

KYRGYZSTAN

SECTION I. REVIEW OF TRENDS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Philosophical thought of the past labeled the problem of the "sexual disjunction of the world" as one of the most complex, multifaceted, inexhaustible problems of mankind. Today, on the threshold of the third millennium, finding positive ways to solve that problem is acquiring a special relevance, making it possible to bring a heretofore unused potential, that of many millions women, into developmental processes.

In April 1999, at a special session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, Kyrgyzstan was named among the top 10 states that are successfully fulfilling the commitments adopted at the Fourth World Conference in Beijing. A summary of the work done in 2000 made it possible to assess the achievements associated with Kyrgyzstan's efforts with regard to the advancement of women, identify existing problems and obstacles and acknowledge that the current state of human development is typified by new factors that exert a growing influence on the status of women and men. They consist, primarily, of the globalization process, which has cultural, political, economic, and social consequences and affects the level of cultural values, lifestyle, and ways of communicating, as well as the maintenance of stable growth in Kyrgyzstan. The information revolution and the technological transformations of recent years are also providing new opportunities for enhancing the potential of women, but new problems involving access to information resources and self-education have emerged.

The progress achieved in the advancement of women has made it possible for Kyrgyzstan to proclaim, as a priority goal for the next five-year period (2000–2005), a more global strategy — the achievement of gender equality — based on the notion that women's rights constitute an integral part of universal human rights. The political will of the State in that area has been bolstered by institutional reforms. In 2002, the status of the national institutional mechanism was elevated, which was accompanied by a reorganization of structures previously in place into the National Council on Women, Family, and Gender Development reporting to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, whose working body is the Secretariat, which is a structural subdivision of the Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Also adopted in 2002 was the National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period 2002–2006.

The National Plan of Action identified the following strategic directions for implementing gender policy in the Kyrgyz Republic:

1. Development of an institutional mechanism for achieving gender equality.
2. Observance of gender balance at all levels of decision making.
3. Gender component of economic development in the areas of labour, employment and social protection.
4. Gender aspects in health care.

5. Gender parity in education and culture.
6. Reduction of all forms of violence against women.

The Plan takes into account the aims and objectives formulated in the summary document of the twenty-third special session of the UN General Assembly (2000) and the Millennium Declaration (2000) that pertain to eradicating poverty, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, promoting equality between men and women, expanding the rights and opportunities of women, etc., as well as the problems and obstacles which the experience of the preceding national programme for the advancement of women "Ayalzat" had shown to exist, and attaches priority to integrating gender perspectives into all spheres of activity of the State and society. A distinguishing feature of the National Plan of Action is the presence, for all six strategic directions, of base indicators developed for monitoring and evaluating the progress of gender policy, as well as the fact that not only State structures, but also the academic and nongovernmental sectors took an active part in preparing it.

This National Plan has been coordinated with the overall national strategy, the "Comprehensive Development Framework for the Kyrgyz Republic to 2010" (CDF), which was adopted in 2001 and whose aim is to achieve political and social well-being and economic prosperity for the people in conditions in which the principles of freedom, human dignity and equal opportunities for all prevail. Specifically, in section 4 of the CDF, "Strategy for National Renewal", paragraph 4.2 "A just society guaranteeing security and human development" contains item 4.2.7 "Gender policy", the implementation of which is component that runs through all the national programmes being adopted in the Kyrgyz Republic. When the CDF was being prepared, individual aspects of the gender policy in the system of State administration and the workings of society were discussed in 2000–2001 at seminars and conferences in which the nongovernmental sector took part.

The measures called for under the National Plan of Action have also been incorporated in the medium-term National Poverty Reduction Strategy in Kyrgyzstan for the Period 2003–2005 (NPRS) because experience garnered in many countries indicates that strategies to reduce the scale of poverty that are based on an understanding of its gender nature are the most effective and ensure that the consequences of their implementation are fair. In the Kyrgyz Republic, gender is taken into account in the following four aspects of poverty:

1. Potential and human capital.
2. Opportunities of the poor.
3. Security and vulnerability among the poor.
4. Expansion of rights and opportunities for the poor.

A periodic gender analysis of those aspects in the implementation of national programmes and strategies, an analysis that rests on the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, enables a State to quickly identify difficulties and obstacles associated with advancing the gender component and develop and implement the requisite recommendations for ensuring the ample participation of women and men in subsequent processes of development and in eradicating poverty.

On 14 January 2004, at the thirtieth session of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, noted as positive factors reflected in the second periodic report submitted by the Kyrgyz Republic on the observance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (2003) were the sequential and integrated strategy of the State in implementing gender policy through the execution of the National Plan of Action and a number of associated national programmes geared to fighting trafficking in women and to safeguarding the rights of women and ensuring gender education.

Currently on the agenda is the gender analysis of the budget of the central level of administration and of local budgets that called for in the National Plan of Action, that is, the fact that a socially fair State budget is an important prerequisite for achieving gender equality in the country is being taken into account.

Over the span of the entire post-Soviet period, Kyrgyzstan has consistently pursued a policy of recognizing the rights of women as human rights. Basic rights and freedoms are consolidated in the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic and in a whole array of statutes. The *Zhogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic (parliament) has ratified a considerable number of international conventions that consistently undergo the procedure of implementation in the domestic laws of the country.

In the sphere of international legal relations, the adoption in 2002 of the Kyrgyz Republic law on the accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is an extremely significant factor. Together with the earlier signing of the Supplementary Protocol to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights signifying acceptance of the mechanism of individual complaints, this made it possible to broaden access to the use of international systems of legal protection for the women of Kyrgyzstan. On 30 December 2003, the Kyrgyz Republic also ratified the Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance (20 June 1956), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic is now preparing the instrument of accession to that Convention. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, in the context of implementing a programme of measures to combat the illegal export and trafficking in persons, has prepared a draft Kyrgyz Republic law on the ratification by the Kyrgyz Republic of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 15 November 2000; a draft Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, of 15 December 2000, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; and a draft Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea of 15 December 2000, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime No. 74 of 15 April 2003 and has sent them to the parliament for review.

Work is continuing with regard to the entry into bilateral treaties on cooperation in the provision of legal assistance in civil and criminal cases. Such a treaty was signed in 2003 between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic has also prepared draft treaties on legal assistance and legal relations in civil, family and criminal cases between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of France, the Greek Republic, the Republic of Finland, the

Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Norway, and the Republic of Poland, which have been sent to those Parties via the appropriate diplomatic channels for review.

The new version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, adopted by referendum in 2003, consolidated a number of additional rights emanating from the international catalog of human rights and aimed at maintaining and further expanding women's rights:

- the right to defend one's life and health and the life and health of other individuals against unlawful infringements (para. 2, article 16);
- the right to freely determine one's nationality (para.12, article 16);
- right to personal and group recourse (para.15, article 16);
- artistic freedom and protection of intellectual property (para. 16, article 16);
- right to recover damages from the State (para. 4, article 16);
- right to inheritance is protected and upheld by law (para. 4, article 19);
- right to inspect information about oneself that is being held in agencies, if the information is not a State secret (para. 6, article 16).

Other articles of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic strengthened civil rights such as the following:

- right to vote in elections and be elected (para. 3, article 23);
- citizens have equal access to State and municipal service (para. 4, article 23);
- right to settle disputes arising from civil relationships in courts of arbitration (para. 3, article 38);
- right of citizens to qualified legal assistance and to protection of rights and freedoms (para. 1, article 40);
- right to appeal to the Ombudsman (Akyykatchy) (para. 2, article 40);
- no citizen of Kyrgyzstan may be extradited to another State (para. 4, article 13).

An especially significant achievement is the adoption by Kyrgyzstan of laws that directly affect women's rights. Such laws include the Kyrgyz Republic laws on the bases for State guarantees to safeguard gender equality (2003) and on social and legal protection against violence in the family (2003) and the Family Code (2003), which have made it possible to strengthen considerably the State policy for protecting the rights and freedoms of women.

The law on the bases for State guarantees to safeguard gender equality, for example, governs relations associated with providing equal rights and opportunities to persons of different sex in social, political, economic, cultural and other areas of human life. This law consolidated and expanded the basic provisions of the Constitution of our State, which has taken upon itself to honor commitments to safeguard gender equality through the norms of law. Only legal regulation that takes gender perspectives into account is capable of ensuring the rights and freedoms of any individual or citizen. That is why the law on the bases for State guarantees to safeguard gender equality is fundamental to other laws, and the basic principles of gender equality reflected in it are called upon to protect men and women against sexual discrimination and affirm progressive democratic relations on the basis of national traditions. The

law calls for State guarantees of gender equality in State administration and in one's career in State service (Ch. 2), in economic and social relations (Ch. 3) and in labour relations (Ch. 4). A special feature of the law is its introduction of quotas for a number of State positions. Article 23 of the law, for example, contains a provision to the effect that the country's parliament, within the limits of its competency, shall, on the basis of the representative numbers, appoint individuals who account for no more than 70% of one sex as the following:

- judges of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan;
- judges of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan;
- staff members of the Central Elections and Referendums Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- auditors in the Chamber of Accounts of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The procedures for reviewing gender-equality violations are contained in Ch. 6 of the law. They include appeals to the President, to the *Zhogorku Kenesh*, to the Government, to the Ombudsman, to local self-government bodies, to the courts, to the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development under the President, to employers, to social organizations and other nongovernmental associations, and to law-enforcement authorities. In that connection, a number of measures are required to develop mechanisms for monitoring the enforcement of the law and, in particular, mechanisms for ensuring gender quotas.

Numerous independent studies conducted in the republic have confirmed the hidden existence of domestic (family) violence. They, in turn, have served as the basis for the adoption by the country's parliament of the draft law on social and legal protection against violence in the family (2003), which was submitted as a popular initiative. The law governs relations in the area of social and legal protection for individuals who are victims of violence in the family and has a goal of creating a social and legal system for protecting the lives and health of family members against violence and providing protection to victims of family violence on the basis of compliance with the international human-rights standards contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action. Innovations reflected for the first time ever in the laws of countries of Central Asia consist in the introduction of the institution of protective orders (temporary and court protective orders) as special administrative and civil means of social and legal protection against violence in the family, as well as the enlistment of partners from non-State organizations in the suppression and prevention of violence in the family.

The process itself of submitting a draft law to parliament is interesting. For the first time ever in Kyrgyzstan, the nongovernmental sector used the constitutional norm pertaining to the popular legislative initiative that requires collecting 30,000 signatures of citizens of the Republic for the draft law being introduced. Given the absence of a mechanism for implementing that norm, the "Diamond" Association and the Association of Independent Academic Lawyers of the Kyrgyz Republic independently developed a procedure for collecting the signatures. Crisis centres that collected 36,000 signatures of citizens from all age and social groups of the population in the space of six months through the use of

active publicity method were identified as the signature-collection entities. Some 68% of those who signed for the draft law were women, and 32% were men.

Work is now being completed to introduce a number of amendments and additions to current Kyrgyz Republic law regulating issues pertaining to the force of protective orders (temporary and court orders) and the establishment of responsibility for family violence. In addition, the Conceptual Framework for Reforming the Penitentiary System of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period up to 2010, which also regulates the features of the enforcement of punishment against women and minors, has been approved.

But criminal, administrative and civil law may also be applied in cases of violence against women in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic guarantees every individual full, absolute and immediate protection of the civil rights and freedoms (article 38), the right to life, physical and moral inviolability, personal freedom, and safety and honor (article 16), as well as other basic human rights. Under article 2 of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, one of the main objectives of criminal law is to prevent crime and protect the individual, as well as civil rights and freedoms, against criminal infringements.

In Kyrgyz Republic criminal law, socially dangerous acts against fundamental personal rights and freedoms are addressed in section VII "Crimes against a Person" of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic and include crimes against life and health (Ch. 16), against the freedom, honor and dignity of the individual (Ch. 17), against the sexual inviolability and sexual freedom of the individual (Ch. 18), against the constitutional rights and freedoms of the individual and the citizen (Ch. 19) and against the family and minors (Ch. 20). They may also include specific acts from section IX "Crimes against public safety and public order", specifically, vandalism (Ch. 24) and the act of involving others in prostitution (Ch. 25).

Included in the group of violent crimes against persons are the following: murder (article 97), murder committed in the heat of passion (article 98), death caused by negligence (article 101), incitement to suicide (article 102), intentional infliction of serious (article 104) or less than serious (article 105) injury to health or infliction of such injury in the heat of passion (article 106) or through negligence (article 109), beating (article 110), or torture (article 111), intentional infliction of minor injury to health (article 112), threat of homicide (article 113), assault (article 128), rape (article 129), violent acts of a sexual nature (article 130), coercion to commit a sexual act (article 131), sexual relations or other acts of a sexual nature with a person under 16 years of age (article 132), depraved acts (article 133), bigamy and polygamy (article 153), contracting actual marital relations with an individual who has not attained marriage age (parts 2,3, article 154), coercion of a woman to enter into marriage or preventing entry into marriage (article 155), trafficking in children (article 159), evasion of parents from supporting their children (article 162), and evasion of children from supporting their parents (article 163), as well as vandalism (article 234), habitual use of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances (article 249), and involving others in prostitution (article 260). It should be noted that in the current Criminal Code, article 130 expands the concept of violent acts of a sexual nature, which provides grounds for regarding oral and anal sex acts as serious crimes against the sexual inviolability of a person, punishable to the same

extent as rape. Thus, the provisions of criminal law make it possible to protect the rights of women against criminal infringements on them.

There also exists the possibility of the arrest of an individual guilty of violence, specifically through the use of measures of administrative liability, for petty crimes (article 364 of the Kyrgyz Republic Code of Administrative Liability). Pursuant to part 3 of article 26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Kyrgyz Republic, in cases involving crimes specified in part 1 of article 129 and part 1 of article 130 of the Criminal Code (rape without aggravating circumstances), charges may be brought in court in a semi-public manner, i.e., a criminal case is initiated only on the basis of a complaint by the victim, and it cannot be terminated if the victim reconciles with the accused. An exception is a case involving a minor, in which the prosecutor has the right to initiate criminal proceedings. It should be noted that, in Kyrgyzstan, the death penalty is not applied to women under the new criminal laws (part 2, article 50 of the Criminal Code).

The Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic has made a study of international practices, and a draft law is being prepared on the protection of participants in criminal procedures that is expected to expand considerably the rights of participants in criminal procedures, as well as the social protection of citizens, particularly women, who are victims of criminal acts and are in critical life situations. For purposes of improving the safeguarding of the rights of women who have been victimized and of witnesses, an addition was made to article 61 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in 2002 according to which a witness is given the right to have a protector.

