phase of the training of trainers was conducted in Borjomi, Georgia, where 16 participants from the MFA, Ministry of Justice, Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and State Security Service deepened their knowledge in negotiation techniques, the key elements of resolution 1325 (2000) and practical and successful examples of its implementation with a focus on dialogue processes. The third and final round of ToT took place in Stockholm, Sweden from 13 to 15 November 2018. Fifteen participants learned about the follow-up resolutions on WPS by

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<sup>249</sup> <http://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/11/georgian-government-commits-to-increasing-womens>

<sup>250</sup> <https://undocs.org/S/2018/900>; pg. 3; paragraph 9

improving their skills and negotiation techniques, heard professionals' insights of the negotiation processes and discussed different forms of inclusion for women's civil society organizations in peace processes.

In the framework of the 2018-2020 UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality in partnership with the Academy of the Ministry of Finance and with the support of UN Women implemented the project "How to Start and Develop Business" for 17 conflict -affected women residing in Zugdidi municipality.

The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality attaches importance to women's role and use of their potential in peace processes and continues facilitation of increase of their involvement in confidence building and reconciliation process. SMRCE supports engagement of conflict-affected women's non-governmental organizations in public diplomacy . The State Minister's Office has a database on public diplomacy initiatives. In the period of 2016-2017, the indicator of submitted initiatives by women or/and women organizations (equaled to 10% as of 2015) has increased up to 20%.

The regular information-sharing meetings between the participants of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and civil society organizations and women's rights activists are held as part of the Government of Georgia's commitments in the framework of the National Action Plan of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2020). With the support of UN Women and the US Department of State regular meetings continue. This is a very important information sharing format which engages all parties including women's rights activists and CSOs to participate in the process. These meetings aim at sharing information and mainstreaming women's priorities and needs in the peace negotiations, existing humanitarian and security situations in the villages adjacent to the occupation lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region.

On 17 December 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and the State Security Service of Georgia participated in a meeting to discuss the main results of the 46th round of the GID with representatives of the Public Defender's Office, civil society organizations and women's rights activists. During the last GID meeting the establishment of a sub-group on Women, Peace and Security issues composed of GID participants was considered. This will be a big step forwards to ensure that the needs and priorities of IDP and conflict-affected women and their communities are heard.<sup>251</sup>

Since 2016 the regular information-sharing meetings between civil society and representatives of local conflict-affected community and the participants of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) are led by the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, with the participation of the State Security Service of Georgia. These information-sharing meetings have become a well-established platform for regular dialogue between civil society representatives and IPRM participants. Due to the growing importance of the meetings, they have been included for the third time in the new National Action Plan of Georgia for the

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<sup>251</sup> <http://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/12/making-steps-forwards-for-womens-inclusion-in-the-geneva>

implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2020). Government officials meet with the representatives of women's CSOs to exchange information on recent developments concerning human rights and the security situation in the villages adjacent to the occupation lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia. The discussions usually are centered around the everyday security of the population living in the villages adjacent to the occupation lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region, limited access to essential health, social and education services of the people, especially women living in the Gali region of occupied Abkhazia, Georgia, as well as challenges related to the persisting problems with poor infrastructure. The results of the independent monitoring of the National Action Plan of Georgia on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2017) by the Public Defender's Office as well as the NGO Women's Information Center assessed the meeting format as highly productive. The results of the monitoring also recommended diversifying the meeting locations beyond Tbilisi and the administrative centres of Samegrelo and Shida Kartli regions, by also engaging the villages adjacent to the occupation lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region. In 2018 the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality together with the State Security Service in response to above mentioned recommendation decided to extend the geographical coverage of information-sharing meetings. On 10 August 2018, residents from the village of Perevi (Imereti region) and residents from the neighboring villages shared their concerns with state officials. The Office of the State Minister is planning reaching out to more women and men in the villages close to occupation lines, particularly the villages of Ergneti (Shida Kartli region) and Khurcha (Samegrelo region).

Georgia started to move forward with localization of its third WPS NAP (2018-2020) which has been recommended by the UN Women's [Study](#) on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2015), monitoring reports produced by the Public Defender's Office of Georgia and the NGO Women's Information Center. The localization process is being carried out in 10 Georgian municipalities - Dusheti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Khashuri, Sachkhere, Stepantsminda, Tsalenjikha, Tskaltubo and Zugdidi - selected for either their proximity to the occupation lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region or their high concentration of IDPs. A coalition of three civil society organizations in Georgia - the IDP Women's Association "Consent", the Women's Information Center and the Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sokhumi" with the help of UN Women and the U.S. Department of State started to strengthen the capacities of the regional and local administrations in the localization process of the WPS NAP and to enhance the dialogue and participation of internally displaced (IDP) and conflict-affected women and girls.

From 11 to 13 February 2019, consultation meetings organized in the Imereti and Samegrelo regions of Georgia engaged local government representatives from Sachkhere, Tsalenjikha and Zugdidi municipalities, CSOs, grass-roots and IDP women and members of the communities residing along the occupation lines. The discussions focused on the progress of localizing the WPS NAP and on respective security and socioeconomic challenges and needs of the population concerned. Among other human security issues raised were housing and livelihood problems for the IDPs, illegal detentions of people by the Russian occupation forces for so called illegal crossing of the occupation line, human rights abuses and the negative effects of the closure of the so called crossing points with Abkhazia. .

Such consultation meetings are being organized in all target municipalities and serve the purpose of linking national policies with local needs and priorities. These participatory platforms increase

ownership of the municipalities and of IDP and conflict-affected women in the WPS NAP and contribute to a bottom-up approach to its implementation.

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 1325 and contributes directly towards creating an enabling environment for the increased participation of women in the decision-making positions in the security sector. In November 2016, first, two-day training for the representatives of human resources departments from the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Security Service, National Security Council, Ministry of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, and the National Statistics Office – GeoStat, on collecting and analyzing sex-disaggregated data was organized. The training was conducted by UN Women in cooperation with the Prime Minister’s Office and the Civil Service Bureau. The workshop focused on raising awareness of human resources managers around their respective commitments under the NAP, building capacity of human resources staff on methods and systems around collecting sex-disaggregated data, and using data for policy formulation and tracking progress on gender equality.

UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) encourages all States to conduct events aimed at protecting the rights of women and girls, including organizing training programmes and high-level meetings with an increased female presence. Providing targeted trainings on UNSCR 1325 and subsequent WPS resolutions with special focus on the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence and communication aspects with the population for the specialized units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including the officers of the Special Tasks Department is part of the Ministry’s commitments under the National Action Plan on the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security 2018-2020. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to enhance the capacities of the Ministry’s Special Tasks Department around gender-responsive patrolling and oversight across the occupation lines conducts trainings for the officers stationed across the occupation lines in Imereti, Samegrelo and Shida Kartli. The training is dedicated to women’s rights and gender equality issues, specifically effective ways for identifying and responding to the security concerns of women, men, girls and boys living in the villages adjacent to the occupation lines. Special attention is paid to gender mainstreaming in security operations and communication strategies with conflict-affected women and girls.

Open Days on Women, Peace and Security are organized annually by UN Women during last five years. The Open Days provide the opportunity for women in conflict-affected areas to voice their concerns and priorities directly to UN officials, and for the latter to stay informed on key context-specific issues. The fifth meeting was held in November 2018. More than 60 representatives of women’s and youth’s civil society and grass-roots organizations, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict-affected women from the regions of Imereti, Kvemo Karti, Samegrelo and Shida Kartli living in villages in the vicinity of the occupation lines with the occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region of Georgia, were brought together to discuss the progress and challenges of the implementation of WPS in Georgia with the UN representatives. The importance of institutionalizing a consultative mechanism between the representatives of women’s organizations and the co-chairs of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) that would inform the sessions about women’s experiences, concerns and recommendations were discussed. In addition, the participants raised their safety and security concerns and expressed worries about the



future in the gradually depopulating and ageing villages, which offer limited to no job opportunities and a lack of services.

In December 2018, the Ministry of Defence of Georgia, with the support of UN Women, organized the Workshop on Female Leaders in Security and Defence - “National Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325)”. The meeting brought together 25 representatives from the security and defence sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Romania, Turkey and the United States to discuss issues related to the role of women in the armed forces, international missions and operations, as well as gender mainstreaming within the security and defence sector in the context of the national implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000). The two-day meeting served as a platform to exchange best practices for many other areas, including sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis used to improve HR policies; and capacity development for military and civilian staff on gender equality and anti-discrimination.