With regard to sexual harassment, one may note that current law, unfortunately, does not contain provisions that directly govern that issue. That is because this phenomenon, as a violation of women's rights, was "disclosed" to the public of Kyrgyzstan only comparatively recently, which is why the concept of "sexual harassment" does not have a clear-cut legal definition. National law, however, has specific provisions, such as article 131 of the Criminal Code "Coercion to commit a sexual act", the legal analysis of which indicates the possibility of its application in cases of sexual harassment coupled with dangerous violence that had serious consequences.

Analysis of national law in terms of the regulation of relations arising in connection with trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation shows that, until recently, the Criminal Code merely had a provision on liability for recruiting people for purposes of sexual or other exploitation, committed through deceit (article 124 of the Criminal Code). But the Kyrgyzstan law on the introduction of additions and amendments in specific statutes of the Kyrgyz Republic (2003) introduces amendments and additions to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure that involve liability for trafficking in persons and for arranging illegal migration. Specifically, article 124 "Trafficking in persons" in the new version includes criminal liability for recruiting, transporting, concealing, receiving, transferring or selling a person or for any other illegal transaction, with or without his consent, that is performed via coercion, fraud, deceit or kidnapping for the purpose of exploitation or deriving a benefit. Exploitation is taken to mean involving someone in a criminal activity; coercing an individual into prostitution or other forms of sexual activity, forced labour or services, slavery, or adoption (as son or daughter) for commercial purposes; or use in armed conflicts. A positive factor in terms of the criminal-law prevention

of this crime is the stiffer penalty for trafficking in persons, the liability for which, with aggravating circumstances, can be as much as 20 years of incarceration and confiscation of property. Needed additions were also inserted into Chapter 22 of the Criminal Code. They consist of the arrangement of illegal migration by means of providing vehicles or forged documents or living quarters or other facilities, as well as the provision of other services to citizens for the illegal entry into, on foot or by vehicle, and travel in the Kyrgyz Republic. Thus, this article covers the commercial activities of marriage bureaus and employment agencies if such activities are linked to illegal migration. In that connection, certain articles of the Kyrgyz Republic Code of Administrative Liability were also amended and added to.

This law does not incorporate suggestions by representatives of the Ministry of Justice of the General Prosecutor's Office on the legislative consolidation of a norm for freeing human-trafficking victims of criminal responsibility for the commission of crimes accompanying the trafficking, specifically, the illegal crossing of the State border by that person and the use of false documents, if they make a voluntary statement to law-enforcement authorities. Thus, the victim of trafficking remains uninterested in cooperating with law-enforcement authorities and, quite the opposite, is placed in a situation in which he or she will make every effort to hide any information or material evidence of the commission of a crime. That is why it is apparently rather difficult to hope for a reduction of the latency of crime in the trafficking of women for purposes of sexual exploitation.

Gender equality is also supported by a whole array of civil, economic and political rights consolidated in relevant normative and legislative instruments. Personal non-property rights and intangible benefits, as well as the property rights of the individual, are protected by the Civil Code of the Kyrgyz Republic. They are presented in section I "General provisions" of Chapter 2 "Origin of civil rights and duties. Exercise and protection of civil rights" and in section II "Right of ownership and other proprietary rights" of Chapter 13 "Right of joint ownership". They include compensation for psychological damage (article 16), protection of personal non-property rights and intangible benefits (article 17), protection of honor, dignity and business reputation (article 18), right to protection of privacy (article 20), common property of spouses (article 275), and ownership of peasant household (homestead) farm (article 276).

The new Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, adopted in 2003, is based on the principle of gender equality in family relations (article 3) and is rather more progressive than the Soviet code on marriage and the family that was in place before. For example, for purposes of protecting health and creating a full-fledged healthy family, a new provision was incorporated that calls for a medical examination for those entering into marriage (article 16 of the Family Code). Also, as one way of protecting women's rights, the new law has a provision restricting the right of a man to request dissolution of a marriage. Thus, according to article 18 of the Family Code, a man "shall not have the right, without the consent of his wife, to initiate proceedings to dissolve the marriage during the wife's pregnancy or for one year after the birth of a child". It should be noted that a special feature of the new family law is its regulation of a concept such as domestic labour (Ch. 8 of the Family Code), which is taken to mean an independent type of labour activity geared to meeting the family's needs. This innovation represents a very important achievement, given that, before, domestic labour was a form of discrimination against women. This law fortifies the notion that spouses bear equal responsibility with

regard to domestic labour (para. 4, article 32 of the Family Code), and gender discrimination by one spouse against the other is prohibited (para. 5, article 32 of the Family Code). Consolidated for the first time ever are the contractual conditions attending the property of spouses (Ch.9), which, to some extent, are geared to protecting the property rights of women. The rules for contracting a marriage (article 44) are specified, as are the content of the marriage contract (article 45) and the amendment and dissolution of the contract (article 46), as well as the annulment of the marriage contract (article 47). All in all, the marriage contract will make it possible for women to assemble their own property and, in the event of the dissolution of the marriage, keep it for themselves.

In 2003, gender-related amendments consisting of the following were also incorporated into the Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- the chapter "Labour of women" was renamed "Special features of the labour of women and other persons with family responsibilities", and it specifies guarantees both for working women and for both parents;
- articles 97 and 100 permit pregnant women to be hired for night work and overtime if such work is not medically prohibited;
- article 306 allows pregnant women and women with children under the age of 3 to be sent on business trips, hired for overtime work and work at night, on weekends and on nonworking holidays, if such work is not medically prohibited.

The adoption in 2000 of the Kyrgyz Republic law on the reproductive rights of citizens was an indisputable achievement in the protection of reproductive health. This law established State guarantees to protect the reproductive health of citizens and created a legal basis for obtaining family planning services and for the unfettered exercise of one's reproductive rights. The law covers virtually all reproductive rights of citizens and defines the guarantees for their implementation. The problem of sexual rights, however, is not clearly defined in this law and requires additional study.

It should also be noted that, in 2002, for purposes of protecting the rights of refugees, the Kyrgyz Republic law on refugees was adopted, which defines the legal status of refugees and consolidates the rights and duties of individuals who have petitioned for recognition as refugees, the guarantees of the rights of refugees, etc. An important aspect is the status consolidated in article 15, which gives refugees the right to acquire Kyrgyz Republic citizenship. In fulfilling the commitments it has assumed, the Kyrgyz Republic is giving all refugees equal legal status without any differences in terms of race, sex, religion or country of origin. In that same year, the Kyrgyz Republic ombudsman (Akyykatchy) law was adopted. The creation of that independent agency makes it possible to monitor the observance of the constitutional rights and freedoms of women effectively.

In affirming its policy of adhering to democratic reforms, Kyrgyzstan took a series of organizational steps to implement constitutional provisions in the society. That was facilitated by Presidential decrees on measures to increase the effectiveness with which basic human and civil rights and freedoms in the Kyrgyz Republic are safeguarded (14 January 2001), on the National Programme "Human Rights" for the period 2002–2010 (2 January 2002) and on measures to implement the national

concept titled "Kyrgyzstan — A country of human rights" (15 May 2003). For example, the National Programme "Human Rights" calls for doing the following:

- determining the principal lines of development of legislative practice and the practical application of law in Kyrgyzstan which will promote the implementation of human rights, the creation of an integrated uniform system for their protection and the harmonization of national legislation in the area of human rights with international standards;
- coordinating closely the internal (national) system of human rights protection with systems of international law;
- promoting the establishment and development of forms of legal education in order that every citizen will be aware of his/her rights and freedoms and be able to exercise and protect them;
- identifying the most vulnerable groups of the population, the protection of whose rights must be guaranteed by the State, and determining ways of optimizing performance in this area.

The Presidential decree on measures to combat the illegal export and trafficking in persons in the Kyrgyz Republic (25 February 2003) also approved the national programme of measures to combat the illegal export and trafficking in persons in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2002–2005, which calls for a complex of measures to stop human rights violations.

Other important documents aimed at implementing the constitutional principle of equal access to State and municipal service, as well as provisions of the Kyrgyz Republic law on State guarantees to safeguard gender equality, were the Presidential decrees on further improvement of personnel policy in terms of attracting women leaders to the State administration of the Kyrgyz Republic (27 August 2002) and on approval of the Regulation on the Commission on Gender Analysis of Normative and Legislative Instruments under the Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family, and Gender Development under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic (15 February 2004).

SECTION II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC.

1. Women's rights

Kyrgyzstan at present is faced with the task of reforming society politically and creating new institutions and structures called upon to ensure freedom and democracy, human rights, and the dignity of the individual. For a country in which a totalitarian regime existed for more than 70 years, those are problems of unprecedented difficulty that require not only institutional reforms, but also the socio-psychological, ideological, and moral re-orientation of society. Today, every member of society (whether man or woman) is entitled to demand that the State fulfill the international obligations it has assumed, and for those purposes he/she can use both national mechanisms for protecting his/her rights and can appeal to international judicial and non-judicial agencies.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Human Rights Commission reporting to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic has been operating since 1997, as have the Human Rights Commission and the Committee on Education, Women, the Family and Youth in the parliament. At present, agencies involved with problems of the family, women and children are operating on all levels of administration. A division for the protection of women's rights has also been created within the institution of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic.

It should be noted that nongovernmental human-rights organizations play an important role in the system for protecting human rights. A change in the very nature of human-rights violations is intensifying the activities of human-rights organizations in areas in which massive violations of human rights may be observed. Specifically, such violations are nationally (or ethnically) based human-rights violations; violations of the norms of international humanitarian law with regard to civilians in war zones; violations of the rights of refugees and migrants and the rights of military service personnel; the social rights of citizens in a market economy; and abuse in the penal system.

Operating in the country at present are upwards of 900 nongovernmental organizations whose activities are linked in one form or other to protecting human rights and informing and educating the citizenry of their rights and freedoms under the country's Constitution and under international human-rights documents. Such a surge in civil initiative is due by and large to the recent elevation of the role of the civil society in the protection of human rights.

The observance of women's rights remains an important part of the overall democratic process that is taking place in Kyrgyzstan, which has declared itself a country of human rights; in that context, women's rights are viewed through the prism of human rights and are protected by the country's Constitution and national law. Taken as a whole, all the national human-rights institutions are an important component in the observance of human rights, because it is they who, along with other institutions of civil society, track compliance with international norms within the country. At the same time, nongovernmental organizations do not receive proper State support, and they have neither solid legislative status nor a good economic base.

Underlining the commitment of Kyrgyzstan to observe fundamental human rights, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic signed a decree on 14 January 2001 on measures to increase the effectiveness with which basic human and civil rights and freedoms in the Kyrgyz Republic are safeguarded. It notes that 2001 is regarded as a new stage in the implementation of State policy in the Kyrgyz Republic that aims to increase the effectiveness with which basic human rights and freedoms guaranteed under the country's Constitution are safeguarded. In order to ensure the implementation of the tasks referred to and on the basis of the 6 February 2001 Presidential decree on measures to improve surveillance by the prosecution branch and to strengthen further the rule of law in the Kyrgyz Republic, special departments for supervising the observance of human rights and freedoms were created in the Republic's prosecution system. This allowed the prosecutorial authorities to pay greater attention to achieving gender equality and to the problem of violence against women, particularly within the family.

One priority area of the legislative policy of State authorities for 2001–2002 is the development and adoption of normative and legislative instruments that call for the promotion and development of the effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and freedoms that derive from the dignity inherent in the individual. Also geared to advancing women's rights is the National Programme "Human Rights", which was approved by the Presidential decree of 2 January 2002 and which includes the following:

- determination of the main directions to be taken in the development of lawmaking and law-enforcement practices in Kyrgyzstan that facilitate the implementation of human rights; creation of a unified, integrated system for protecting them; and the bringing of national human-rights law into conformance with international standards;
- close coordination of the intra-State (national) system for protection of human rights with systems of international law.
- assistance in the establishment and development of forms of legal education that determine the knowledge each citizen has of his or her rights and freedoms and the ability to make use of them and protect them.
- identification of the most vulnerable groups in the population, the protection of whose rights the State must provide, and determination of ways of optimizing steps taken in that area.¹

In order to promptly inform the country's populace of all important measures for safeguarding human rights and freedoms in the country, the progress made in the implementation of measures of the National Programme "Human Rights" is constantly covered in the mass media, specifically, by the National Television and Radio Corporation through broadcasts from the Ala-Too Information and Analysis Centre, the Zamana Studio and the Kabarlar Artistic Association. The Zamana Studio, for example, has prepared several major broadcasts under the rubric "Kyrgyzstan — Country of Human Rights", and issues involving the protection of human rights, particularly women's rights, are also covered in the television programme "Ak Bosogo", which airs twice a month. It should be noted in particular that

¹ National Programme "Human Rights" for the period 2002–2010 // Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic: Status and legal field. Collection of documents. Bishkek, 2002, pp. 16–52.

investigative reporting based on complaints submitted by the television viewers is conducted, and the results of the investigations are then reported in the television broadcasts. At present, in order to improve aspects of the education of the country's populace in human rights, the National Television and Radio Corporation of the Kyrgyz Republic, together with the office of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, has begun to release a series of television broadcasts in the Kyrgyz language that include information on the implementation of the economic, social and cultural rights of the individual in Kyrgyzstan.

At the same time, barriers such as the growth of poverty and unemployment, the low level of social security, reduced participation in decision-making and redistribution of property and the high incidence of disease are springing up on the path of women to equal rights and opportunities with men. In addition, women are frequently ill informed about their rights, and stereotypes and traditions produced by the patriarchal segment of society, which manifest themselves primarily in the attachment of the traditional gender roles in society and the family to women, as well as in the social acceptance of such a state of affairs as natural and not evoking any sense of a lack of fairness, prevail in the society. Not taken into account is the fact that woman and men have different roles, different access to benefits and resources, different responsibilities, and, accordingly, unequal opportunities to exercise their rights, as a result of which State policies and programs affect them in completely different ways. In addition, the statutes in place in the Republic need to be improved in terms of an expansion of legal institutions and judicial and executive regulation. Thus, examining the observance of human rights from gender standpoints reveals that, although sexual discrimination is virtually nonexistent on a formal level in Kyrgyzstan and the laws are based on the principle of equal rights, hidden discrimination against women does, in fact, take place.

2. Participation of women in the work of policy-making bodies and in the decision-making process

The experience garnered by various countries shows that incorporating women in high-level State structures is a long and complex process. In that context, when estimating the positive results of the previous "Ayalzat" national programme for the advancement of women, one should note that that programme made it possible to also identify a number of organizational, legal and institutional obstacles. It served as the basis for developing subsequent specific measures that were aimed at increasing the percentage of women at the decision-making level and that were reflected in the new National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2002–2006. That is why the main goal of the State policy for the advancement of women is at present to ensure their full and equitable participation in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

A survey of the existing percentages of women and men at all levels of authority shows that manifestations of a gender imbalance are observed in all areas of activity identified by the CDF/NSPA as priority areas — state administration, social welfare — and in the real sector of the economy. Analysis of the distribution of State employees by sex in executive-branch structures as of 1 October 2003 reveals that women accounted for 37.8% of such workers at the Republic level, and men, 62.2%; at the oblast and rayon (district) levels, the figures were 28.5% and 71.5%, respectively. Women were

concentrated primarily at the level of ordinary specialists and technicians, where they accounted for 73.5%.

In Republic-level positions approved by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, of 102 managers, only nine were women. Two women served as ministers, and the positions of oblast governor and city mayor had one woman each. A woman also heads the Constitutional Court of the Kyrgyz Republic. For the Republic as a whole, 29% of management positions in 2002 were filled by women; but in individual oblasts of the country, the participation of women in the decision-making process was even more limited. For example, the figure stood at 19.3% in the Batken Oblast and at 13.6% in the Naryn Oblast. In terms of sector, the figure remains extremely low in sectors such as agriculture and forest management, where women occupy only about 16.0% of management positions.

A substantial contribution to the advancement of gender principles in the system of State service was made by the August 2002 Presidential decree on further improvement of personnel policy in terms of attracting women leaders to the State administration of the Kyrgyz Republic. As a result of that decree, a number of women leaders were named to various levels of state administration agencies. To date, women have been appointed to the position of deputy governor in six oblasts; 10 women occupy vice-mayor posts; 40 women are deputy administrators of State rayons; and seven women hold deputy minister posts.

It should be noted that career advancement in some State structures is often governed by certain gender stereotypes that make it impossible for women to do the work of a manager as a result of the "special nature" of that work. As a result of that policy, women staff members in internal affairs agencies, for example, make up, on the whole, a relatively small category, but one that is professionally "segregated": they are used primarily to staff personnel, information and passport services; juvenile affairs offices; secretariats; and material-and-financial support services. But despite the stereotypes that have come about, definite progress is being noted in the advancement of women in powerful ministries. Specifically, the Personnel Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has begun a gender audit and a gender analysis of staff turnover, and educational institutions of the Ministry have provided conditions for equitable admissions for study for individuals of both sexes. Women have also been provided with equitable conditions for occupational training, including training abroad. For example, several women from Kyrgyzstan have undergone Interpol training in Hungary and Turkey.

The distribution of women in the State administration system is illustrated in diagrams 1 and 2. For example, women account for only 13.6% of those working in the Ministry of Ecology and Emergency Situations, and a considerable percentage of them hold primarily mid-level management posts. The largest percentage of women managers (66%) are in the Department of Ecology and Natural Resource Management. But key positions are given to men, which is rationalized by the specific nature of the activities of the ministry — response to emergency situations, industrial accidents, etc.

A total of 68 women work on the central staff and in the overseas offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 36 of whom are diplomats and 32 of whom are administrative and technical personnel. Women account for upwards of 10% of the management posts, which includes the deputy minister

position. Two women hold the rank of ambassador — the General Consul of the Krygyz Republic in Istanbul, and the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UN in Geneva.

Analysis of the makeup of the staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare shows that women accounted for 66.7% of those employed in the Ministry in 2003, and five of those women did management work on the central staff, including one who held the position of minister; 51 women worked in the oblast and rayon structures. Women accounted for 56.9% of department and sector heads and 75% of specialists.

In the legislative branch, an imbalance is also observed in terms of the percentage of women in the country's parliament. Of 105 deputies, only seven are women. In oblast and rayon (or municipal) *keneshes* (councils), the percentage does not exceed 12–13%; in rural *keneshes*, 16%. Although existing election law does not restrict the right of women to participate in the election process, women, as a rule, do not have the means necessary for participating in elections or the skills or know-how to conduct an election campaign on a par with men.

As can be seen from the above, the percentage of women at decision-making levels throughout the executive and legislative branches remains incommensurate with the contribution and role of women in modern society. The existing barriers are due to the fact that women, as a rule, do not have the election know-how and often do not have the assets or means to participate in elections; moreover, there is no gender-sensitive law providing equal opportunities for participating in administration.

For that reason, there is a need for gender training of all officials responsible for staff policy in the State administration system, as well as the development of women-supporting mechanisms that are more efficient and that would enable women to equalize their opportunities both in election processes and in the system of State service. For example, the creation of rayons in which only women could be elected.

Work in that area is being done by the Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development. In May 2003, together with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Conrad Adenauer Fund, the Secretariat held an international conference called "Strategy for Ensuring Equality of the Sexes in Politics", at which an affirmative action policy aimed at ensuring equal representation of the sexes in social development processes was discussed.

The Secretariat has also been participating since March 2004 in the implementation of the project "Advancement of Gender Equality in Politics", which is supported by the United National Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). Created within the framework of the project was the Coordinating Committee, which, through cooperation with State structures, the nongovernmental sector and international organizations, acts to implement developed strategies for achieving gender equality in politics. The project provides for organizing intensive training sessions on leadership and on conducting political campaigns.

3. Women's education

Children and adolescents 19 or under make up 44% of the country's population, which is why education is regarded in the Kyrgyz Republic as a strategic institution for ensuring the long-term development of the society, and decisions are systematically being made on the highest level to strengthen educational structures and to promote the education of children from poor families.

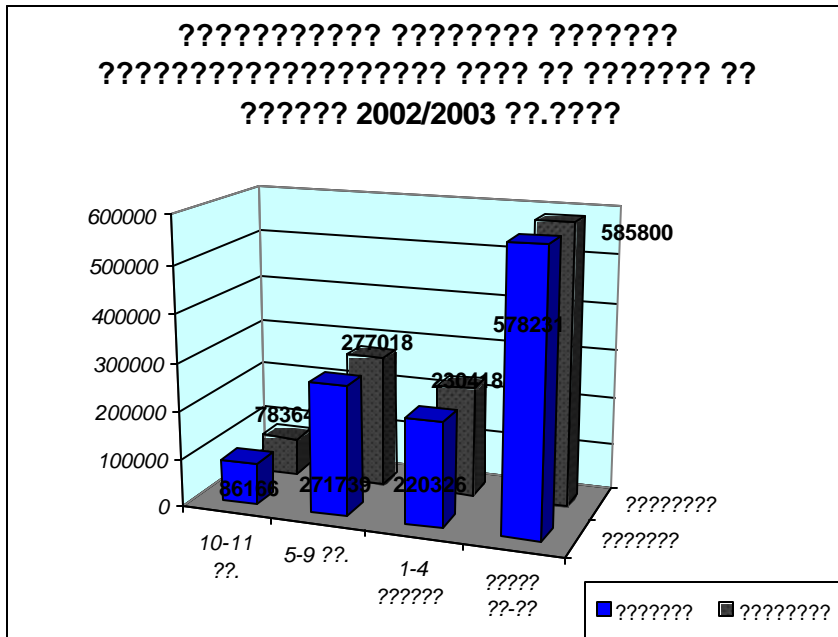
In the last three years alone, a whole array of project documents and programmes have been adopted that have formulated strategic "millennium goals", specifically, to eliminate the gap between boys and girls in primary and secondary schools by 2005 and to achieve equality between men and women at all levels of education by 2015. Among such programmes, one should note the CDF; the NSPA; the national programmes "Araket", "Zhany Muun — New Generation" and "Zhetkinchek — Access to Education"; and the programmes "Development of Young Children", "The Rural School" and "Plan of Action for Education for All."

Work is continuing in the context of the implementation of those State programmes of the Ministry of Education to increase the number of children in primary and secondary schools being trained. On average, the level of enrollment in primary schools is remaining steady, and the ratio of boys to girls enrolled in primary schools is staying roughly the same.

The quantitative indicators for girls and boys studying in general-education day schools generally reflect the natural proportions of the sexes in given age categories and account for 1,164,031 individuals, of whom 49.7% are girls and 50.3%, boys.

The net ratios for boys and girls are 97.5% and 95.6%, respectively, for children being schooled at the primary-education level and 85.4% for boys and 88% for girls at the secondary-education level. All in all, the situation in terms of the education of women remains stable, and education levels for women are, as before, a little higher than they are for men. Girls predominate among secondary-school graduates (ranging from 52.7% to 60.8%) depending on the region, and the percentage of women and girls among graduates of the higher educational institutions of the Republic is also higher. Thus, despite Despite [sic] the economic problems and social costs attending the transition to a market economy, State measures of support have managed to preserve a high level of access to primary and secondary education for children and specifically for girls.

Histogram 1 "Ratios of pupils of general-education day schools by grade at the commencement of the 2002/2003 school year"



[Key to histogram:

Title at top: Ratios of pupils of general-education day schools by grade at the commencement of the 2002/2003 school year.

Along x-axis, left to right: grades 10, 11; grades 5–9; grades 1–4; all students.

To right of bars, top to bottom: boys; girls.

Lower right: girls [blue square], boys [red]

An important subsequent step for achieving gender equality is an additional legal mechanism for the social advancement of girls, which expands for [sic] access to higher professional education. The mechanism consists of the incorporation of Republic-wide testing and State education grants into the educational system in 2003. A total of 63.1% of girls and 36.9% of boys entered the country's higher educational institutions on the basis of the results of the Republic-wide test in 2003. Among the 200 top graduates with the highest scores, 104 were girls and 96 were boys. The girls also lead among those receiving Presidential scholarships under the "Skilled staff for the 21st century" educational programme (1,337 girls versus 642 boys).

Considerable attention is also being devoted to vocational training, the system for which includes the training and retraining of specialists in 125 professions. New specialties have been added to the traditional list of skills — farm manager, specialist in traditional crafts, etc. At the same time, it should be noted that the specialties proposed for women continue to strengthen gender stereotypes in vocational activities.

In 2003, the number of students in the country's higher educational institutions was 199,124, of which 107,480 were girls and 91,644, boys. With the overall predominance of women in higher and secondary-specialized occupational training, sector specialization nevertheless saw substantial disproportions that can be described in terms of a structure that reproduces the traditional occupational segregation of women. Specifically, women have an absolute lead in the following sector specializations:

- at the level of secondary-specialized training — medicine, education, culture and the arts;
- at the level of training in higher educational institutions — education, services, culture and the arts, and the humanities.

Although today's Kyrgyzstan girls are free to choose their professions and are already mastering such specialties as business and management, the natural sciences, etc., technical specialties, construction and the fishing industry in large part still remain the prerogative of men. A similar gender disproportion is also noted in the distribution of graduates across the sectors of science. Overall, women constitute a majority among secondary-school teachers, at 77.7%; but among instructors at secondary-specialized schools and higher educational institutions, their percentages are somewhat smaller, at 58.9% and 47.6%, respectively.

Owing to the constructive partnership between State structures, on the one hand, and the nongovernmental sector and international organizations and development agencies, on the other, a broad network has evolved in the country for training adults at facilities such as specially created oblast adult training centres. In the context of these training programs, special projects are being implemented whose target group consists of different categories of women, including women from the most vulnerable segments of the population — single mothers, unemployed women, migrant women, retired women, etc. The training itself is geared to the eradication of functional illiteracy, to the political and economic advancement of women and to personal and civic growth. Thus, mechanisms are being formed that enable girls and women to have access to continuing education.

Specialized departments of gender theory on the law faculty of the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavonic University, at Osh State University, and at Osh Technological University are effectively continuing their work in the form of methodological, science, and information centres for other higher educational institutions. The formation of gender-oriented and special education for women in the context of the informal training of adults is under way in partnership with the nongovernmental sector (11 adult training centres are open in seven oblasts). As a result of the work done, gender strategy has become the basis for a new intradepartmental strategy of the Ministry of Education and has laid the foundation for administrative reform, as a result of which female professional personnel have been able to move up the career ladder. At present, systematic consideration of the topic is helping to generally elevate gender sensitivity and bring about gender-oriented management at the ministry level.

Overall, despite the successes and the positive trends, a multitude of problems remain in the education system. As a result of the deepening social stratification, the universal, free education guaranteed by law in the post-Soviet period is becoming increasingly less accessible to all segments of the populace, given the commercialization of educational services and the decline in value of education.

In practical terms, that has been reflected in the dramatic, 70% reduction in the number of pre-school facilities, in the increased number of students in the classroom and in groups in kindergartens and in the emergence of categories of children under the age of 17 who have never attended pre-school facilities or schools. The situation in that regard is particularly dire in remote rural areas of the Republic. Unfortunately, the phenomenon of dropouts has appeared; in the 2002/2003 school year, for example, statistics revealed 527 girls and 1,190 boys no longer in school.

As a rule, children who do not go to school live in difficult economic conditions and have been forced to earn a living for themselves and their family since an early age. Many children who quit school are the children of migrant families, and they travel with their parents for long periods of time or seasonally in search of work. That also applies to families and groups of the chronically poor, whose lists of wants include key social benefits — access to education and to health care. Generally speaking, boys who are engaged in heavy work on the family farm, who take up "market" occupations, and who work for hire in agriculture are preponderant among children not in school. In the future, if such gender-specific features remain, one can predict a considerable gap in the education levels of rural boys and girls in favor of the latter and an overall decline in the cultural and educational level of future generations of rural students.

Such gender inequality on the labour market is behind the lower demand for professionally trained cadres of women than for professional men. Specifically, according to the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, upon completion of higher educational institutions, 58.9% of women and 41.1% of men find themselves not in demand in their specialties, a fact that is responsible for the poorer prospects girls face in developing an active professional career.

A trend is emerging in which rural youth are having difficulty gaining access to high-quality education as a result of the poor quality of teaching in rural schools. The quality of teaching and the "weight" of a diploma from peripheral higher educational institutions are also not equal. For that reason, if the current trends attending the development of education continue, most of the populace living in rural areas is at risk of being excluded from the competition for high-quality, prestigious professional education; for the eradication of functional illiteracy and for well-paying positions on the labour market.

Another problem that has become apparent in the course of the implementation of State gender strategies is that schools remain the most important socializing institution for girls and boys, particularly in rural areas. Without countrywide special gender training of teachers in general-education schools, however, and without new textbooks that have gone through gender analysis, the schools will, as before, replicate and strengthen gender stereotypes.