The training “Integrating Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Principles into the Security Sector” was prepared and held at the joint initiative of Georgia’s Ministry of Defence, the National Defence Academy, UN Women, the Women’s Information Centre and the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia during 21-23 May 2014. The training aimed at raising awareness and deepening the knowledge of military and civil service staff of the Ministry of Defence about the integration of gender equality principles into the security sector.

In summer, 2015 advocates from occupied regions and the territory controlled by the central government of Georgia working on gender equality issues met in Istanbul for training on gender aspects of mediation. During the four-day training, participants from these conflict-divided communities improved their mediation skills, strengthened the knowledge of formal and informal peace-building processes and served as a rare occasion for people-to-people interaction. The participants, coming from different professional backgrounds - representatives of NGOs, journalists and writers - exchanged their views on the issues of women, peace and confidence building. Such meetings make progress in building trust and learning about the positive role women can play in conflict prevention. The training was conducted by UN Women in partnership with the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Caucasus Office.

Georgia is the first country in the South Caucasus, which has adopted the National Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Since 2012, Georgia has had a National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security (NAP). While it has delivered many positive results over the years - with Georgia becoming an example of best practices in mainstreaming gender and strengthening women’s participation in the security sector - the NAP’s direct benefits to local-level women have been less visible.<sup>252</sup> It is important to ensure coordinated partnerships among various national and international partners in effectively addressing women’s needs in the security sector as well as women’s leadership in peacebuilding.

The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia (now called the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia) was one of the first line ministries that

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<sup>252</sup> <http://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/11/open-day-on-women-peace-and-security>

adopted Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan in 2016. The promotion and observance of gender equality and the prevention and elimination of discrimination and sexual harassment, combating violence against women and domestic violence, protecting victims/survivors, and implementing the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, are some of the key principles of the documents that are based on the fundamental guarantees of equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for women and men as stipulated by the Georgian Constitution and legislation and in international conventions ratified by the Government. Ministry's Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan were harmonized with other national policies on gender equality and women's empowerment and the AP is budgeted.

The Ministry has created an internal gender equality mechanism by appointing a Gender Advisor to the Minister, establishing a Gender Equality Commission, and appointing gender focal points in the regional branches. Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan foresee gender mainstreaming in the internal policies and structures as well as programmes for Ministry's beneficiaries, internally displaced persons, refugees, emigrants and other vulnerable groups of population.

The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia functioned from 1996 until 2018. In 2018 the Ministry's various tasks were assigned to the ministries of [Regional Development and Infrastructure](#), [Ministry of Internal Affairs](#), and [Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs](#).

There is no consistent oversight on the rights of women in the conflict-affected regions. Nor are there quantitative surveys, statistics, or other data available to paint a realistic picture of local trends and needs. The Office of the Public Defender of Georgia has no direct representation in occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia and, hence, no direct access to the regions,<sup>253</sup> due to the occupation of regions by the Russian Federation.

Based on the assessment of the Public Defender domestic violence represents one of the most complex and latent problems in occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region. In most cases, victims residing in occupied regions continue to live with abusive spouses, while central government's law enforcement agencies do not have possibility to exercise their duty in occupied regions and properly protect victims' interests. There are no shelters or crisis centers to provide protection and safety to victims. A mobile team continues to function in Gali. The team regularly visits local villages to provide psychological, medical, and legal counseling to women and raise awareness about women's issues in local communities.<sup>254</sup> According to Women's Development Fund (formerly known as Avangard), a Gali-based NGO, in 2016, 75 cases of domestic violence were reported in the occupied Ochamchire, Tkvarcheli, and Gali districts combined, compared to 44 cases in 2015.<sup>255</sup>

The Public Defender is aware of 11 cases of early marriage among girls in Gali over the past three years.<sup>256</sup> Based on the information available to the Public Defender's Office, early marriage among girls represents a common social problem. As law enforcement agencies of Central Government of Georgia are not allowed in the occupied regions in order to respond to early marriage cases, as well as occupation regimes tend to be indifferent regarding human rights issues, justice rests

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<sup>253</sup> Special report of the PDO on the rights of women and children in conflict affected areas; pg. 36

<sup>254</sup> Ibid; pg. 37

<sup>255</sup> Ibid; pg. 37

<sup>256</sup> Ibid; pg. 39

within families. However, in most cases families refuse to accept the return of female victims of early marriage, as they believe it will damage the family's honor and public reputation. So-called honor killing constitutes one particularly egregious form of violence against women.<sup>257</sup> In 2016 a case involving the death of a young woman in occupied Abkhazia raised concerns among local organizations working on women's issues. According to the "official" version of events, the young woman committed suicide. Information circulating among members of Abkhaz society suggests that a young woman hanged herself in Gudauta. Many people believe that she was in fact murdered or pushed to commit suicide by members of her family for allegations of infidelity to her husband. The so called Abkhazian authorities responded that no statement or claim had been filed with the police and, therefore, no "criminal investigation" was launched.

In January, 2019 opening of crisis center for victims and survivors of violence in Zugdidi and existence of similar center in Gori are very important as these are two cities close to the occupation lines and can provide one-stop shop support services to victims/survivors of violence.

Local civil society organizations work to raise awareness, provide legal counseling, and advocate for improved women's rights conditions. So called Abkhazian organizations tend to be more active in advocating women's rights and have been able to affect some positive outcomes. In 2012 *Women's Association of Abkhazia*, started working on combating domestic violence issues. A region wide survey was preceded. Sixty women from different occupations, age groups, and ethnic backgrounds were interviewed in the course of the survey. Findings suggested that most of the respondents considered domestic violence to be an issue in occupied Abkhazia, however, they also thought it to be a latent problem. At the same time, the respondents believed that perpetrators of such violence must be punished, however no effective mechanism was created in this regard.<sup>258</sup>

The year 2015 gave rise to concerns regarding women's security in occupied Tskhinvali region of Georgia, in the wake of self-liquidation of two NGOs led by women and working on women's and youth issues. One reason behind the decisions to shut down the organizations was pressure from so called security service (KGB) due to their participation in the peace processes. In his 2015 parliamentary report, the Public Defender stated that "because of the pressure heads of two of the most reputable and experienced non-governmental organizations (Agency for Social-Economic and Cultural Development and the Association of South Ossetian Women for Democracy and Human Rights) made a decision to shut down their respective organizations. The decision was a response to and a form of a protest against the situation with respect to non-governmental organizations."<sup>259</sup>

On 9 February 2016, the so called Abkhazian authorities made a decision regarding banning termination of pregnancy, even in cases when pregnancy threatens the health of the mother. The only exception was made with regard to antenatal death, commonly referred to as stillbirth. Statistics suggest that 700 abortions were performed in occupied Abkhazia in 2015, only 15 of which were justified by medical reasons, with social factors accounting for most of the remaining cases. The rationale behind the above decision was the efforts to combat demographic decline. However international practice suggests that banning abortion is not a solution to demographic

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid; pg. 39

<sup>258</sup> Ibid; pg. 38

<sup>259</sup> The human rights situation of the conflict-affected population in Georgia, Public Defender of Georgia, 2015, P. 68. Available at: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3768.pdf>.

problems, rather it results in an increased rate of illegal abortions and higher mortality rates among women.

In occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region of Georgia, women are more active in the civil sector and in the fields of education and healthcare.<sup>260</sup>

Free healthcare service is one of the most successful directions of the engagement strategy. Individuals living in occupied territories are able to use different types of state programs and the most important is the state program on “Referral Service”. Starting from 2017, referral service program has become available for the residents of Gali region.

Regardless existence of wired fence and major limitation of movement, compared to the data of 2012, number of individuals from occupied Tskhinvali region willing to be treated has increased. At the same time, number of patients from Abkhazia region engaged in referral program has increased six times.<sup>261</sup> Universal healthcare program elaborated by the Government of Georgia is available for population of all ages residing at occupied territories and holding neutral documentation. In April 2015, Hepatitis C elimination program was initiated. Based on the initiative of the central government of Georgia, residents of occupied territories were able to participate in the program. In March 2017, Hepatitis C Control Center was established in Zugdidi city. This center serves individuals from occupied territories and participation in Hepatitis C elimination program is available based on neutral documentation.

Citizens living in the region of Abkhazia, under the UN Development Program and with support of “Coordination Mechanism” established in the scope of state engagement strategy action plan, are regularly provided with different medications and vaccines. During 2017, Abkhazia region of Georgia was provided with immunization vaccines, Hepatitis B vaccines, Hepatitis C tests, medication for diabetes, counter tuberculosis and AIDs medications. Abkhazia region of Georgia was provided with ambulances, medical inventory, equipment and other medical assets through the coordination mechanism.