The changes occurring in education are fast-moving, and in order to support the gender policies that have been developed, it is crucial that the changes be assessed systematically and that optimal strategies be generated for State policy on the basis of the changes. That condition, in turn, requires that the most important indicators be identified. But for now, unfortunately, a number of extremely important issues associated with regional specifics and the available means of the families of girls and boys who are beyond the reach of education and training remain beyond the scope of training, as do the indicators

of demand for graduates of the higher educational institutions based on their sector specialization, the ratio of educational institutions with different forms of ownership and the ratio of students in them by sex, etc.

4. Women's health

The principal results of the reforms of the Kyrgyz Republic's health care over the period just past are as follows: the medical care system network has been restructured; the State pharmaceutical availability policy has been developed; mandatory medical insurance and the family-medicine institution have been introduced; new methods of funding that use information technologies have been approved and introduced; preparations have been made for the final division of the health-care sector into "buyer" and "supplier" of medical services on the basis of market relations; medical facilities have been streamlined by eliminating redundant, ineffective facilities and facilities whose equipment does not meet today's requirements; and the medical community and the populace of the Republic took an active part in the reform process. The reforms are geared to improving public health by increasing the accessibility of quality medical care, creating the conditions for a healthy lifestyle and achieving the efficient and fair use of resources.

At present, health care is regulated by the laws on the prevention of AIDS (1996), on the reproductive rights of citizens (2000), and on the prevention of iodine deficiency disorders (2000). A number of national programmes are in place, such as the national "Manas" programme for reforming health care, which involves a 10-year (1996–2006) developmental strategy; the National Immunoprophylaxis Programme (2001–2005); the national programmes "Zhan Ene for 2003–2006" and "Mental Health of the Population of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2001–2010"; the State programme for the prevention of AIDS and infections transmitted sexually and by needle in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2001–2005, etc.

Medical care is provided to the women of the Republic by a network of treatment-and-prevention facilities: from primary care on an outpatient basis to specialized hospital care. The introduction of mandatory medical insurance in the country is a factor that increases the public's access to medical care. By 2002, some 83.7% of the population was already covered by insurance, which creates an environment in which categories of people from vulnerable segments of the populace are more able to seek medical services. Based on the Programme of State Guarantees to Provide Citizens with Accessible, Free Basic Medical Care, women are receiving free emergency-care medical services both in the hospital—those coming in for childbirth or for a pregnancy-related pathology—and on an outpatient basis—all pregnant women. Overall, 85% of women get prenatal care.

At present, health-care sector services are provided by staff at more than 87 family-medicine centres represented by 800 family-physician groups and 871 medical assistant-obstetrician stations.

Sizable gains have been achieved in the short period of time since 2000 as a result of the implementation of the State programmes for reforming the sector. For example, the integration of the family-planning and social-welfare service into medical care has made it possible to work more

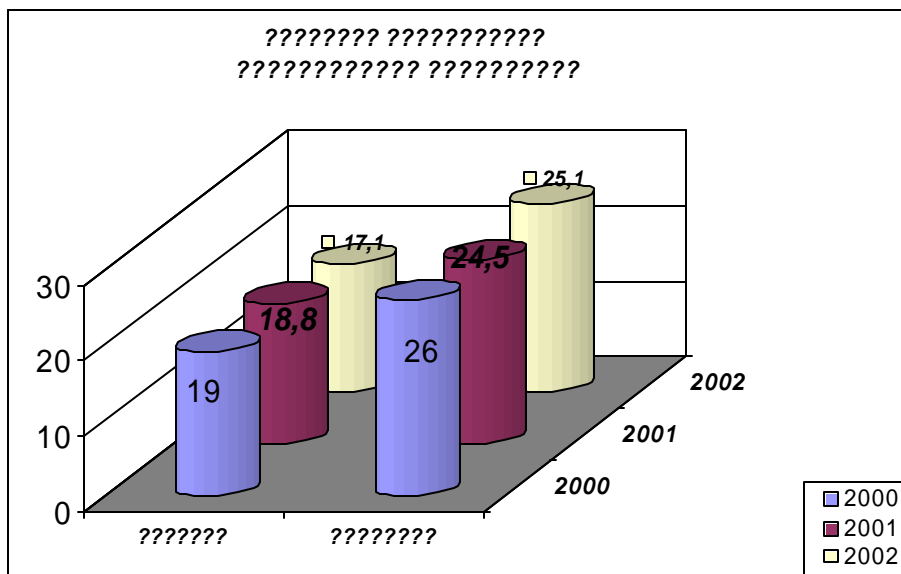
efficiently with the public and to effect a downward trend in abortions while developing other forms of family planning. As a result, in 2002, the total coverage of women with contraceptive agents was 26.6 per 100 fertile women, broken down as follows:

- 51.8% of women employ intrauterine contraceptives;
- 18.8%, hormonal contraceptives;
- 29.4%, other contraceptive agents.

Another example consists of the activities in programmes for the survival, development, and protection of mother and child, which include components of maternal and neonatal care, early childhood survival, and early childhood growth and development; such activities are responsible for positive changes in the indicators that are most sensitive to the quality of medical services and to the socio-economic living conditions of the public — primarily, child and infant mortality.

The level of infant mortality for children under the age of 1 year per 1,000 live births was 21.2%, based on a figure of 17.1% for girls and 25.1% for boys. Over the period of 1998–2002, infant mortality declined by 19%, which was due to a whole array of problems that are being addressed at present. Specifically, as a result of the enhancement of the clinical skills and knowledge of 1,864 medical workers — neonatologists, pediatricians, children's resuscitation experts, obstetrician–gynaecologists, and mid-level medical workers — management of the basic causes of infant mortality has been improved. In the near future, Kyrgyzstan, in keeping with WHO recommendations, will move to world standards in terms of live-births criteria.

Histogram 2. Dynamics of infant mortality



[Key:

Title: Dynamics of infant mortality

Below: (left) girls (right) boys]

Managing infection with controlled specific prophylaxis agents is an example of the interaction between State health care and the international organizations WB, WHO, and UNICEF; the Netherlands Red Cross; and the governments of Japan and Denmark, as result of which a preventive immunization campaign with 95–98% coverage was organized and an overall downward trend has been achieved in morbidity and mortality. In that area, the WHO Global Programme was implemented to eradicate poliomyelitis, and Kyrgyzstan achieved the status of a poliomyelitis-free country. No neonatal tetanus has been recorded in the republic, and the strategy to eliminate measles and to prevent congenital rubella syndrome is being successfully implemented. In the context of a programme involving the integrated management of childhood diseases, the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic, in partnership with USAID, is implementing a complex of measures in two rayons of Jalal-Abad Oblast and, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, is preparing to implement a project called "Early childhood development at the community level" in 12 rayons of the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Naryn oblasts.

Important positive changes have been effected in the prevention of iron- and iodine-deficiency disorders, as well as tuberculosis. The Ministry of Health has developed and submitted for approval to the government a national programme for the prevention of iron-deficiency anemia and vitamin A deficiency among women and children. In the context of that project, seven production enterprises have now been set up to produce 10 sets of equipment to enrich flour with the trace element of iron. As a result of the introduction of the two-stage programme "Controlling tuberculosis" in the Republic, the morbidity index has dropped to 123.2 per 100,000 population in 2003 from 126.3, and the mortality index, to 11.8 from 13.8. At present, the Secretariat is initiating a study called "Gender analysis of tuberculosis morbidity".

Intensive work involving the dissemination of informational and educational materials, the showing of taped commercials, and counselling is under way to prevent HIV/AIDS among youth, commercial sex workers, and other individuals who belong to that risk group. For HIV/AIDS examinations and psycho-social counselling, nine anonymous offices have been set up in the Republic, in all the oblast centres and in the city of Bishkek, and an immunoblot laboratory has been outfitted and is functioning. In 2003, anonymous examinations and counselling sessions were conducted with 1,638 men and women.

Work is continuing in the "Zhan-ene" programme, which is based on principles that enhance the effectiveness of perinatal care and whose aim is to improve the reproductive health of girls and women of all age groups by lowering overall morbidity and infant and maternal mortality, reducing the number of abortions and introducing modern family-planning methods.

At the same time, public health is dependent on many socio-economic factors that cannot be addressed by the ministry alone. The intensification of the social stratification of society and the large percentage of categories of the populace living near the poverty line or in poverty are responsible for poorer nutrition, poorer working and recreation conditions for men and women and, consequently, a decline in overall health indices. Today, the level and list of socially significant diseases — tuberculosis, iodine deficiency, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, drug addiction, and alcoholism — are growing dramatically. The annual increase in the number of individuals identified with HIV is more than 100 for

the second year already (it was 160 in 2002, and 132 in 2003). In all, 494 HIV-infected individuals were recorded in the country as of the beginning of 2004, with 44 of them being women, and the percentage of women with a first-time diagnosis of alcohol dependence is steadily growing; it was 13.8% in 2002. The morbidity index for malaria also rose, by 90.7-fold, particularly in the southern oblasts of the country. Despite the multitude of programmes being implemented, certain categories of the populace have fallen between the cracks in the health-care system; specifically, there are no programmes to protect the health of elderly women.

Despite certain stabilization phenomena and the gains made in reducing maternal and child mortality, the average indicators remain high. For example, the level of maternal mortality exceeds the average European rates by 2.5-fold and amounts to 53.5 per 100,000 live births, with almost 80% of cases of maternal mortality recorded among rural women. The deterioration in the health of women of childbearing age stands out rather clearly. Anaemia in pregnant women is reaching critical levels (70%) in certain regions, and diseases of the genitourinary system and gestoses are widespread. Those and other diseases that are the most widespread among women of childbearing age, as well as early pregnancy, a high birth rate and short period of time between births, are often the causes of maternal mortality.

Obviously, these and other alarming medical and social problems should be addressed together, by all the social institutions of the society, as determined in the CDF strategy. In reality, however, the fragmentation of the departmental activities and the limited funds released by each area from the State budget do not facilitate optimal cooperation in overcoming the problems. For example, in recent years, the level of funding for health care from the Republic budget has been cut back, which is very dangerous and could entail irreversible changes in the gene pool of the nation.

5. Women, the economy, and overcoming poverty

Kyrgyzstan is one of 13 pilot countries in which the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NSPA) is being implemented, which is a medium-term programme of action of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and is geared to the conduct of vigorous economic, social and political reforms that not only reduce poverty, but also ensure stable human development. That is why eliminating the gender imbalance in the economy is a priority for the development of the country and is an integral part of all programme documents aimed at expanding the economy.

In Kyrgyzstan, poverty has enveloped almost all major socio-demographic groups of the populace; but the most vulnerable segments of the populace have been hit especially hard. For the most part, categories such as women, youth, the elderly and the disabled are at considerable risk of poverty. At present, one of the objectives of the State's economic policy is to reduce poverty by half by 2010.

Despite the fact that many costs of the transition period, such as the decline in incomes, massive unemployment and the weakening of social security and social support, are widely shared and do not affect women alone, many economic problems have nonetheless had a considerable negative effect primarily on women. The deterioration in the situation of women during the transition period was due to such phenomena as the drop in the real value of social payouts and benefits, the reduced accessibility of

children's pre-school facilities and the difficulty experienced by single mothers and mothers with several children in finding suitable work. Many women left the work force during the period of economic decline, because employment was declining faster for women than for men. To some extent, that was due to the elimination of many jobs in the social sphere that were traditionally held by women, as well as to the difficulties business had in providing child-care benefits and the latest day-care facilities.

As a result, women, because of low pay (when they do find work), are engaged in a harsh struggle for survival and are more economically active than men; for example, they engage in shuttle commerce and they go into the informal sector, thereby bypassing conditions that provide labour safety and social welfare.

Analysis of the distribution of the economically active public and employed and unemployed citizens by sex in 2002 among the entire population shows that the level of employment for women is 47.4%, as opposed to 65.7% for men. Accordingly, the level of unemployment among women is 14.3%, which is 3.1% higher than for men. The level of unemployment for women was 4.5 points higher than in 2001; for men, it was 5 points higher.

Given that, unemployment is the main cause of the intensification of internal population migration, a considerable portion of which consists of women and children. The main flow of internal migrants goes from rural areas to large cities, which has a number of negative effects: an increase in the number of unemployed in cities who are not registered as such, reduced access of migrants to health-care services, marginalization of the populace and a worsening of the crime situation.

The gender imbalance remains between men and women in terms of employment status (see Table 1).

A relative majority of working women (36.5%) are hired workers at enterprises and in institutions and organizations, 15.9% of women are unpaid family workers, and 15.2% have a private ancillary plot. Only 1% of women are employers. An analysis of the population of workers at small agricultural enterprises indicates that men account for 70.7% of that population. Thus, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the jobs are held by men, i.e., the heads of small enterprises, the majority of which in the Republic are private enterprises, give preference to men when they hire. There is a substantial preponderance of men among the heads of peasant household (homestead) farms and farms held by individual entrepreneurs. The number of farms headed by women, according to the data of the 2002 agricultural census, is one-sixth that of the number of farms headed by men (359 versus 2,138) and one-seventh that for farms held by individual male entrepreneurs (30,254 versus 214,150).

Table 1. Women and men 15 years of age or older who are employed in the economy, based on employment status in 2002

	(%)	Proportion, in percent	
		Women	Men
Total	100	43.2	56.8
Working for hire – total	44.1	44.5	55.5
At enterprises, institutions, organizations	36.5	46.0	54.0
For individuals	7.5	38.5	61.5
Not working for hire - total	55.9	42.2	57.8
Employers	1.0	27.8	72.2
Self-employed	15.2	27.4	72.6
Members of production cooperatives	4.3	44.1	55.9
Unpaid family workers	15.9	64.8	35.2
Individuals with private ancillary plot	19.6	49.7	50.3

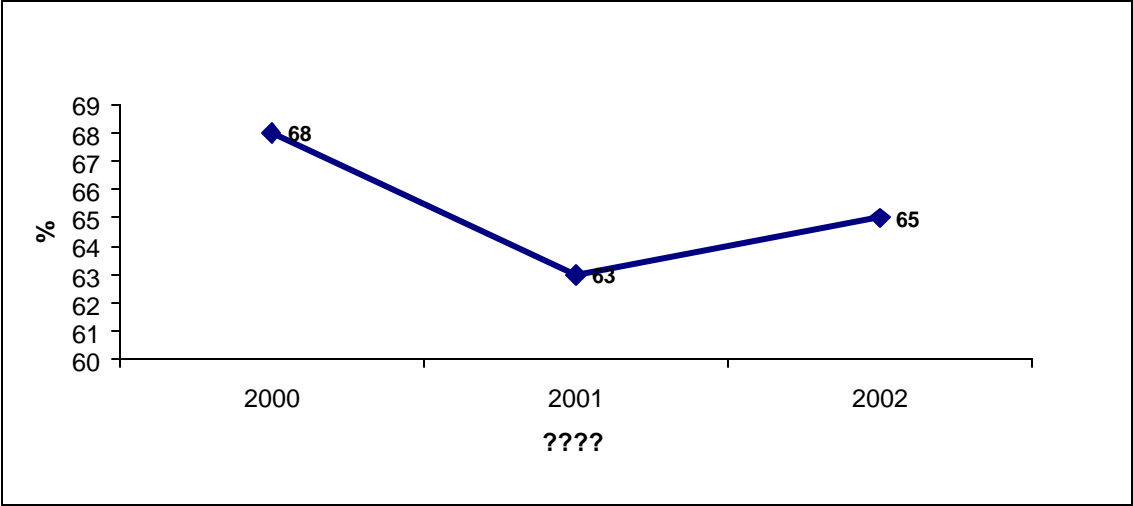
Despite the existence of various programmes aimed at equalizing the incomes of men and women, the imbalance between those incomes in 2002, as shown in Diagram 1, exists as before.