In order to simplify procedures of healthcare provision, in close proximity of occupation line, particularly in the neighborhood of Zugdidi city, village Rukhi, university clinic constructions was completed in 2018. The construction of the medical center was initiated by the Government of Georgia in August, 2014. University clinic is equipped with 220 beds and modern technologies and provides services to residents of occupied territories.

Every year the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia has a social program for funding of students. The funding is available for bachelor as well as master program students. 2 520 00 GEL<sup>262</sup> was allocated for 2018-2019 academic year for the social assistance program to fund bachelor’s program of students of different categories among which are students that studied at school on the occupied territories of Georgia and were accepted at the certified universities in Georgia. In 2018-2019 academic year 340 students received funding within the framework of social program, in 2016-2017 academic years, 206 students got State Grant to study. Within the framework of “Study funding program of the affected students in the villages adjacent to the demarcation line” 906 affected students at Bachelor and Master higher educational programs were

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<sup>260</sup> Public Defender of Georgia, Situation in Human Rights of the Conflict Affected Communities of Georgia, 2015, P. 30

<sup>261</sup> VI Periodic Report of Georgia -Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

<sup>262</sup> <https://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=4791&lang=geo>

funded. Previous years data is the following: In 2013 - 548 students, in 2014 - 727 students and in 2015 - 914 students were funded.<sup>263</sup>

In 2013-2016 Education and Science Infrastructure Development Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia carried out rehabilitation of 26 schools of border regions of Zugdidi, Kareli, Gori, Tsalenjikha, Oni and Sachkhere, as well as fully rehabilitated Atotsi Public School. With the support of “Millennium Challenge Account - Georgia”, full rehabilitation was carried out through the modern standards of public schools in Tkviavi, Shindisi, Pkhvenisi, Sakasheti, Zerta and Kheltubani.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia carries out the program "Financial Assistance for Teachers and Administrative-Technical Personnel of Occupied Regions". In addition teachers of the public school of villages located near the border of occupied territories of Georgia are provided with different training programs. In 2017, 254 teachers undergone subject trainings for professional development. In 2015-2016 the new project "Improving pedagogical practice together" was carried out with the support of European Commission Confidence Building Unit and Abkhazian, Georgian and teachers living at the occupied territory (Gali) participated in the project. The Ministry provides free school bus service to pupils, including in the occupied regions. About 2030 pupils of around 40 schools are involved in the program.<sup>264</sup>

The State Legal Aid Service offers free legal advice to IDPs and refugees. They are entitled to use person-to-person and telephone/online consultation services. Legal Aid Service provides legal assistance for the protection of their rights, when:

- The rights determined under the Law of Georgia on Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories of Georgia” or by-laws has been violated and insolvent internally displaced person is authorized to requests appointment of a lawyer;
- Providing legal assistance to a refugee (representation in a court or administrative agency) is advisable because a case falls into the category of complex and important cases.

## **6. Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation**

One of the basic human rights is the right to live in healthy environment. Protection of this right is one of the main prerequisites for the nation's health and welfare. Under Constitution of Georgia “the state shall take care of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources”<sup>265</sup> Article 29 of the Constitution regulates right to environmental protection and states that “Everyone has the right to live in a healthy environment . . . Everyone has the right to receive full information about the state of the environment on a timely manner. Everyone has the right to care for the protection of the environment. The right to participate in the adoption of decision related to the environment shall be ensured by law. Environmental protection and the rational use of natural

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid

<sup>264</sup> Ibid

<sup>265</sup> Article 5; paragraph 5

resources shall be ensured by law, taking into account the interests of current and future generations.”

One of the strategic objectives<sup>266</sup> of the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia for 2014-2020 is strengthening domestic legal guarantees on environmental human rights, which should be achieved through a) providing greater access to information relating to environmental protection; b) improving state mechanisms so as to ensure greater transparency and public involvement in decision-making processes relating to environmental protection; c) making sure domestic legislation is in line with international legal norms and criteria on environmental protection and d) raising public awareness on environmental issues.

Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-2020 determines the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia as agency in charge to adopt decree on the procedures to accessing environmental information, approve procedures for public discussions, introduce the Aarhus Convention Standards and implement educational programs and awareness raising activities on environmental topics.

Georgia experiences natural disasters that are large-scale and recurrent, because of difficult landscape and geographical location. There has been a significant increase in frequency and intensity of hydro-meteorological and geological disasters in Georgia. In 1967-2012 more than 60000 families were displaced as eco-migrants in Georgia due to geological disaster, more than 1000 people died, of whom 107 – in 1995-2012.<sup>267</sup>

After signing the EU Association Agreement, Georgia is required to implement reforms and ensure harmonization of legislation with a number of the EU directives, including in the fields of environmental protection and sustainable development. Article 302 of the EU requirements states that Georgia should advance air and water quality, develop waste management, nature protection, industrial air pollution and chemicals management at an international level. The agreement provides for a range of activities in the field of environment protection, implementation of which will support not only the creation of appropriate environment for the humans and ecosystems, but also the enhancement of environment management and efficient decision-making.

The negative effects of unfavorable environment are in direct connection with a tendency to the deterioration of human health. Air pollution is a potential risk-factor for disease, disability, and mortality. Spectrum of diseases is wide enough. In Georgia air is polluted by emissions of vehicles, energy sector, agriculture and industrial facilities. Children and pregnant women are at most risk. Major pollutant in urban area is transport. 62-78% of nitrate oxides (NOx) and carbon monoxide (CO) emissions in the country is from transport sector.<sup>268</sup>

One of the problems in Georgia is contamination of the environment by waste and chemical substances. This is a comprehensive problem, including contamination by household waste, disorganized landfills, as well as the issues related to hazardous and accumulated waste management. It is noteworthy that no law existed in Georgia on waste or waste management. The Law on the Waste Management Code entered into force in January, 2015 and is in compliance with the relevant EU directives and ensures the protection of the environment and human health by preventing and reducing adverse impacts of the waste generated by introducing effective

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<sup>266</sup> Strategic Objective 23

<sup>267</sup> Environmental Information and Education Center – Disasters

<sup>268</sup> <http://eiec.gov.ge/%E1%83%97%E1%83%94%E1%83%9B%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98/Air.aspx>

mechanisms of waste management. The National Waste Management Strategy 2016-2030 and an Action Plan 2016-2020 was adopted on April 1, 2016 which define the policies and goals of waste management for the next 15 years. According to the Environment Protection Supervision Department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia a total of 566 cases of violation of waste management code were recorded in 2018 in Georgia. Waste Management Code provides for implementation of measures that will facilitate waste prevention and its increased re-use as well as environmentally safe treatment of waste including recycling and separation of secondary raw materials, energy recovery from waste and safe disposal of waste, and monitoring of this process.

The new Law on Radioactive Waste adopted in 2015 increased the level of protection of human health and the environment from the harmful impact of ionizing radiation. In addition, the Strategy for Management of Radioactive Waste 2017-2031 and Action Plan 2019-2021 was adopted by the Government of Georgia. The Sulphur content in petrol was gradually decreased from 250 mg/kg in 2012 to 50 in 2015.

The draft laws on Water Resources Management has incorporated the principle of access to information<sup>269</sup> and public participation in the environmental decision-making process, informing public regarding the status of drinking water.<sup>270</sup> Under the draft Law the Ministry takes responsibility to inform consumers every 3 years regarding the condition of consumed water.<sup>271</sup> The draft law on Water Resources Management was submitted to the Parliament in 2017.

On 14 May 2013, a Legal Entity of Public Law ‘Environmental Information and Education Centre’ was established within the structure of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia with the aim to raise public awareness on environmental protection, support public participation in the decision-making process and increase access to justice. The mission of the Environmental Information and Education Centre is to act as a mediator between the environmental protection policy developing and implementing parties and ensure that strategies, legislation and policies are explained to the target groups in a simple language and format.

The functions of the Environmental Information and Education Centre are the following:

- To create a unified data base on environmental protection and support its publicity;
- To ensure public access to the timely and an adequate information on the state of environmental protection;
- To support public participation into the environment related decision-making processes;
- To support public participation into the environment related surveys;
- To timely disseminate information about public discussions of reports concerning impact on the environment;
- To disseminate information about adoption of new legislative acts or legislative amendments in the field of environment;
- To carry out different activities and events in order to raise awareness on environmental issues among the target groups;
- To study public demand for environment related information;

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<sup>269</sup> laws on Water Resources Management, Article 6, paragraph 1, subparagraph “h”

<sup>270</sup> Law on “Water Resources Management, Article 33, paragraph 3,”b”

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, Article 14, paragraph 3

- To support environmental education in Georgia and coordinate an implementation of the respective activities;



## Section III – National Institutions and processes

Establishment of gender equality implies various important measures. The Government of Georgia, which shares the principles of equality and assumes international obligations to promote gender equality in the country, creates strong institutional mechanisms. National machineries for gender equality refer to the institutional arrangements and mechanisms for ensuring effective gender mainstreaming.

Georgia's national machinery consists of three key bodies:

1. Gender Equality Council of the Parliament;
2. Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues; and
3. Gender Department of the Public Defender's Office.

The Gender Equality Council was established as an advisory body based on Parliamentary Decree in 2004. In 2010, with the passage of Gender Equality Law the Gender Equality Council became a standing body. In June 2017 the institutional framework for Gender Equality Council has changed and it became permanent consultation body to the Parliament of Georgia that exists to ensure systematic and coordinated activity on gender issues.

According to Article 12 of the Gender Equality Law the Parliament of Georgia defines basic trends of the state policy in the gender related areas, ensures the development and implementation of the legislative framework in the gender equality, reviews and approves gender equality strategy and monitors the activities of the bodies accountable to the Parliament of Georgia in the field of gender equality.

According to the new Rules and Procedures of the Parliament adopted in December 2018 the Parliament sets up the Gender Equality Council to ensure systemic and coordinated work regarding gender issues.<sup>272</sup> The composition, status, functions and powers of the Council is approved by the Chairperson of the Parliament.

**According to the Regulations of the Gender Equality Council of Parliament of Georgia the primary functions of the Council are:**<sup>273</sup>

- Support the Parliament of Georgia to define the state policy in gender sphere;
- Analyze the legislation of the Georgia and develop proposals for elimination of gender inequalities;
- Provide gender equality assessment of the draft legislative acts;
- Develop and plan measures to achieve gender equality and to realize the equal rights of men and women;
- Develop and establish monitoring and evaluation system for the measures ensuring gender equality;
- Supervise the gender equality activities of the executive government;

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<sup>272</sup> Rules and Procedures of Parliament; Article 76.2

<sup>273</sup> The Regulations of the Gender Equality Council of Parliament of Georgia, Article 3

- If necessary, summon the representatives of the Ministries and State Agencies to the Parliament and obtain the information;
- Hear the reports of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues;
- Request information and documents related to the investigation of gender equality issues;
- Consideration of the applications, documentation and other information concerning violation of gender equality and provision of response and respective recommendations within the competences; The Council is authorized to invite the experts or international and local organizations working on the topic;<sup>274</sup>
- Oversight of implementation of the National Action Plan on Rights of Women and Gender Equality;

The Council, in order to improve the public awareness and support women empowerment, regularly disseminates information to public about the work performed, coordinates the public awareness campaigns, publishes announcements on women rights violations, gender equality issues and tendencies in this field; The Council cooperates with Gender Equality Councils at the Supreme Councils of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Adjara, Gender Equality Councils in Municipalities and with the female members of the City Assemblies of the Municipalities and the Advisors on Gender Issues.<sup>275</sup>

The Gender Equality Council once a year submits report on the gender equality status to the Parliament of Georgia. In addition, Gender Council is responsible to draft the report on the international obligations of Georgia on gender equality issues and is authorized to represent Parliament of Georgia in international relations on gender equality issues.<sup>276</sup>

The Council shall have minimum 10 members who should be selected pro rata to the percentage of the Members of all political parties represented in the Parliament. The past experience and awareness of a candidate on gender equality issues shall be taken into account upon selection of the MP to the Council.<sup>277</sup> Currently there are 17 members at the GEC (14 female and 3 male), including the chairperson. The new enlarged composition of the Council was introduced in January 2017. The Council is chaired by the First Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Tamar Chugoshvili, assuming office in January, 2017.

In 2019 the [Gender Equality Council](#), in line with the strategy and action plan for 2018-2020, has started the thematic inquiry on the basis of the Article 155 of the Rules of Procedure. Currently there are two thematic inquiry groups at the GEC: accessibility of vocational education for economic empowerment of women and women participation in state economic programs. The new oversight instrument – thematic inquiry - envisages active participation of NGOs and civil sector. The groups will develop the recommendations and the conclusion to be submitted to the GEC. **The new Rules and Procedure of Parliament ensure the new capacity of the Parliament to select issues for the thematic inquiry that reflects the problems in the country requiring the Parliamentary oversight.**

<sup>274</sup> Rules and Procedures of Parliament; Article 76.4. paragraph “g”

<sup>275</sup> The Regulations of the Gender Equality Council of Parliament of Georgia, Article 4

<sup>276</sup> Rules and Procedures of Parliament; Article 76.5

<sup>277</sup> The Regulations of the Gender Equality Council of Parliament of Georgia, Article 7

In 2017, in order to support evidence-based gender policy, upon initiative of new composition of Gender Equality Council, comprehensive survey on “Gender Equality in Georgia- Barriers and Recommendations” has been carried out. This survey includes country level information on gender equality. Survey has been conducted with the support of UN Development Program (UNDP) under the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality and PROLoG/USAID. Local researchers and international experts participated in the survey.<sup>278</sup>

The Council works on drafting the State Concept on Gender Equality. The first draft has been developed in cooperation with the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality supported by the Government of Sweden and the adoption of the document is planned by the end of 2019.

Given its placement within Parliament, the Gender Equality Council remains uniquely poised to play an important role in monitoring legislative developments, especially in light of the lack of gender balance among parliamentarians.

The Decree (N286) of the Government of Georgia approved the statute of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues and in 2017, for the first time, gender equality institutional mechanism has been established in executive government. Article 12, paragraph 6 of the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality states that the Government of Georgia in order to ensure systemic and coordinated work on gender issues creates the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues. Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence states that the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues ensures monitoring and assessment of measures to eliminate all forms of violence and prevent them.<sup>279</sup> Article 16<sup>1</sup> paragraph 2 of the same Law determines that the composition, status, functions, authority of the Inter-agency Commission shall be determined by the Government of Georgia.

The Commission is co-chaired by the Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues and the Deputy Justice Minister of Georgia and the members of the Inter-agency Commission include representatives of different government institutions<sup>280</sup>.

The representatives of the Public Defender’s Office, the Legal Aid Service, the Public Broadcaster, the Gender Equality Council of Parliament, and the Supreme Court has deliberative vote at the Commission.<sup>281</sup> The representatives of international and non-governmental organizations can only participate in the work of the Inter-agency Commission if the Chairman invites them.<sup>282</sup> The Inter-agency Commission is authorized to create consultative group, thematic working groups, invite independent experts.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> <http://www.parliament.ge/ge/sascavlo-centri/resursebi/genderuli-resursi/kvlevebi/barriers-recommendations>

<sup>279</sup> Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence; Article 7; paragraph 3

<sup>280</sup> The Decree (N286) of the Government of Georgia approves the statute of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues; Article 1

<sup>281</sup> The Decree (N286) of the Government of Georgia approves the statute of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues; Article 1

<sup>282</sup> Article 2

<sup>283</sup> Article 3; Article 5, paragraph “b”

The Constitution of Georgia, International Treaties of Georgia, Laws and Normative Acts of Georgia and the Regulation govern the work of the Inter-agency Commission, which is created for indefinite period of time.

The Commission mandate covers three main spheres:

1. Gender equality;
2. Violence against women and domestic violence;
3. Issues on the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (post conflict violence).

In addition, the Commission addresses issues such as supporting the effective implementation of functions and coordination of activities of respective state bodies in the field of gender equality, violence against women, domestic violence and women's empowerment. The Commission also supports the development of proposals and relevant strategy on these issues and submits them to the Government of Georgia for their review and further action, monitor implementation of the plans. It is noteworthy that the Commission carries out duties of national level monitoring mechanism for Istanbul Convention and is a coordinating body envisaged in Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention; thus, it observes the implementation of issues covered by the Convention.<sup>284</sup>

Every year, before March 1 the Inter-agency Commission drafts annual report regarding the work performed and recommendations enforced related to the UN Security Council Resolutions on gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence.<sup>285</sup>

It should be noted that setting up of the Inter-agency Commission and its cooperation with other national mechanisms contributes to the strengthening the gender equality policy and its efficiency.

Under Article 6 of the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination the Public Defender is responsible for the monitoring and elimination of discrimination and the process of ensuring equality. Article 7 of the same Law determines that the Public Defender annually publishes special report on combating and preventing discrimination and on equality situation in Georgia. Article 14 of the Gender Equality Law recognizes two key functions performed by the Public Defender's Office: monitoring protection of gender equality issues and addressing individual complaints concerning rights violations. The Public Defender is the first state institution that established structural unit on gender equality issues. Under Article 3<sup>1</sup> of the Law on Public Defender the Public Defender of Georgia, shall ensure effective protection of persons from discrimination.