In 2002, the incomes of women amounted to 65% of the incomes of men. In virtually all types of activity (except for hotels and restaurants), wages for women were lower than those for men. The most substantial gap is observed in traditionally women's sectors: finance (by 28%), education (by 22%), and sales (by 21%), which speaks to the existence of vertical gender segregation, i.e., woman and men are employed in the same sphere of activity, but at different rungs on the job ladder.

At the same time, it must be noted that the measures undertaken by the State to ensure equal rights for men and women on the labour market have, by and large, made it possible to create the conditions and infrastructure necessary for women to adapt to the market economy and have preassigned a perspective in the formation of employment policy.

In keeping with the nationwide strategy, the aim of the economic policy of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is to provide stable economic growth in the interests of reducing poverty. All economic-regulation measures are geared to achieving high, stable rates of growth for the country's economy and to ensuring that all segments of the public, particularly its poorest segment, can enjoy the fruits of that growth. Given the features specific to poverty in Kyrgyzstan, the economic policy aims at promoting the expansion of agriculture and small and medium-sized enterprises in every possible way.

Diagram 1 Dynamics of relationship of average women's wages to men's wages, by year.



[Key: Years [under graph]]

An especially great deal of significance is attached to attracting domestic and foreign investment to the country's economy. The State is continuing to increase its efforts to provide a climate favorable to enterprise and investment and to facilitate the efficient functioning of the markets for labour, capital, land and natural resources in every way possible. A necessary component in equalizing the conditions for economic development for the poor is the continuation of support of the microfinance system.

The change in the level of poverty over the last several years is shown in Table 1, from which it can be seen that poverty in the country has been reduced considerably on the basis of all of the criteria given. For 2002 alone, the level of poverty was 3.2% lower than it was in 2001. The depth and acuteness of poverty were also lower; specifically, the depth of poverty in 2002 was 0.7 that of 2001, and the acuteness of poverty was 0.1 that of 2001. The actual rates of reduction of poverty markedly outstripped those that were called for in the CDF, which makes it possible to count on achieving the assigned goal for the reduction of poverty twice over by 2010.

In Kyrgyzstan, the national labour market and employment programme for the period up to 2005 (Emgek) was adopted in 2002. Its main goal is to ensure the efficient employment of the populace, including women; improve the quality and competitiveness of the work force; keep efficient jobs; promote the creation of additional jobs; develop staff potentials by improving the system for training, retraining, and advanced training; and ensure the mobility of the labour resources via regulation

of labour migration. The programme calls for forming and developing production forces, developing mechanisms for encouraging small enterprises and setting up business incubators and intends to integrate the informal sector into the informal economy.

**Table 2: Poverty in urban and rural areas
as a percentage**

Year	Poor				including the extremely poor				Depth of poverty ²	Acuteness of poverty ³
	Total	Turban	Urban	Rural	Total	Turban	Urban	Rural		
2000	52.0	43.9	56.4	17.8	12.7	20.5	17.7	7.7		
2001	47.6	41.2	51.0	13.5	9.6	15.6	13.9	5.6		
2002	44.4	39.6	47.0	13.8	12.0	14.7	13.2	5.6		

Aspects of gender equality in labour and of the acquisition of equal opportunities on the labour market are reflected in the Conceptual Framework for the Reform of Wages in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2002–2010, which was approved by Presidential decree No. 375 of 14 December 2002. The main goal of the framework is to reform wages. The reforms being made involve primarily restoring the incentive function of wages; creating conditions that enable every able-bodied person to maintain a decent standard of living through his own labour; and ensuring the reproductive, regulating, and social functions of wages. The framework has the important objective of prohibiting discrimination against workers on the basis of nationality, citizenship, sex, age, or religious beliefs in terms of wages, which are based on the principle of equal pay for equal work. The document specifies additional guarantees regarding labour remuneration for individual categories of workers, including minors, women with young children, and the disabled.

At present, work to provide employment for women includes job training and retraining for unemployed women for innovative professions; attraction of women involved in cottage work into self-employment; and the participation of women in for-pay public works. To enhance the competitiveness of women on the labour market, vocational training geared to help women learn new trades to meet labour-market needs has become more widespread in Kyrgyzstan. Some 3,800 of the total number of individuals sent for vocational training in 2002 were women, and 76% of those women were able to get a job in their newly learned specialty, which was in demand on the market. In order to take into account

2 Poverty depth (or deficit) is defined as the mean difference between the expenditures (or consumption) of poor households and the poverty line

3 Poverty acuteness (or quadratic deficit) is defined as the mean of the squares of the relative poverty deficits for a category of poor people

the interests and different needs of women of separate social groups, the vocational-training organizers use separate programmes, including programmes for disabled women, single mothers and mothers with several children, and women who have children who are minors or children who are disabled. As a rule, vocational training for those categories of citizens is geared to cottage work and self-employment. In 2000–2003, of the total number of those who applied to the Republic employment services, 13,700 women (50,1%) were directed to for-pay public works.

Under the Kyrgyz–German project known as "Labour market policy and employment", several projects are being implemented in which assistance and services are provided for single mothers and women who have lost their breadwinners, self-help groups are being created, skills are being upgraded and retraining carried out and unemployed women are being provided psychological support and are being assisted in finding work. One important component of this project is the creation of the "Jobseekers' Clubs", which are being created to provide assistance to the long-term unemployed (those who have been unemployed for at least one year) in acquiring job-hunting skills and to give them a practical opportunity to use the skills they have acquired and make additional services available that assist in job placement. Priority to participate in the club's work goes to the unemployed who are in particular need of social protection: youth, group-3 disabled and women who have suffered serious psychological trauma as a result of long-term unemployment.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Information and Consulting Centre is successfully continuing work to provide information services on training, advanced training, finding a job, and psychological support. The Centre has an Internet site that enables anyone to make use of the Centre's information. The site has information on all educational institutions of the Republic and on courses for advanced training, as well as articles and links. The site is constantly updated with new information on all areas of the Centre's activity. Since early 2003, some 3,800 individuals have used the Centre, and of those individuals, 34% were women.

According to the strategy for public employment and the labour market approved at the World Bank and Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare seminar titled "Strategy for a social policy within the framework of the SOSAC (Social Sector Adjustment Credits) project", active measures are expected to supercede passive measures on the labour market. Microcredit is one of the most effective tools of active policy. In that connection. [sic] Relying on the legal bases of microcredit and microfinance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare developed and adopted measures for producing simplified mechanisms enabling the poor to access credit resources. Of the total number of citizens who have received microcredit through the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 56.4% were women. Through the State Commission under the Government of Kyrgyz Republic on the development of entrepreneurship, a total of 595 projects worth 76,305,200 som were financed in 2003, and 256 of the recipients were women entrepreneurs who received a total of 24,298,000 som in financing. Through the KAFC (Kyrgyz Agricultural Finance Corporation), as of 1 January 2004, a total of 13,033 projects worth 8,219,300 som had been approved, of which 3,017 projects (23%) totaling 199,500 som were for women entrepreneurs. By comparison, 2,445 projects worth 155.1 million som were approved for women entrepreneurs in 2002.

Associations of mutual aid groups created under the International Agricultural Development Fund and World Bank microfinance programme have expanded in the Republic. At present, the programme is operating in all oblasts of Kyrgyzstan, in 94 settlements. A total of 964 mutual aid groups have been formed, encompassing some 7,000 people. All in all, those groups have almost 3.4 million som in savings in monetary form and in natural units. More than 60 million som have been allocated to microprojects under the program. Considerable attention in those programs is devoted to providing women with access to financial services, and, as a result, 54% of the programme participants are women.

Solving the problems of education, employment, development and support of entrepreneurship among youth, and eradication of poverty among youth is included in the national programme "Zhashtyk" for 2000–2010, in which a gender component is also organically integrated. Youth initiative centres, youth NGOs, and leadership schools, including female leadership schools, the aim of which is to develop the initiative to solve various problems of society, are being created in all regions. In the implementation of the policy for employment among the youth in the republic, specific actions are also being arranged to create jobs, such as the "Check for Job" programme, under which measures to encourage enterprises and organizations to create additional jobs for unemployed youth who have no work experience have been put in place (preferential tax rates). A total of 133 checks have been pledged for this programme this year, and half of them must go to women. All in all, 4,794 jobs have been created for youth since the beginning of 2001. In the Republic's National Young People's Employment Exchange alone, young women and girls accounted for 52.8% of the young people placed in jobs. Student trade union organizations and student agricultural brigades have resumed their operations. The Temporary Job Placement Department and the Mobile Employment Service, whose services are used primarily by young people, have been created in Bishkek.

It should be noted that the State programme "New generation" for the implementation of the rights of the child for the period up to 2010 is being implemented to reduce poverty among children. Given the inadequate legal base in the area of protecting children, a draft code on children that will be a mechanism for implementing the rights of children is being developed. Measures to attract extrabudgetary funds are being undertaken to mitigate the problem of the insufficient funding of children's institutions. Pilot projects are being implemented to create departments for the support of the family and children, and they will work with vulnerable children in the home and with their families. Rehabilitation and foster-care centres are being created for neglected children.

The national strategy "Integrated development of the village up to 2010" (2004) involves the undertaking of special measures to help raise the level of employment among women and solve the problems associated with the use of female labour to grow and harvest crops such as tobacco and cotton. A unit has been developed for improving the social welfare of women, specifically, the timely payout of benefits to pregnant women, mothers with several children, and other categories of women.

6. Social protection of women

The social policy being pursued in the Republic is geared to improve the targeting and effectiveness of the system for the social welfare of the populace, enhance the stability of the system of social insurance, help increase employment, and ensure that all segments of the public have access to educational and health-care services while maintaining the financial stability of those sectors. The level of poverty is expected to drop to 30.2% by 2007 as a result of the implementation of economic and social policy.

The implementation of socio-economic policy on the basis of programme documents has enabled a reduction in the level of poverty to 44.4% in 2002 from 47.6% in 2001. The real growth of personal monetary incomes averaged 9.3% for the year, and that of average monthly wages exceeded 11%. The amount by which the average monthly wage exceeds the minimum consumer budget has steadily increased: to 23.4% in 2003 from 10.5% in 2001. With energy rates increasing, pensions, benefits and wages have risen. For example, social benefits alone rose by 20%. Work is also being done to reform the pension system, convert concessions to direct monetary payouts, and improve the targeting methods used in making benefits available.

At present, the mechanisms for social welfare in the Kyrgyz Republic include granting and paying out State benefits (allowances to poor families and citizens, social benefits to individuals who are unable to work and are not entitled to a labour pension), granting concessions (to veterans of war, to the disabled, to individuals who have performed meritorious service for the Republic, etc.) and providing social services (in-patient care for the disabled and the elderly in residential homes, and in-home social services for the aged living alone). Both men and women can apply for benefits.

Different types of social welfare are provided, particularly to poor women who have children. At present, the principal type of social support afforded to such women consists in the payment of the following State allowances:

- a lump-sum payment upon the birth of a child;
- child-care allowance for nonworking mothers until the child reaches 18 months of age;
- allowance for mothers of twins, until the twins reach 3 years of age;
- increased allowances for mothers who have given birth to triplets or higher multiples of children, until the children reach 16 years of age.

When a pension is awarded, the law provides for including the time spent caring for a child under the age of 3 in the insurance contribution record, but no more than six years. Also provided for is the payment of an allowance for caring for a sick child until the child reaches 14 years of age, to be paid to the parent who cares for the child. At present, 10.1% of the country's population is covered by State benefits, which amounts to 513,700 individuals, of whom 52% are women.

The bulk of the benefits are provided on the basis of category, without consideration of need. Upwards of 30 categories of people who number more than 600,000 are entitled to benefits today. In

that context, measures aimed at strengthening social welfare and at developing its targeting through a passport system for poor families, for example, are carried out on a regular basis.

The passport system for poor families represents one of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare's successes in reducing and mitigating poverty. As of the beginning of 2004, the social passport system encompassed 630,500 families. The year 2003 saw a 5% reduction in poverty, which amounted to roughly 31,500 families. This year, the well-being of an additional 58,500 families will be improved.

7. Preventing violence against women

Numerous studies performed in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2000–2004 enable one to conclude that criminal violence against women Kyrgyzstan shows up most often in areas common to many countries, such as in family relations, at the workplace or a place of study, and in trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Analysis of official Ministry of Internal Affairs data broken down by gender shows that the total number of crimes committed against women averages 25–26% of the total number of crimes against persons annually. In the context of crime patterns, serious crimes committed against women, including murder, infliction of serious injury to health and rape, constitute an average of 11% of the total number of crimes against persons; intentional infliction of minor injury to health constitutes 8.6%. But if crime patterns are examined from the standpoint of crimes committed solely against women, one can see that the serious crimes mentioned above constitute as much as 44% annually, with the intentional infliction of minor injury to health accounting for up to 33% of all recorded crimes of that category. In actuality, that figure is somewhat higher, because crimes committed against girls who are minors also need to be included.

An absolute majority of the women (up to 100%) are women who have been raped or forced into marriage, followed, in descending order, by

- torture (on average, 72% of the women victims);
- beating (on average, 41% of the women victims).

In general, a continuous growth is noted in crimes against women that involve intentional infliction of minor injury to health (to 48% in 2002 from 31% in 1999), that is, the women in 2002 represented almost every other victim of a crime against women. As for violent acts of a sexual nature, some 50–80% of the victims of such crimes are minors, primarily girls 16 or 17 years old.