The Department of Gender Equality of the Public Defender's Office -with relevant strategy and action plan that supports integration of gender equality issues in human rights activities of the Public Defender's Office was established in 2013 and since December 2018 it is called Gender Department. Creation of this unit is significant step forward in organizational development and underlines the will of the PDO to pay key role in establishment of gender equality in public. There are 4 employees (head of Department and 3 Chief Specialists) at the Department and additional 7

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<sup>284</sup> Article 5

<sup>285</sup> Article 5, paragraph "e"

staff members (4 in regions and 3 in Tbilisi) who are hired for the implementation of certain projects.

Its mandate includes, inter alia, monitoring protection of the right to gender equality, as well as examining individual complaints and applications concerning related rights violations and issuing recommendations and conclusions, monitoring of implementation of national and international acts on gender equality, generalization of national or international practice on gender equality issues and application of good practices in Georgia. It also engages in research, promotes gender equality issues in the activities of the Public Defender, raises public awareness on gender equality issues in Georgia, and issues annual and issue-specific reports on women's rights issues. The purpose of the Department is to supervise protection of human rights and freedoms with regard to gender equality, support the integration of gender equality issues in regular human rights activities of the Public Defender and raising public awareness to strengthen gender equality in Georgia.

Since February 29, 2016 the Gender Department issued 28 recommendations and 2 *amicus curiae* and most frequently the Department is approached regarding the domestic violence issues. Since its establishment in 2014 up until April, 2019 the Department received 1449 applications.<sup>286</sup> According to the information provided by the Gender Department the application with regard to violence against women has increased (72 cases in 2018) including the cases of sexual harassment (22 cases in 2018). In 2018 out of 484 applications 223 were about the domestic violence where physical and physical-psychological form of violence prevails comparing to other forms.

Implementation of gender policies at local levels is a part of gender strategies of the country. In order to effectively integrate gender equality issues at local levels, it is important to have a relevant mechanism in place which will be part of the policy planning process, its implementation and monitoring.

The 2016 amendments to Georgia's Law on Gender Equality place gender equality in the center of local self-governance. According to the amendments, gender equality councils must be established at the local councils (*sakrebulo*s) and mayors of each municipality shall appoint designated civil servants responsible for addressing the matters related to gender equality. The Law on Gender Equality regulates creation of Gender Equality Councils at the autonomous republics of Georgia and at the local self-government bodies in order to ensure systematic and coordinated work on gender issues.<sup>287</sup> In case of city halls designation of person responsible for gender equality in order to ensure the study of gender equality issues, planning and coordination of appropriate activities is determined.<sup>288</sup>

In order to facilitate municipalities' efficient actions towards gender equality issues and coordinated work with the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia, the Municipal Gender Equality Council is set up in the municipalities. The composition, status, functions and authorization of the Council is defined by the local self-governance 'Sakrebulo' by law and the statute of the Municipal Gender Equality Council, approved by the respective 'Sakrebulo'.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Breakdown by years: 2014 – 167; 2015 – 155; 2016 – 161; 2017 – 401; 2018 – 484 and 2019 (3 months) - 81

<sup>287</sup> Law on Gender Equality, Article 12<sup>1</sup> and 13

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*; Article 13; paragraph 1<sup>1</sup>

<sup>289</sup> Local Self-governance Code of Georgia Article 61.2; Article 16.4; Article 24.1."B""h"; Law on Gender Equality Article 13.1<sup>1</sup>

Gender Focal Points have been identified at all government institutions, line ministries, at the sub-national level in each of the district mayor's offices<sup>290</sup> as major partners responsible for implementation of the gender mainstreaming within the state institutions. As of 2019, Gender Equality Councils exist in all 64 local self-governing bodies to support the advancement gender equality at sub-national levels.

Creation of gender councils at the legislative branch, the local self-governance level and appointment of gender focal point public officers at the executive branch, line ministries is important step made forward to ensure strengthening of gender equality mechanisms in local and executive governments.

Women's rooms in four regions of Georgia represent the working space for these people. "Women's rooms" are open spaces, information-consultation resource centers created by local self-governing executive body, municipality city halls. The goal of the women's rooms is to increase, strengthen and support equal participation of men and women at local self-governance level in decision making process and to give them additional information-consultation services for social-economic activities. Women's rooms were established in Samtske-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Adjara and Kakheti regions during 2012-2018 by Mercy Corps with SDC support.

In 2015 gender audit was held at Tbilisi City Hall. On November 1, 2016 Tbilisi City Hall adopted decree #26-80 on creation of Gender Equality Council based on which the Council was established at the City Hall and the public officers responsible for gender equality issues were designated. Major direction of activity include identification of gender strategy, implementation of educational training programs on gender equality for employees, and organization of charity and fund raising events to resolve women's and children's issues. The council and individuals responsible for gender equality have elaborated gender strategy action plan for 2017-2020, which was approved by the City Assembly in February 2017.

The first national conference on 15 May 2018 brought together representatives of the Georgian Government and Parliament, as well as mayors of all self-governing cities and municipalities, chairs of local councils/sakrebulo and municipal gender equality councils, and local gender equality focal points. Practical implementation of the legislation, coordinated efforts and common strategies of the national and local governments, and the enhancement of institutional mechanisms for achieving gender equality at the local level were in focus of the discussions at the conference.

To meet its international commitments, Georgia has strengthened its national institutional framework to monitor and advance women's equality.

The Government has offered high-level political support to incorporating SDGs into national priorities. Since 2015 the Government of Georgia has adopted the global goals and has been working through a process to nationalize the targets and indicators. In 2015 the Administration of Government of Georgia was granted coordination functions of the implementation of SDGs and it was largely intra-governmental process involving all ministries and agencies. The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) meets annually to review country reports. Georgia submitted its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the HLPF in 2016. However, VNR was not detailed at

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<sup>290</sup> [http://www.ginsc.net/map\\_html/index.php?lev=0&cat=0&sub=0&lang=en](http://www.ginsc.net/map_html/index.php?lev=0&cat=0&sub=0&lang=en)

that time and highlighted Georgia's general aspirations towards achieving sustainable development, the process of establishing institutionalized coordination and nationalization mechanism and future plans.

In 2016, the Government of Georgia (AOG) established a technical working group and involved experts of various sectoral ministries.. As a result of the work, Georgia currently has all 17 goals, 100 targets and 215 indicators nationalized. The Government of Georgia (GOG) aims to nationalize all 169 targets till 2030.

Since May 2, 2017 the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is facilitated through the Sustainable Development Goals Council, which was formally established through the Ordinance of the Prime Minister of Georgia. The Council was established within the auspices of the Public Administration Reform Council, which was transformed into the Public Administration Reform and Sustainable Development Goals Council through the Decree of the Prime Minister. An important role of the Council is to guarantee the conformity of national policy directions with the strategic objectives established by the National SDG Document.

The detailed functioning of the SDGs Council was determined at its first meeting on October 24, 2017. The Council gained the core function to oversee the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Georgia which includes:

- Coordination of interagency issues associated with the implementation of SDGs;
- Adoption of decisions on updating and extending SDGs, SDG indicators, and the SDG national document;
- Continue to incorporate SDGs into Georgia's national policies;
- Establishment and oversight of relevant working groups to support the strategic planning, integrated implementation, and effective monitoring of assigned SDGs and related thematic fields, etc.<sup>291</sup>

The Council is chaired by the Head of the Administration of the Government of Georgia and co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and reports directly to the Prime Minister.<sup>292</sup> The meetings of the Council take place once every three months.<sup>293</sup> The Policy Analysis, Strategic Planning and Coordination Department of the Administration of the Government serve as the Secretariat of the Council and provide analytical and technical support to its operation.<sup>294</sup> The Council is composed of ministries and other government agencies; however, it also allows for a possibility for the participation of representatives of UN agencies, EU delegation, USAID, civil society organizations, business associations and academia, without the right to vote in order to guarantee transparency and inclusiveness of the process.<sup>295</sup> Prime Minister's Assistant on Human Rights and Gender Equality issues, who is the chairman of Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues, along with other ministries and

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<sup>291</sup> Ordinance of the Prime Minister of Georgia #118; Article 3

<sup>292</sup> Ibid; Article 4 and Article 5.1

<sup>293</sup> Ibid; Article 5.2

<sup>294</sup> Ibid; Article 6

<sup>295</sup> Ibid; Article 5 & Article 9

the UN agencies is the member of the SDGs implementation monitoring thematic working group of the SDGs Council.<sup>296</sup>

To support the functioning of the Council, four thematic SDG Working Groups have been established: Social Inclusion, Economic Development, Democratic Governance and Sustainable Energy and Environmental Protection.<sup>297</sup> SDG 5 and 10, SDG 16 falls within the competence of the Democratic Governance Working Group. The Council makes political decisions, while Working Groups work on thematic directions and coordinate the work of the involved institutions on data collection and SDGs integration into national policy documents. The responsibilities of this Working Group are to:

- Ensure the efficient implementation of assigned SDGs;
- Make informed recommendations to relevant stakeholders on key policy priorities;
- Incorporate knowledge-sharing mechanisms that can be utilized by the Working Group to advance the integrated implementation of SDGs;
- Ensure the integration of SDGs into national policy planning system via incorporating the SDG targets into existing or prospective National Strategies and Action Plans;
- Provide feedback, guidance and relevant insight in the drafting of Georgia's Voluntary National Review on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda;
- Create effective mechanisms to successfully monitor and evaluate assigned SDGs;
- Conduct a targets/indicators revision and extension of sustainable development targets for approval of the SDGs Council.<sup>298</sup>

The core instrument to support the Council and Working Groups in the process of elaboration of the first progress report, describing detailed progress of all SDGs compared to relevant indicators, to be submitted in 2019 will be the Electronic Monitoring System (EMS). Development of Electronic Monitoring System for Sustainable Development Goals is one of the best examples of cooperation among the government, civil society organization and UN Agency for the purpose of SDG Goals effective implementation. The design of the system was developed by LEPL Data Exchange Agency of Georgia in close collaboration with AoG, IDFI and UNDP. The complex system enables AoG and lead government institutions to report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through a web-based monitoring system. Once the National SDG Document is incorporated in the monitoring software, the administrator will assign tasks to every lead agency, which will annually report on the implementation of each indicator. After monitoring data is inserted in the system, it will generate charts, graphs and other visualizations, according to the level of disaggregation of the indicator. The information will be published on the public module of the website, where all interested parties will have the opportunity to look into the national level implementation of SDGs. In addition, the system will simplify the preparation of the Voluntary National Review reports by providing ready-made visualizations on the implementation of each target. AoG will have the opportunity to utilize the system for the preparation of the 2019 High-Level Political Forum.<sup>299</sup>

Georgia's progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was discussed on 22 January 2019 at the annual meeting of the national Council on the Sustainable

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid; Article 3.2.K

<sup>297</sup> IDFI -Nationalization of Sustainable Development Goal 16 in Georgia - Achievements, Challenges and the Way Ahead; pg.6

<sup>298</sup> Ibid; pg.6-7

<sup>299</sup> Ibid; pg.5



Development Goals (SDGs). Chaired by the Administration of the Government of Georgia and the United Nations, the SDG Council brought together over 130 representatives of the Georgian Government, United Nations, civil society, private sector, academic institutions and international organisations.

Setting up a national coordination mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has proven to be one of the most important tasks for Georgia. The institutional setup and broad ownership of the SDGs is decisive in how the process will continue further. Activities carried out by AoG and relevant line Ministries have guaranteed that, Georgia will be among the leaders in the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Development of the National SDG Document is an important milestone in the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda, since it will facilitate a substantive dialogue between public institutions, civil society, development partners, private sector and academia.

National parliaments are uniquely positioned to promote sustainable development, translate the goals into enforceable domestic laws and regulations, create synergies among the stakeholders, and hold governments accountable for the goals they subscribed to.

The Parliament of Georgia joins hands with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Government of Sweden and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to introduce effective tools for monitoring and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The national Parliamentary Action for SDGs will focus on all available parliamentary mechanisms, such as law-making, budgeting, oversight and citizen engagement, and will be based on the Parliament's self-assessment that will measure its capacities, gaps and opportunities in supporting Georgia to achieve its national goals.

## Section IV – Data and Statistics

Article 5 of the Gender Equality Law states: “Official statistical reports on gender issues shall contain sex-disaggregated data”. The Law of Georgia on Official Statistics defines the purpose and principles of official statistics and determines the legal grounds for keeping, storing and disseminating statistical information. At present the statistical activities are carried out by an independent body of National Statistics Office of Georgia - GeoStat, the Legal Entity of Public Law. It carries out its functions considering the international methodology and standards. The purpose of the Law is to keep independent, impartial and reliable statistics in the country in compliance with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice, based on internationally recognized fundamental principles of statistics.

GeoStat conduct the census of the population, produces annual reports, develops statistical activity program and within the framework of this program conducts statistical surveys, processes administrative data exclusively for the statistical purpose; publishes the data and ensures its publicity and secures the equal access to the statistical data for all the users.

The GeoStat is run by the Executive Director, who is simultaneously the Chairperson of the Board of the GeoStat and the GeoStat Advisory Board.<sup>300</sup> The Director is appointed for 4 years term. GeoStat Board comprises seven members and the GeoStat Executive Director. There must be one representative of the National Bank of Georgia, one of the Ministry for Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and one of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia at the Board and the remaining members shall not be public servants. Organizations representing the national women’s machinery are currently not members of this board. The Board oversees the operations of GeoStat such as reviewing and approving the annual program of activities, budget allocations and statistical methodologies. Another consultative body, the GeoStat Advisory Board, is also chaired by the head of GeoStat. It comprises eleven data producers and/or users from academia and international organizations and, as its title suggests, it plays an advisory rather than decision-making role; to review statistical activities and methods and to provide recommendations. UN Women is represented on this board .

Data to be produced is determined through the annual ‘Statistical Activity Programme’ designed by GeoStat. It does not go into any detail about the indicators, level of disaggregation that will be available or format of the final products disseminated.

GeoStat produced its first National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) covering the period 2011-2014.<sup>301</sup> The NSDS 2011-2014 included provisions on gender statistics. Under the social statistics domain, the strategy committed to using data from the annual integrated household survey, the population census and other sources to “compile gender related statistics on a wide range of topics”.<sup>302</sup> Aside from production, the NSDS included development of gender statistics strategy and ensuring that all data collection and compilation activities are gender aware by the end of the initial strategy period. This is still to be developed as resource limitations and

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<sup>300</sup> Law of Georgia on official Statistics, Article 8

<sup>301</sup> GeoStat. 2011. National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Georgia 2011-2014. Tbilisi. <http://www.geostat.ge/cms/files/NSDS%20Geo%20Eng.pdf>

<sup>302</sup> National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2011-2014; Section 5.36

other priorities have halted progress.<sup>303</sup> With support through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a draft strategy for statistical development for 2019-2023 will be developed by the end of 2019.<sup>304</sup>

A global assessment of the Georgian National Statistical System was conducted by the European Commission (Eurostat), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in 2012 which led to introduction of an amendments to the law in 2015 that clarifies the role of GeoStat and better reflects the principles of the United Nations fundamental principles and the European Statistics Code of Practice.<sup>305</sup> A second global assessment is being undertaken in late 2018 by Eurostat and partners, which considered the effective implementation of the law and provided recommendations on the future development of the national statistical office (GeoStat) and the national statistical system in general.

The World Bank rates the general statistical capacity of Georgia quite high with a score of 86.7 out of a possible 100 points. This is the average of three scores related to their compliance with international statistical standards and methods (90.0), the quality of key source data, including gender-related collections (80.0) and the periodicity of key social indicators including some related to gender equality in education and maternal health (90.0). Georgia's statistical capacity peaked in 2010 at 95.6, with the fall being mainly due to limited data being produced on health, education and child malnutrition. For last four years Georgia maintains score between 88.9-87.8.<sup>306</sup> This statistical capacity score does not tell us much about gender statistics but rather provides an indication of overall capacity. A more recent country gender assessment conducted by the World Bank in 2016 highlights the commitments made to improving gender statistics.<sup>307</sup>

GeoStat has been mainstreaming gender in its work for many years. The main results of gender mainstreaming being:

1. Publication of a data booklet entitled 'Women and Men in Georgia' every two years since 2000. "Women and Men in Georgia" is the statistical publication dedicated to gender equality challenges. The publication is aimed at raising public awareness of gender-related problems and developing targeted state policies in the field of gender equality. The data are retrieved from the surveys conducted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia and other administrative sources. The publications are PDFs available online and also distributed in print. It comprises tables of data but little analysis or interpretation. The bi-annual 'Women and Men in Georgia' is developed in a participatory way, with users involved at the initial stages to give feedback and suggestions on new data the publication should contain. The topics covered are population, public health, social security, education, labour market, crime and justice, and business statistics, asset ownership and entrepreneurship, violence against women, agriculture, domestic tourism and ICT.