Annually, as many as 3,000 women turn to the country's crisis centres for help in cases involving violence, and they are primarily young women and girls aged 16–25, students and office workers as a rule, with up to a total of 50% of the cases involving various forms of violence in the family. A rather large percentage of the women who have been victims of violence are also unemployed women or homemakers. Among the latter are wives of military servicemen and law-enforcement officials. A trend

has been noted in which men are turning to crisis centres for help, and in one crisis centre alone, Shans [Chance], they represent 7–10% of those coming in.

Unfortunately, the number of individuals who are victims of violent crimes in the family is not broken out in Kyrgyzstan, which merely characterizes the entire agglomeration of victims of all types of crimes. Data on crimes on the household premises are available for 1995–1998 only — for only murders and the intentional infliction of serious injury to health. Ministry of Internal Affairs data indicate that such crimes consistently account for upwards 10–15% of all recorded crimes of that category. Active-duty units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs across the Republic record upwards of 8,000 domestic-violence calls annually, and 742 problem families were listed on the preventive rolls with internal-affairs authorities in 2002.

Also an indirect indication of problem in the family are neglected youth, the number of whom rose across the Republic as a whole. According to Ministry of Internal Affairs data, 4,977 minors were on the preventive rolls of internal-affairs authorities in 2001; in the first half of 2002, a total of 751 of the 825 teenagers who landed in the Centre for the Adaptation and Rehabilitation of Minors were minors who had left their families without permission. The information and analysis division of the Ministry notes that the centralized roll of neglected children and teenagers is not up to date, but as of the end of 2003, more than 5,000 individuals were on the roll. The Ministry provides even higher figures: specifically, according to their data, by the end of 2003 the number of neglected children overall had reached 10,000, of which 21% were girls. A 2003 study of problems involving street youth in Kyrgyzstan shows that the overwhelming majority of that contingent had had homes and that the main reason the teenagers had left their families or their guardians was, as a rule, the abusive treatment they had received, and after that came the alcoholism or drug addiction of their parents.

At the same time, criminal violence against women in the family in Kyrgyzstan has its own special features that stem from the existence of customs that are discriminatory by nature—forcible bride theft and polygyny, which lead to the commission of crimes such as forced entry into marriage, bigamy and polygamy, the liability for which is prescribed under Kyrgyz Republic criminal law. The official criminal statistics in that area show rather low figures; for example, some 15–20 cases in which women are forced into marriage are recorded annually. But various studies show that, in fact, those crimes are now becoming increasingly widespread and are not subject to any serious prosecution, even though the social danger associated with them lies primarily in the fact that they lay the unhealthy initial groundwork for potential conflict in the family.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the development of private enterprise and the formation of a class of owners in Kyrgyzstan markedly outran the establishment of civilized labour relations. As a result, the trends and conditions existing on the labour markets dramatically boosted the vulnerability of women to different kinds of harassment by men, particularly sexual harassment, in the context of labour relations, including in academic settings at higher educational institutions. It should be noted that the degree of risk of becoming a victim of sexual harassment in the workplace is multiplied for women engaged in the shadow and criminal economy that has emerged, where labour conditions are not regulated or monitored and are therefore potentially unsafe.

A cause for growing alarm in the Republic is the proliferation of trafficking in women for their illegal exploitation, which consists of their being fraudulently (falsely) hired as part of a work force and may include their being exported for prostitution. According to a report from the Consulate General of the Kyrgyz Republic in the United Arab Emirates, there were, as of 2001, about one thousand women from Kyrgyzstan in the UAE under false documents or without no documents whatsoever. Their illegal status adds to the difficulties associated with their being in that country and is adversely affecting the protection that the Consulate General of the Kyrgyz Republic in the UAE is able to afford them. According to data presented in 2002 at the Republic seminar titled "Urgent problems associated with combating the illegal exploitation of people", over the span of the last year and a half, the passport and visa service of the republic issued 2,000 foreign passports to men and 4,000 to women, with 3,000 going to girls aged 18–25. The overall figure is double that for the period of 1997–1998. The traffickers rather often use authentic documents and visas for legal entry or for transporting the women to the country of destination. For example, the FRG embassy alone processes as many as 14,000 visas annually for citizens of Kyrgyzstan, 30% of whom are women. Human traffickers also make frequent use of other legal channels, such as the no-visa regime between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey and between Kyrgyzstan and China and on-arrival airport processing of visas in the UAE.

In ethnic terms, women of Slavic extraction predominate among women emigrating abroad, at 49%, with Kyrgyz women making up 23% and other nationalities, 28%. The presence of a high percentage of women of Slavic extraction shows that this category is in demand in countries such as Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. If age, however, is taken as the criterion, the youngest women are those of Kyrgyz nationality. They are taken from Kyrgyzstan for purposes of sexual exploitation through recruitment that takes the form of fraudulent hiring, and most of them are young women under 30 who have a secondary education, are married, and have low economic and social status.

The findings point not only to a rather high level of violence against women, but also to its high degree of latency. The most latent are sex crimes, violence in the family, and crimes associated with trafficking in women. With regard to that, the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic notes the need for further development of statistics for gender-oriented violations by victim of violence, age group, social status and type of violence, as well as the location at which the violence was committed, in order to obtain a clearer picture of the problem of violence as a whole and to improve the methods for handling this negative phenomenon.

One of the strategic directions in the National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic is identified as "Reduction of all forms of violence against women". The following measures are planned in that section:

- gender-sensitivity training of law-enforcement officials in matters involving the prevention of violence against women;
- creation of a network of free counselling assistance (legal and information services) for women who are victims of violence (emergency telephone numbers and hotlines);

- creation of institutional mechanisms in the form of State crisis centres that provide safety and confidentiality for women who are victims of violence, and support of existing nongovernmental crisis centres and expansion of the regional network of them;
- organization of preventive activities through the teaching of tolerant and safe behaviours to education-system students, and promotion of information campaigns on the problem of eradicating violence against women;
- creation of support groups for preventing violence in local communities in rural areas;
- development and adoption a national programme to prevent human trafficking;
- development of measures to protect women who live in various conflict zones, and support of the participation of the women in the resolution of the conflicts and in the restoration of peace;
- development and introduction of measures for the social adaptation of women in detention facilities and measures for the rehabilitation of women who have left detention facilities;
- development and introduction of programmes for working with individuals who have committed violence (rehabilitation programmes);
- development of a multisector response to violence against women;
- collection of statistical data on all forms of violence against women and children;
- monitoring and analysis of the effectiveness of measures used to fight violence against women.

Another important document geared to improving measures for the special prevention of criminal violence in this area is the National Programme "Human Rights" for the period 2002–2010, which was approved by the Presidential decree of 2 January 2002; it includes the following:

- ensuring the enforcement of existing national antidiscrimination law against employers of the State and private sectors who are guilty of sexual discrimination, and establishing the measures of their liability;
- upgrading the mechanism for monitoring the enforcement of laws in connection with the violation of the civil rights of women, such as coercion into an early marriage;
- revising the criminal liability of officials for sexual harassment against women who are subordinate to them in the office or in the workplace;
- expanding the rights of victims in criminal court proceedings and providing legal services to crime victims;
- preparing and implementing special programmes for sex education and gender education of youth;
- collecting all statistical information available in the country on cases of violence in the family (including "hotline" data);
- setting up international cooperation in combating all forms of trafficking in women and children, including trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, pornography, prostitution, and sex tourism;
- preparing and implementing special programmes for eliminating the traditional approach and negative gender stereotypes in context of the interaction of the sexes.⁴

Important additions to the development of the State policy in reducing all forms of violence are the national programme of measures to fight the illegal export and trafficking in people in the Kyrgyz

⁴ See: National Programme "Human Rights" for the period 2002–2010, pp. 34–35.

Republic for 2002–2005, the State programme "New Generation" for implementing the rights of the children of Kyrgyzstan for the period up to 2010, and the State programme for countering the proliferation of drug addiction and the illegal drug trade for the period of 2001–2003.

The first programme includes the requisite measures to improve national law by means of acceding to international conventions and signing interstate agreements. The aim of the second programme is to promote the social adaptation of the family and its self-reliance and to prevent the decline of the society's human potential. The solution to that problem is closely linked to providing equal opportunities in the development of rights and interests for minors, including girls, and in the protection of the minors against discrimination and all forms of criminal violence. The third programme includes measures to fight crime in the area of drug trafficking, in which women are increasingly being used as "live" containers. An indication of that is the fact that individuals against whom criminal proceedings have been instituted for holding drugs predominate among women who have committed drug-related crimes.

The above programmes are, by and large, sequential and complement one another. It should be noted that Kyrgyzstan has adopted other special-purpose long-term programmes — in economics, health care, etc.— that should, on the whole, also facilitate a reduction in criminal forms of violence against women through positive situational changes in the areas they encompass.

At present, the most intense work under way in reducing all forms of violence against women is work to prevent violence in the family and to combat trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Prosecutor's Office, in collaboration with nongovernmental organizations — the "Diamond" Association and the Association of Independent Academic Lawyers of the Kyrgyz Republic — with the support of the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries and the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation, have developed special gender programs for law-enforcement authorities and have published study aids aimed at providing fuller protection for women who are victims of violence, especially violence in the family. For example, the study aid "Violence against women: Preventing it and combating its consequences" was published for the Ministry of Internal Affairs system, and the study aid "Preventive role of prosecutorial authorities in the prevention of violence in the family" was published for prosecutorial authorities. The programmes and aids illuminate issues such as the eradication of gender stereotypes that exist in the culture, change in the role of law-enforcement authorities under current conditions, provision of safety for women and children who are victims of violence, the existing services for providing them assistance, etc.

Training of members of active-duty units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs began in 2001 under that program, and it is being conducted in sessions with personnel of rayon and city police departments. By the beginning of 2003, the training covered 50% of the rayon police departments and 50% of the city police departments. Gender-related questions were included in the list of questions for certification of the members of all the structural subdivisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Similar training of staff members of Kyrgyz Republic prosecutorial agencies was set up in 2002 at the Centre for Retraining and Advanced Training at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavonic University, and work is being done to institutionalize the training in the system of internal-affairs

agencies, which will enable some consistency in the implementation of gender policy in executive and supervisory bodies.

That should also be aided by the reform of the Ministry being conducted by the State Commission for the Reform of the System of Internal-Affairs Agencies. According to the Conceptual Framework of the reform, Centre 102, outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment, is being created in the public safety service to analyze day-to-day information that comes in to the system of law-enforcement agencies. The Ministry, together with the General Prosecutor's Office, has generated draft for a new statistical report on crime in the Kyrgyz Republic. The statistical report includes data on individuals who are victims of violent crimes and on the individuals who committed the crimes, with a breakdown by sex. By and large, the systematized work to update the statistics broken down by gender is being done by the Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development together with the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

A big achievement of the reform is the pilot project to create block police in one of the rayons of Bishkek, which the Ministry of Internal Affairs has already begun. The passport and visa service will be reorganized into migration police. The conceptual framework for the reform of the Ministry is supported by the OSCE Centre in Kyrgyzstan and contains not only technical assistance, but also elements that are specifically intended to establish a constructive partnership with the civil society. For example, plans call for the introduction of an elected position for rayon inspectors and chiefs of city and village police departments, who will be accountable to the public. In general, the issue of creating special divisions in the internal-affairs and justice ministries and in prosecutorial agencies that will handle cases involving violence against women was addressed.

In cooperation with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, juvenile-affairs inspectors and other police officers have received training under the project "Development of social work with children at risk in the Kyrgyz Republic" for purposes of raising the level of their professionalism in cases of violence against children. Emergency telephone numbers are in operation in all rayon internal-affairs agencies, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Incoming complaints are checked out, and appropriate measures are taken. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan still has no programs for rehabilitating individuals guilty of violence, although the question of the need for developing them and introducing them in the penal system (Main Penal Administration) is already being discussed by the Republic's lawyers.

Measures to prevent crime involving human trafficking involve the institution of stiffer penalties for forging documents and the strengthening the protection of passports, visas, and other exit documents. The Ministry of Justice has developed new internal and foreign passports and temporary certificates and has prepared draft normative and legislative instruments regulating the activities of Kyrgyzstan border crossing points, information packets for individuals going abroad and for the staff of border and consular services, nongovernmental organizations, and private structures. Also being developed is a programme that will enable rapid communications with Kyrgyz Republic consular facilities abroad, based on a unified interdepartmental information network that has been in operation since 2000 — the national security service/Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ministry of Internal Affairs/border

service network, which is designed to monitor the entry, stay, and departure of citizens. The programme will enable the prompt exchange of information regarding the implementation of measures to protect the rights of Kyrgyz Republic citizens abroad. Already in place is an automated border-monitoring system at the Torugart, Osh-Airport, and Irkeshtam controlled access points. With the support of IOM, special emergency telephone numbers and hotlines have been set up in Bishkek and Osh, and certain crisis centres are geared to assisting victims of violence. The operations of entities engaged in placing Kyrgyzstan citizens in jobs abroad are regularly monitored and subjected to random inspections.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs regularly provides practical consular assistance to Kyrgyz Republic citizens abroad. As of the beginning of 2004, a total of 89 requests for confirmation of Kyrgyz Republic citizenship from the General Consulate of the Kyrgyz Republic in UAE were recorded, as were 10 requests from the Kyrgyz Republic consular facilities in the Turkish Republic; 12 statements came from relatives of women victims. Thanks to the coordinated joint efforts of the Kyrgyz Republic ministries of foreign affairs and internal affairs, the Kyrgyz Republic consular facilities in those countries received the necessary documents confirming the Kyrgyz Republic citizenship of victims, and the victims were issued certificates enabling them to return to their homeland.

At the societal level, nongovernmental organizations of Kyrgyzstan continue to enter into regional and international networks and coalitions that are addressing the problems of trafficking, which will make enable an effective, reliable exchange of information and its transfer to the appropriate agencies if necessary. There are already such trends in Kyrgyzstan in law-enforcement practices preventing violent crime against women. Specifically, they involve the use of special measures by law-enforcement authorities of the Republic — signals that come in in the event of certain kinds of violence or messages regarding girls being taken abroad illegally. The information is made available by hotlines and social and crisis centres, as well as special self-help groups operating on the local level to combat the problem of violence against women. The incoming information often requires confidentiality and a rapid operational response, which is why cooperation between law-enforcement agencies and civilian organizations in that area is being strengthened in Kyrgyzstan.