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<sup>303</sup> Jessica Gardner (UN Women Consultant), *Gender Assessment of the National Statistical System in Georgia Final Report*; 27 December 2018; pg.8

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., pg.8

<sup>305</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). 2013. Adapted Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of Georgia.

<sup>306</sup> The World Bank: Statistical Capacity Indicator Dashboard (<http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/SCIdashboard.aspx>). Accessed March 20, 2019.

<sup>307</sup> The World Bank. 2016. Georgia Country Gender Assessment.

In 2018, for the first time, in the latest publication of “Women and Men in Georgia” GeoStat has made linkages between its gender data and the relevant gender indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Development and release of a Gender Statistics Portal that repackages available data using infographics and interactive data visualizations. GeoStat took its work on gender statistics to another level by launching an electronic Gender Data Portal at the end of 2018. The portal was developed in cooperation with UN Women. This bilingual (English and Georgian) Portal can be accessed from GeoStat’s official web page ([geostat.ge](http://geostat.ge)) as well as directly available at <http://geostat.ge/gender/index.php?lang=ka>. Gender Statistics Portal represents centralized, user friendly, web-based database on gender statistics. The Gender Data Portal presents key gender statistics in the fields of agriculture, business statistics, crime, demography, education, employment and unemployment, health care, households, ICT, income, influence and power, and social security. The Gender Data Portal not only presents data in a user-friendly format, but also allows visitors to access relevant GeoStat datasets for further scrutiny and elaboration.

In 2018, also for the first time, “Women and Men in Georgia” as well as the Gender Data Portal, feature findings from the National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia conducted by GeoStat and UN Women, with financial support from the EU, in 2017.

3. Gender analysis of the 2014 population census with UFPA support and publication of two products: a) Gender Analysis of the 2014 General Population Census Data; and b) Trends in the Sex Ratio at Birth in Georgia: An Overview Based on the 2014 General Population Census Data, attempted to analyze sex differences in a number of specific issues, such as marriage, fertility, education, impairment and disability, migration, knowledge of the state language, household composition and economic activity.
4. Survey on violence against women in 2017. The 2017 National Survey on Violence against Women was designed to produce reliable indicators of violence, representative at the national, urban, rural and, to the extent possible, regional level. The objectives of the 2017 National Survey on Violence against Women in Georgia was to obtain reliable estimates of the prevalence of different forms of violence against women and girls, committed by intimate partners as well as other perpetrators in the private and public spheres, during their lifetime as well as in the last 12 months; to assess the extent to which violence against women is associated with a range of health and other outcomes; to identify factors that may either protect or put women at risk of violence; to assess the extent to which women are aware of and use services for survivors of violence; to examine men’s and women’s awareness of and attitudes towards issues of violence against women. The National Survey on Violence against Women, conducted by GeoStat and supported by UN Women and the European Union, has significantly contributed to the creation of a baseline for the nationalized SDG 5.
5. Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) stand-alone survey on entrepreneurship and asset ownership in 2015. Data collected through the stand-alone EDGE survey represented the first step of collecting individual ownership data and provided first-time

indicators on incidence and distribution of ownership for different types of assets. The pilot survey attempted to estimate gender disparities with relation to distribution of wealth.

6. An assessment and technical recommendations to better align the methods for calculating the gender pay gap with international standards to be implemented in 2019.
7. Some training of users of gender statistics with more planned for the future (e.g. journalists, NGOs, civil servants).

In Georgia official gender-related data comes from three sources: administrative records, sample surveys (population or establishment based), and censuses.

Table 1: Data collections that provide a basis for producing gender statistics<sup>308</sup>

Collection	Frequency	Latest year
Population census	Every 10 years	2014
Agriculture census	Every 10 years	
Survey on prevalence of gender-based violence against women	Every 5-10 years	2017
Pilot Evidence and Data for Gender Equality survey	Unknown	2015
Labour Force Survey	Quarterly	
Reproductive Health Survey	Every 5 years	2010
Summary of vital statistics	Annual	2017
Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)	Every 5-15 years	2018
Agriculture Integrated Survey (Agris)	Unknown	Will be piloted during 2019
Information management systems of key ministries (e.g. education, health, justice and internal affairs)	Quarterly and annual data submitted by administrative bodies to GeoStat	

The main users of gender statistics in Georgia are the parliament, the national women’s machinery, researchers, representatives from NGOs, particularly those working on protecting human rights, policy and decision makers within government ministries, and donors and development partners. The national women’s machinery (described in section III) and GeoStat, are the main actors leading the production and use of gender statistics. National action plans (NAPs) related to gender equality support the production and use of gender statistics. They provide an entry point to better clarify the priorities and data needs and have a working group associated with them responsible for overseeing implementation and monitoring. Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia under its action plan for 2018-2020 Activity 1.4 Develop the Pay Gap Calculation Methodology states to cooperate with National Statistic Office to conduct needs assessment and analysis of environment and under Goal 5: Raised Awareness and Sensitivity about Gender Equality the Council determines availability of the most recent and updated statistics on violence against women to be one important indicator.<sup>309</sup> Coordination and resolution of issues between users and producers of gender statistics are addressed through the Gender Equality Council as

<sup>308</sup> Jessica Gardner (UN Women Consultant), *Gender Assessment of the National Statistical System in Georgia Final Report*; 27 December 2018; pg.17-18

<sup>309</sup> Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia under its action plan for 2018-2020 pg. 2 and pg. 10

needed (e.g. recent discussions on calculation of the gender pay gap). The SDG Council working groups are another forum for user-producer dialogue.

Gender statistics are defined as statistics that adequately reflect the differences and inequalities in the situations of women and men in all areas of life. It is one of the key instruments to reflect and integrate the needs and priorities of women and men and girls and boys in policy development and to ensure equal distribution of its positive outcomes for everyone. Gender statistics are aimed at producing adequate data by using advanced, gender-sensitive methodology to measure and assess the actual situation regarding the social status of women and men and overall gender equality. Improvement of content, methods, classifications and measurements with respect to gender equality statistics is of utmost importance for gender equality professionals, as it is for representatives of legislative bodies, state authorities and civil society.

Presently there are gaps in data production, accessibility and use. However, without disaggregating statistics by gender and other categories, it is impossible to determine issues of concern related to gender equality and develop evidence-based policies to address them. Rather, the disaggregation of data should be integrated into all data collection efforts.

The Public Defender has recommended that the courts “collect information on the sex, date of birth, relationship status of a victim and their abuser, forms of violence and other significant data”.<sup>310</sup> In this regard, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences expressed concern “about the absence of unified statistical data on domestic violence and in general on gender-based violence”.<sup>311</sup> She further expressed concern about the lack of effective data collection on the issuance of protective orders.

A recent assessment on Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations highlights a lack of sufficiently disaggregated data as a barrier to achieving gender equality.<sup>312</sup>

The establishment of laws, policies and national action plans provide a good basis for driving the demand for gender statistics, although there is a need to elaborate on specific data needs.

Collecting and providing access to sex disaggregated data is a key priority in advancing gender equality. GeoStat collects certain data in a sex disaggregated fashion. Major statistical publication “Women and Men in Georgia” dedicated to the gender equality issues provides information disaggregation by following topics: population, healthcare, education, social security, households, employment and unemployment, income and expenditures, ICT, business statistics, crime, influence and power, agriculture and land/assets ownership, Entrepreneurship, domestic tourism, violence against women. The expansion of indicators happened gradually. The 2017 issue of “Woman and Man” has been expanded with such important issues as agriculture, domestic tourism and ICT and 2018 edition includes a number of new indicators such as asset ownership and entrepreneurship, violence against women.

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<sup>310</sup> See also, Public Defender’s Office, *Special Report: Evaluation of Protection Mechanism from Domestic Violence*, 2017, p. 18.

<sup>311</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on her mission to Georgia*, A/HRC/32/42/Add.3, 9 June 2016, para 78.

<sup>312</sup> UNDP; USAID/PROLoG 2018. *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations* (Volume 1 and Volume 2).

In 2018 UN Women has supported the assessment of the National Statistical System from the gender perspective in Georgia, with the aim of identifying gaps and opportunities for the improvement of methodology, collection, distribution and application of sex-disaggregated data for informed policymaking. Some of the recommendations of the assessment include development of a national strategy and action plan for gender statistics; adoption of a national set of gender indicators for reporting on national and international commitments, such as the SDGs, the Istanbul Convention, CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action; establishment of the basis for what gender-related data are to be produced, analysed and used; Introduce regulations and amend national policies and plans so that government ministries collect, analyse, produce and disseminate sex-disaggregated and gender-related statistics from administrative records; transforming the Women and Men in Georgia publication into a national gender profile that could provide more comprehensive information to complement the latest key gender indicators.