Crisis centres — specifically, Sezim and Shans, among others — are extremely successful in working with the law-enforcement authorities, as are the nongovernmental organizations "Diamond" Association, the "Moltur Koz" Children's Centre, the "Mental Health and Society" Public Association, the "Alga" Association of Rural Women and the public foundation called "Promotion of the Development of a Legal Infrastructure and Juridical Education". At the Republic level, the public prevention centres created in the Issyk-kul and Batken oblasts by the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Internal Affairs, which include women's councils, youth organizations, elders' courts, and other community entities, are similarly successful. Self-help groups that were organized in 2001–2002 in some oblasts of the Republic at the community level are demonstrating the development of civil initiative. The self-help groups include active rural women who, after being properly trained, provide psychological and legal assistance to women who are victims of violence. This organizational technology uses principles of social mobilization of the populace and aims at creating groups to collectively counteract violence at the local community level. It should be noted that the technology has given a good account of itself in Kyrgyzstan, a mountainous country with a primarily rural population and regions that are hard to get assistance to.

The efforts of State structures (local, internal-affairs, and prosecutorial authorities) and community organizations (elders' courts and local nongovernmental organizations) are being combined in Kyrgyzstan to create a responsible interaction between them in cases of family violence. In 2003, with the support of the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation, a project was implemented to create just such a potential at the local level to combat violence against women.

In education, special courses that address gender-related problems and include a section on violence against women have been available in a number of higher educational institutions of the Republic since 2000. Law students at the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavonic University have had a course called "Problems in the prevention of violence in the family" since 2002, and students at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs have a special course called "Prevention of criminal violence against women and children". Teaching manuals titled "Problems in the prevention of criminal violence against women" and "Prevention and investigation of crimes involving violence against women and children" have been prepared and published at those educational institutions. The Secretariat, together with the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Education and with the support of UNIFEM, is developing a methodology for teaching a course on the prevention of gender-based violence, and it includes interactive teaching methods. The study and teaching aid for instructors at higher educational institutions, "Gender violence, consequences and ways of eradicating it," has been developed to that end.

At the same time, there are not enough programmes to provide sex education for young people. Neither the family nor the school or literature or the mass media are participating to the proper extent in preparing young people philosophically or morally for marriage as an institution that requires a great deal of responsibility, and there is no preventive education in terms of family conflict resolution. That is primarily due to the absence of a systematic approach in solving the problem and, as a result, to the absence of training for specialists working specifically in family conflict prevention, particularly psychologists and specialized medical and social workers. Special note should be made of the need for training criminal lawyers in the area of family-related criminal law.

Nongovernmental organizations in Kyrgyzstan have been quite active in researching the problem of violence against women. Such research looks at the implementation of women's rights, trafficking in women, violence in the family, prostitution, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is important to note that the Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development has played an increasing role in recent years as the initiator of gender-based research and is enlisting scientific and educational institutions in the work. But with the exception of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavonic University (KNU) [sic], the Institute for Special Training of Experts of the Kyrgyz National University, the Osh State University and the Bishkek Humanities University (BKU) [sic], the problem, unfortunately, is virtually nonexistent in research plans.

At the request of the Secretariat, the research on the effectiveness of the measures undertaken in the Republic to combat violence against women is coming to a close, so that it can be evaluated and the State strategy further developed.

The press service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, together with the editorial staffs of the newspapers *Betme-Bet* and *Stat'ya*, periodically covers issues pertaining to a healthy lifestyle, negative gender stereotypes, the prevention of violence in society, and trafficking in women. Staff members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Prosecutor's Office appear in television programmes on those problems on the State channel and the Pyramid (Pyramid) Television and Radio Company in live TV broadcasts that are simulcast on radio. They write articles in Republic and local newspapers, such as the *Vecherniy Bishkek* (Evening Bishkek), *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* (Kyrgyzstan Word), *Delo ?*, etc. The State television channel has begun running a series of programmes for youth that are aimed at changing traditional gender stereotypes regarding the subordinate role of women in the family.

Effective measures to draw the problem of violence against women out of the shadows were undertaken in the Republic in the context of a regional UNIFEM information campaign called "Right to a life without violence". A competition for the best projects devoted to illuminating the problem of violence against women gave preference to projects that were geared to exploring the topic in simple language that was easy for the public to understand and that took into account the structure of societal norms. As a result, virtually all the women's nongovernmental organizations that won grants were able to produce interesting projects. On violence in the family, the Sezim crisis centre, in partnership with the international organization Internews, prepared two video commercials and a 30-minute film that are periodically shown on television and, with the support of the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation, a play called "Karachach" (Black-haired Woman), which has been successfully staged in many villages of the Republic. The aim of these visual media is to show that women are killed not only by husbands and partners, but also by society's apathy towards what is being done behind closed doors.

From 26 November through 10 December 2003, within the framework of the worldwide campaign "16 days of activism against gender violence", the Secretariat of the National Council conducted a talk show on the national television channel that involved the participation of students of higher educational institutions of the Republic, as well as 10 training sessions for pedagogical students of KNU, BGU, and KGPU on problems of violence against women, including family violence and tolerant behaviour .

With the support of IOM, a warning play called "Tozok" (Hell) was staged on the topic of the illegal export of women for sexual exploitation. After its free performance in regions of the Republic, the number of hotline calls pertaining to actual and potential victims of trafficking increased in Bishkek and Osh. Several nongovernmental organizations, together, released a documentary film on civil actions taken against family violence in the southern oblasts of Kyrgyzstan. In the context of that problem, with the participation of the nongovernmental organizations, a series of programs called "Ak Bosogo" (Sacred Threshold) began to be aired on television. By and large, various organizations in that campaign distributed a considerable number of booklets, pamphlets, and posters in educational institutions of various levels, on public transportation, in State offices and even in private firms. Despite the success of the regional information program, the weak point of all the work remains its lack of regularity.

Of particular note is the creation of the documentary film warning of trafficking in women, called "Without identity" and taken from materials of investigative journalism in the United Arab Emirates within

the framework of an IOM project and with the participation of the representative office of the international organization Internews Network and the Pyramid Television and Radio Corporation. The Main Administration of the Consular Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Consulate of the Kyrgyz Republic in UAE provided a great deal of assistance to that information company.

A network of social services for women is being created in Kyrgyzstan. To date, virtually every one of seven oblasts of Kyrgyzstan has its own crisis centre, which is sometimes combined with a shelter. The city of Bishkek has two crisis centres and one shelter. All the facilities are staffed by professionals. Upon request, the crisis centres and shelters provide women who are victims of violence with free medical services (first aid), as well as psychological, legal and other services, such as help in finding work or in being retrained to acquire new skills. The women may stay in the shelters with their children for up to one month. Throughout the Republic, 13 nongovernmental organizations provide such services, and three of those organizations have created counselling or prevention centres for youth and women who are victims of illegal trafficking.

The operations of virtually all the crisis centres are, for now, materially supported by international organizations — the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation, the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (HIVOS), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), etc. Although the National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic calls for the creation of State crisis centres and the support of existing centres, the financial side of the issue has not yet been clearly resolved. For that reason, the existence itself of those structures is very much open to question at present. At the same time, it must be noted that the Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development is already making a strong effort to transfer the funding of the crisis centres to the municipal budget.

Free legal aid to individuals who are victims of violence is also being provided at student law clinics at the juvenile justice centre of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and on the law faculties of the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavonic University and the Kyrgyz State National University. The Adilet nongovernmental law clinic is specially oriented to providing legal aid to women who are victims of trafficking.

Intensive work is under way to provide the public with legal education regarding the problem of violence against women. For example, oblast administrations of the Ministry of Justice are doing work in rural areas to explain the illegality of certain customary practices (bride theft, marriage to girls who are under age, concealed polygamy, etc.). To that end, lecture courses are being offered to students in general-education schools, vocational schools, and higher educational institutions on topics such as "The role of the woman in a civil society", "The woman in the Kyrgyz Republic" and "Prevention of violence against women (girls)".

The Secretariat of the National Council, with the support of UNIFEM, is implementing a project called "On the path to nonviolence" in which a seminar was conducted for mass media managers. Papers were presented on relevant topics involving violence against women — the Kyrgyz

Republic laws on the bases of State guarantees to safeguard gender equality and on the social and legal protection against violence in the family — as was instructional material on topics such as "Judicial protection of the interests of the family, minors, and women", "Prosecutorial oversight of observance of the laws on gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic", "Prevention of violations committed on domestic soil", "Urgent problems of female migration today" and "Gender statistics". The outcome of the seminar consisted of a review of the gender aspects of the mass media and of the role of the mass media in promoting the prevention of violence against women, as well as the development of a draft gender strategy for the mass media.

The Secretariat, together with the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation and nongovernmental organizations, held a regional conference called "Coordinated response to domestic violence" on 20–21 October 2003, in Bishkek, for the purpose of mobilizing the efforts of the local community; representatives of countries of Central Asia and Mongolia took part. Participating in the conference were representatives of the State structures of Kyrgyzstan that are responsible for preventing the problem of violence, as well as representatives of NGOs of countries of Central Asia and Mongolia involved in the Soros Foundation project called the "The Duluth model for preventing violence in the family". The conference identified problems that are typical of all the participating countries in terms of violence against women and made an attempt to develop additional mechanisms for solving the problem.

The Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development in 2003–2004 conducted a series of seminars on preventing violence against women for representatives of key State structures, including law-enforcement agencies, and for deputies of all levels, mayors of cities, the mass media, crisis centres and nongovernmental organizations. That helped to assess the experience garnered in that area, develop subsequent policy on prevention, and disseminate the knowledge gained not only to interested organizations, but also to the public.

Thus, the democratic processes, legal education, and access to many types of information and training in Kyrgyzstan have enabled the civil society to actively participate in the creation of new institutional mechanisms for providing confidential assistance to women who are victims of violence and to mobilize public organizations at the local level for marshalling collective forces to protect against violence. That has not only fostered an awareness among citizens of their role in ensuring their own safety, but has also helped to eradicate certain gender stereotypes among the public regarding the victimization of women, as well as consolidated social groups and organizations of different status in eliminating the socially dangerous phenomenon of criminal violence against women, thereby pointing to the enormous reserve of possibilities offered by the use of civil initiative.

8. Women and armed conflicts

Fully aware of the seriousness of the consequences of armed conflicts for women and girls, Kyrgyzstan is making a series of efforts to create a preventive system that relies primarily on educating civilians and the military in international humanitarian law. Pursuant to the international legal commitments of the Kyrgyz Republic under the Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims of 12 August 1949 and the Additional protocols to them of 8 June 1977 relative to the dissemination of knowledge of

international humanitarian law by means of incorporating its study into military and civilian curricula, article 47 of the first Convention, article 48 of the second Convention, article 127 of the third Convention, article 144 of the fourth Convention, article 83 of the first Protocol and article 19 of the second Protocol, an agreement was signed by the regional office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in countries of Central Asia, the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Red Crescent Society of the Kyrgyz Republic on further measures to organize instruction in international humanitarian law in secondary general-education schools and higher educational institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic. The agreement established measures for organizing instruction in international humanitarian law (international law for armed conflicts) in the secondary- and higher-education system of the Kyrgyz Republic for purposes of subsequent formation of a normative base for secondary general-education and higher education in that area.

At present, students in secondary schools of Kyrgyzstan study the bases of international law for armed conflicts under the subject "Preinduction preparation of youth", based on article 19 of the Internal Service Regulations of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, a training programme called "Kyrgyzstan and international humanitarian law", for whose study 17 hours are allotted, has been prepared and incorporated into the programme of study of general-education schools. The programme is accompanied by a study aid called "Through humanism to peace".

The Ministry of Education also provides assistance in incorporating the principles and norms of international humanitarian law into the curricula of higher educational institutions under the area "Jurisprudence" and under the specialties "International law", "International relations" and "International journalism", as well as in the social and humanitarian disciplines (History, Sociology, Political Science, Philosophy, Literature, etc.). For example, courses of study on international humanitarian law are taught on the law faculties of the International University of Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavonic University and the American University in Central Asia, and that subject is included in appropriate courses on the journalism faculties of the Kyrgyz State National University.

It has been specially determined that mandatory study of international law on armed conflicts should be introduced for students of civilian higher educational institutions who are studying on military faculties and in military departments. For military disciplines, the scope of study of the bases of international law on armed conflicts is determined by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Ministry of Defense.

In 2004–2007, international humanitarian law resource centres will be opened at higher educational institutions collaborating with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavonic University, the Kyrgyz State National University, the International University of Kyrgyzstan, the Academy of State Administration under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, etc.). The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement will supply the resource centres, as well as the libraries of the institutions, with literature and materials on international humanitarian law treaties, as well as brochures and articles of the Movement, video materials, and information on Movement programmes and activities.

As is known, during the operation to free hostages and drive the Islamic Movement fighters out of Kyrgyzstan in 1999, it was primarily the peaceful populace of the southern oblasts of the country who suffered. About 4,500 forced resettlers left their permanent place of residence. The women were the population group least prepared for the hostilities.

At the same time, the hostilities that took place in neighboring Tajikistan in the late 1990s produced refugees in the country who numbered 7,527 as of 1 March 2004, of whom 3,424, or 45%, were women. Under prevailing Kyrgyz Republic law, women refugees are given legal and social protection by the State. For example, in the area of medical services for refugees, a cooperative agreement was signed in August 2002 between the Office of the Head of Mission of the UNHCR in the Kyrgyz Republic and the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Health that enabled refugees to receive medical care on a level with citizens of Kyrgyzstan.

Generally, however, the low level of education and the traditional patriarchal way of life define the position of women refugees in the family and the society as one of low status and dependent on the husband, relatives, and public opinion. A high level of unemployment (70%) is noted among women refugees. A considerable number of them need qualified medical care and information on family planning, disease prevention, and other matters. To provide the refugees with legal and social services, the Kyrgyzstan office of the UNHCR enlisted a nongovernmental organization, the Adilet law clinic, which provided social and legal aid to 208 women refugees in 2003.

With the support of UNHCR, local authorities are providing assistance to initiatives for women refugees and are creating the conditions needed for their implementation. In the settlement of Sosnovka, in Zhayyl Rayon of Chu Oblast, for example, the nongovernmental organization Khayriniso set up a mini bakery, providing jobs for five women refugees, and is now working on implementing another project for refugees — setting up a mini flour mill. A school/cultural centre costing US\$55,000 has been built in the settlement of Chet-Bulak, in the Batken Rayon of Osh Oblast; two Sunday schools are in operation in the city of Bishkek for children of Afghan refugees, and a recreation and job camp for 25 child refugees has been set up in the settlement of Kara-Tyube. Thus, the conditions for the training and recreation of child refugees are being provided, as a result of which all children of school age are going to school.

It should be noted in particular that the Kyrgyz Republic government is taking specific measures to resolve the citizenship problems of Tajik refugees. Thanks to such measures, more than 2,500 Tajik refugees, including more than a thousand women, were granted Kyrgyzstan citizenship in 2001–2003.