UN Women has been supporting the advancement of gender statistics in Georgia in close cooperation with the National Statistical System since 2014. Support for the improved methodology and Gender Pay Gap calculation, facilitation of user-producer dialogues, and investment in wide dissemination of user-friendly sex-disaggregated statistics are a few examples of the ongoing cooperation between UN Women and GeoStat, with the support of the EU and the Governments of Austria and Switzerland.

The Government of Georgia began the nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016. The Government identified the priority goals, targets and indicators through the adaptation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This has resulted in mix of global and local targets (100) and indicators (215). By implementing the SDG national agenda, by 2030 the situation regarding gender equality will be significantly improved in the country. Specifically, Goal 5 with its relevant objectives and indicators focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Support from the national statistical system is essential to ensure legislating, policy-making, monitoring and reporting are evidence-based and data is guiding government and others towards achieving sustainable development goals.

The nationalized set of SDGs includes tailored targets, baseline data and additional nationally relevant measures. Of the 54 gender-related indicators at the global level, 30 (56%) have been adopted as is.<sup>313</sup> Nine of the indicators are not included in the framework either due to not being considered relevant or no data being available.<sup>314</sup> The remaining 18 global gender-related indicators are in the local framework but use a related or different measure.<sup>315</sup>

In most cases the local targets and indicators under SDG 5 are aligned with the global ones with wording of targets adjusted for the national context (e.g. target 5.3 refers only to child and early marriage and not to female genital mutilation) and more nationally appropriate indicators used. There are 26 indicators under SDG 5 reflecting the national priorities under each area covered by

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<sup>313</sup> The following global indicators appear as is in the Georgia SDG framework (as at September 2018): In local framework: 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 1.4.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.3.1, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 4.6.1, 4.7.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1, 5.5.1, 5.5.2 (as 16.7.1.c), 5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.a.1, 5.b.1, 8.3.1, 8.5.1, 8.6.1, 8.7.1, 8.8.2, 10.2.1, 16.1.1, 16.2.3, 16.7.2, 17.18.1. Please see Global gender-specific SDG indicators available in Georgia in Annex 1

<sup>314</sup> Global SDG indicators not included in Georgia framework: 1.2.2, 1.b.1, 2.1.1.; 2.1.2, 5.3.2, 11.1.1, 11.2.1, 11.7.1, 11.7.2, 13. b.1.

<sup>315</sup> Indicators for which related or different measures are being used: 2.3.2 (adjusted indicator on average income per family farm), 3.8.1 (related measure used instead on population reporting being sick and consulted health care provider), 4.1.1 (related measure), 4.2.1 (different measure on screening for health/developmental concerns), 4.2.2 (related measure on participation in school readiness program), 4.3.1 (related measure on participation in TVET), 4.5.1, 4.a.1 (measures only special education needs students), 5.1.1, 5.4.1, 5.a.2, 8.8.1, 8.9.2, 9.5.2, 16.1.2, 16.2.2, and 16.7.1.

the global goals (discrimination, violence, harmful practices, unpaid care work, women's participation in leadership and decision-making, access to sexual and reproductive health, equal rights to economic resources, and enabling technologies). Only eight indicators (5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1, 5.5.1, 5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.a.1 and 5.b.1) match those associated with the global goals and the remaining 18 are local additions or adjustments.

Data collection has been identified as the main challenge for implementation of the SDGs and barriers include a lack of consistent data collection standards and capacity for analysis. The key problem identified in the first Voluntary National Report on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the lack of data disaggregated by age, gender, and specific sectors of economy. This especially concerns the Goals and Targets that deal with social rights, labor rights, gender issues, poverty and unemployment.<sup>316</sup> The first VNR states that lack of sector-disaggregated data and administrative statistics in many areas impedes development of the effective indicators and means of verification. The process of adjusting the SDGs has helped Georgia to pinpoint specific areas in which the national data collection must improve.<sup>317</sup> Georgia has identified sectoral, disaggregated data generation and analysis as an area of interest to learn best international practices and seek assistance.<sup>318</sup> The identified data gaps in the first VNR demonstrate substantial need for upgrading Georgia's national statistical research infrastructure and practices, which will require additional training, better financing and attraction of the necessary human capital.<sup>319</sup>

Building of statistical capacity within the SDG Council and its four working groups is needed as they embark on putting together the first SDG progress report in 2019 covering the period 2015-2017. In 2019 Data for the SDGs report will be collated through an Electronic Management System (EMS), which ensures *effective coordination between government agencies in the process of monitoring and reporting on the national SDG agenda and helps to report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through a web-based monitoring system*. The four groups are: (a) good governance, (b) economic growth; (c) social inclusion, (d) sustainable energy and environment protection. There is no separate group for gender issues or gender statistics. Gender concerns, including gender statistics, are led by Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality and Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues and are discussed under the good governance and social inclusion working group.

Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) launched new platform, an open DataLab ([www.datalab.ge](http://www.datalab.ge)) in 2018. It is a platform that brings together data sets from public institutions in a user-friendly way. It currently contains more than 800 datasets from 190 public institutions and users can explore datasets on public policy issues, analyze data according to individual interest, prepare simple visualization and share official statistics.

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<sup>316</sup>First Voluntary National Report on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pg.8

<sup>317</sup> Ibid; pg.3

<sup>318</sup> Ibid;

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, pg.8



## Annex 1 – Global gender-specific SDG indicators available in Georgia

The following global gender indicators appear in the Georgia SDG framework:

<b>Gender-related SDG Indicators in the Georgia SDG framework</b>	
<b>Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>	
1.1.1.	Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)
1.2.1.	Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age
1.3.1.	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
1.4.2	Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure
<b>Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>	
2.3.2	Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status
<b>Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>	
3.1.1	Maternal mortality ratio
3.1.2	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
3.3.1	Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations
3.7.1	Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods
3.7.2	Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group
3.8.1	Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)
<b>Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>	
4.1.1	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
4.2.1	Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial wellbeing, by sex
4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex
4.3.1	Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
4.6.1	Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

4.7.1	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment
4.a.1	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 (as per the WASH indicator definitions)
<b>Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b>	
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
5.2.1	Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years 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
5.2.2	Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence
5.3.1	Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18
5.3.2	Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age
5.4.1	Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location
5.5.1	Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments
5.5.2	Proportion of women in managerial positions
5.6.1	Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care
5.6.2	Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education
5.a.1	(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
5.a.2	Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women’s equal rights to land ownership and/or control
5.b.1	Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex
<b>Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>	
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex
8.5.1	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities
8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
8.7.1	Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age

8.8.1	Frequency rates of fatal and nonfatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status
8.8.2	Increase in national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status
8.9.2	Number of jobs in tourism industries as a proportion of total jobs and growth rate of jobs, by sex
<b>Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries</b>	
10.2.1	Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities
<b>Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
16.1.1	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age
16.2.2	Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation
16.2.3	Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18
16.7.1	Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions
16.7.2	Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

## Annex 2 – Additional Country Gender Specific Indicators

<b>Additional Country Gender Specific Indicators</b>	
<b>Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>	
2.3.2	Average income of rural population (from employment/self-employment, sale of agricultural goods) per family farm: 700 GEL
<b>Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>	
3.8.1	% of population who reported during 6 months were sick for any reason and consulted doctor at the medical institution: 85%
<b>Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>	
4.1.1	Primary and secondary education available for 100% children by 2030. All children have achieved at least a minimum proficiency level in basic reading and math skills
4.2.1	Number of children left out of formal education system will decrease at least to 10%
4.2.2	All municipalities implement school readiness program; Number of children age 5-6 involved in school readiness programs by sex
4.3.1	Participation rate of the youth and adults in accessible and quality technical and vocational education and training by 2030 is increased
4.5.1	Equal participation of females and males in general, vocational and higher education system ensured by 2030
4.a.1	All public schools are equipped and rehabilitated taking into account the needs of children with special needs
<b>Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b>	
5.1.1	Council of Europe Istanbul Convention shall be ratified by the Parliament of Georgia
5.4.1	Women economic activity rate (% of women in labor force) – target: 77%
5.a.2	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
<b>Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>	
8.8.1	Decrease of number of violations of labor security and safety rules according to the administrative data and law on labor security and safety; Labor Inspectors shall annually inspect at least 2.5% of companies by 2030.
8.9.2	Number of jobs in tourism industries by 2025; more than 333 000
<b>Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure</b>	
9.5.2	Number of researches increased by 10% by 2030
<b>Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
16.1.2	Crime registered at the dividing border and territory close to it
16.2.2	Number of persons convicted for human trafficking disaggregated by sex, age and form of exploitation
16.7.1	Number of public servants (age, sex, persons with disabilities, local self-governance, judiciary)