9. Women and ecological sustainability

At present, ecology and protection of the environment in the Kyrgyz Republic are an area of interest to society and the State. Relevant laws and other statutes have been adopted, specialized State agencies have been created, ecology has been incorporated into programs as an academic subject in all educational institutions, and the problem is often covered by the mass media. Formulated in the CDF national strategy and the Millennium Declaration are the basic goals in terms of the environmental

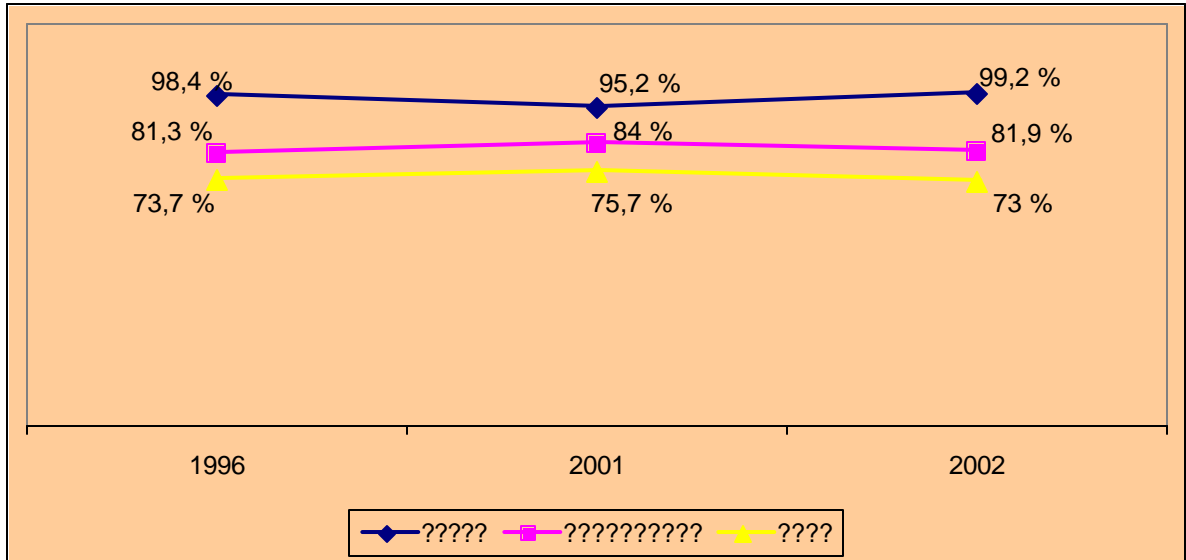
security of Kyrgyzstan — to preserve the ecological balance, and to avert man-made emergencies and mitigate the effects of natural disasters. For that reason, the following have been identified as priorities:

- environmental sanitation, and the halting of the loss of natural resources;
- formation of an ecologically sustainable society;
- reduction of the number of people who do not have access to clean drinking water;
- substantial improvement of the housing of the populace;
- improvement of environmental-awareness programmes for the public

At present in Kyrgyzstan, the role of women in the improvement of the country's ecology is being elevated. That involves primarily the rearing of the younger generation, the teaching of ecology to youth, and women's striving to preserve a safe environment for future generations. The woman, as the principal conduit of knowledge and customs to the younger generation, plays an enormous role in passing on ecological knowledge and environmental awareness. What's more, in actively participating in the activities of public organizations at the local community level, women affect the development of strategies and the technologies being used for natural resources management.

Two opposing trends have emerged in the protection of the environment against industrial pollution. One is due to the decline in industrial and agricultural production and consists in a reduction of the impact on the natural environment. The other is associated with economic crisis and is often expressed in a predatory relationship toward fragile natural resources (land, forests, and water). The basic indicators characterizing man's impact on the environment show a marked rise in the dumping of polluting substances and the release of harmful substances into the atmosphere. Environmental standards are being lowered or neglected, and less money is being spent for protecting the environment. Particularly acute in rural areas of the Republic is the matter of the public's access to clean drinking water and to sewer systems, which stems from the absence or breakdown of plumbing.

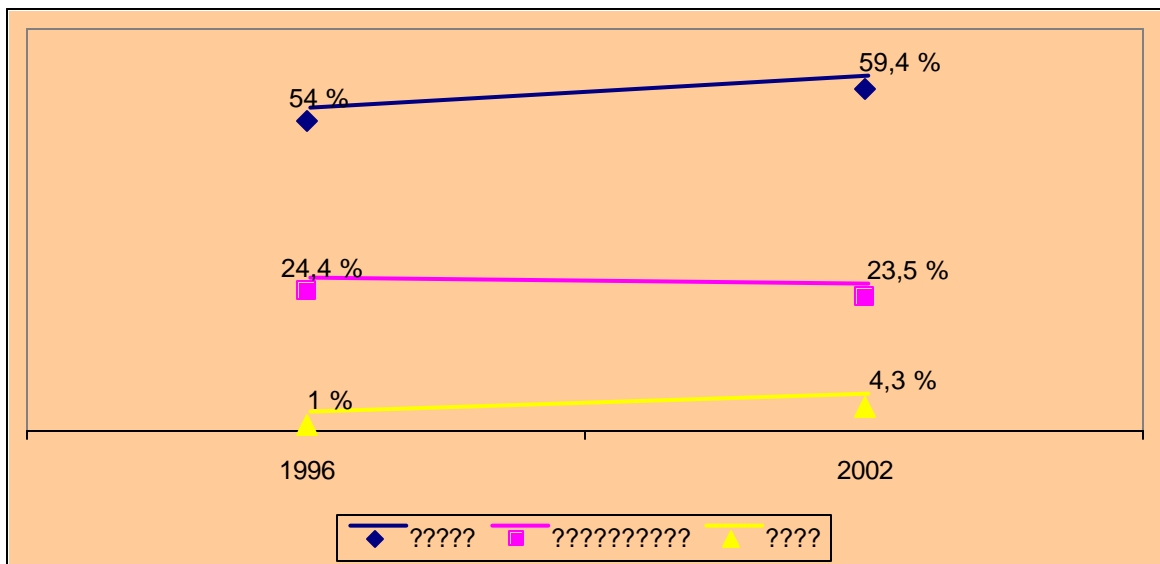
Diagram 2. Percentage of the populace with consistent access to clean drinking water.



[Key: left to right: city Kyrgyzstan village]

The housing conditions of the populace are characterized by the percentage of the populace with access to sewer systems.

Diagram 3 . Percentage of populace with access to sewer systems



[Key: left to right: city Kyrgyzstan village]

As can be seen, these indicators are extremely inadequate, primarily because most of the populace lives in rural areas, where it is difficult to get access to clean drinking water, and sewer systems are virtually nonexistent.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management of the Kyrgyz Republic is implementing two projects involving rural water supply and sanitation that are being financed by the Asian

Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB). Under the ADB project, which is called "Provision of infrastructure services at the population centre level", the Government has prescribed the restoration and construction of water lines in 806 villages in the Chu, Osh, Batken, and Jalal-Abad oblasts with a total of population of 1.2 million. The WB project, which is called "Rural water supply and sanitation", is aimed at restoring and constructing rural water lines in 270 villages with a population of 500,000. After completion of the work, the water lines will become the property of civil organizations — rural public associations of drinking-water users, which will be responsible for operations and for the provision of rural users with clean drinking water. At present, 500 such associations are already functioning in the Republic. Under their charters, women's access to the water supply is a mandatory condition for the functioning of the associations; women, just as men, can be elected to governing bodies, and, in addition, certain posts are reserved for women, such as the post responsible for sanitation. Women are being involved in the implementation of the projects in all stages of the work involving local communities. For example, special women's groups are being formed to evaluate the participation of the populace, and as many women as possible are being invited to rural gatherings to explain the projects during the mobilization campaign for the creation of the associations.

The State is expending no small amount of effort to avert natural disasters and industrial accidents — in which women, children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable — and to mitigate their effects. Forecasts of emergencies in the Kyrgyz Republic are compiled and are sent to rayon-level State administrative bodies and town executive councils. Integrated radioecology studies under the TACIS programme are under way at several uranium tailings dumps. To prevent any harmful ecological impact on the reproductive health of the populace, particularly, women, radon levels are being studied in ecologically susceptible population centres (Kadzhi-Say, Mayli-Suu, Khandarkan, Ak-Tyuz).

The WB project called "Emergency flood measures" is implementing a two-year programme to restore and rebuild flood-control and basic-irrigation facilities in the Batken, Jalal-Abad, and Osh oblasts in order to eliminate the existing risk of flooding. Efforts continue in the resettlement of people from villages located in hazardous regions of the Republic. The Central Asian Institute of Applied Land Research, whose principle areas of activity involve geodynamics, geodisaster management, ecology, and water resources, has been established in Bishkek.

Atmospheric pollution represents a priority environmental problem. Pursuant to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and with the support of the Global Environment Facility and UNDP, the first National Report on Climate Change was prepared in which scenarios for climate change in the future were generated and measures were proposed to reduce releases of greenhouse gases. An Inventory of Land Resources is being developed to take more effective account of land resources. At present, 25% the grasslands in the Republic are moderately or severely degraded, and the average yield of the grasslands has declined by 14%. To solve those problems, the Water Strategy project has been prepared, and that project will make it possible to use water resources efficiently and increase the yield of irrigated lands by 10% by 2010.

An evaluation of the effect of negative environmental factors on health largely relies on the demographic characteristics of the population. There has been a steady growth in the life expectancy of

the populace since the late 1990s. A difference of more than seven years in the life expectancies of men and women is chiefly due to elevated mortality among male youth and middle-aged men from accidents, poisoning, injuries, and circulatory-system diseases, which stem from difficulties in family life or at work, and severe emotional stress or problems, as well as neglect of one's health.

A number of obstacles associated primarily with an acute shortfall of the State resources needed for performing environmental measures and for responding to natural disasters and industrial accidents stand in the path of the State's achievement of ecological sustainability. There are also no normative instruments that make it possible to mitigate the harm done to the populace from natural disasters. A cause for concern in urban areas is the poor condition of sewer and heating systems and of water-supply and water-treatment systems. A big obstacle is also the low level of ecological awareness among the population as a whole and among individual groups, such as businessmen. As before, women are very poorly represented at the policy-development and decision-making level in the area of ecological issues.

10. Women and the mass media

As of the beginning of 2004, about a thousand mass media outlets were registered in the Kyrgyz Republic, roughly half of which, according to experts, are actually in operation. According to prevailing law, Kyrgyzstan's mass media cannot have a policy that discriminates by sex. In actual mass media operations, there are no recorded instances of gender-based restrictions in hiring or in organization of a given activity in the information sphere. Women make up roughly 20% of the managers of regional publications, which is to say that women head 14 of 70 rayon or city print media outlets. A woman also heads the media sector.

In terms of the achievements of the media sector in implementing strategies to effect gender equality, one can point not only to the increasing number of examples of the advancement of women in media management, but also to the active involvement of the mass media in the promotion of gender-oriented campaigns together with State structures, the nongovernmental sector, and international organizations. Working in close cooperation with those partners, the Republic's mass media were vigorous in conducting a campaign known as "Stop the slave trade", campaigns to prevent iron and iodine deficiency, to protect women's rights to land resources, etc. Among special information campaigns, the regional campaign "Right to a life without violence" to prevent violence against women was very important and successful; it was run in Kyrgyzstan in 2001–2002 under the aegis of the international organizations UNIFEM, the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation, UNFPA, and others. Thanks to the country's mass media, the problems of domestic violence and the notions of society's struggle against that phenomenon, as well as the gender aspects of drug abuse and alcoholism and the political and economic rights of women, have not been kept at the bottom of the list.

Positive strategies for cooperation between the mass media and civil society, specifically, with public women's organizations, are making it possible to more adequately reflect today's gender problems in media products. Also of importance are measures taken by the State in partnership with international organizations and the nongovernmental sector to expand the access of journalists to new

information-related and communication technologies. Information resource centres that have been opened in many oblasts of the Republic with the support of OSCE and USAID enable journalists to become familiar with examples of gender-oriented news coverage and give professionals broader opportunities to cover the lives of women and men in various publications in Kyrgyzstan and abroad.

At the same time, it is necessary to point out the two main problem areas involving gender inequality in the media realm:

- Occupational inequality, which manifests itself not only as women's being underrepresented in the sphere of information management, but also as the obstacles faced by women journalists in building a career, which is due to the pressure exerted by gender stereotypes.
- Unrealistic images of women and men, and the asymmetry in the frequency of referring to the images, which maintains and reinforces the stereotyped notions of the secondary role of women in all spheres of life

As a result, although most of the editorial staffs of regional media outlets are represented by women journalists, the percentage of women in metropolitan publications is declining among the journalists, although the level of participation of women in the organizational and technical stages of information production is invariably high. The feminization of journalism, primarily regional journalism, is due in large part to a change in the status of the journalist, the decline in the credibility of the mass media and, accordingly, the problematization of the authority of the media, the decline in the prestige of the profession, and the critically low level of pay of journalists. The most economically successful mass media outlets remain bastions of men.

In connection with the incorporation of gender perspectives into media operations, forms of professional gender-oriented training for journalists are being widely disseminated. Thus, a series of seminars for journalists on the coverage of gender problems to promote a policy of gender parity was conducted by experts of UNDP, the Swedish International Development Authority SIDA, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Soros–Kyrgyzstan Foundation and by representatives of the Russian mass media. For example, a seminar held under the aegis of the Secretariat and called "Gender aspects of the coverage of political issues in the mass media" involved the heads of all the television and print companies of the Kyrgyz Republic mass media. The seminar introduced the Kyrgyz Republic laws on State guarantees safeguarding gender equality and on the social and legal protection against violence in the family, as well as the National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period 2002–2006 and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and covered the problem of violence against women.

However, gender problems are often stereotypically underrated in editorial bodies, and training for gender topics, as well as coverage of gender issues, is becoming a unique professionally segregated niche that journalists who are not the most qualified are being forced into. Moreover, training journalists whose number is small by Republic standards cannot, unfortunately, provide a sufficient foundation for eliminating sexist approaches in the work of informing the public. In terms of low gender sensitivity, a

problem group in particular consists of mass media editors, on whom the quality and topics of the media products being produced largely depend.

The professional training of journalists in higher educational institutions is notable for a gender asymmetry that favors girls; according to experts, however, the level of motivation of a large percentage of girls toward an occupation upon completion of study on faculties and in departments of journalism is lower than among men. In general, issues of professional training in gender aspects have not been studied

Certain types of offerings that specialize in women's topics have come about in the Republic's mass media. Specifically, a radio programme for women, *Ayalzat*, is regularly aired in several languages spoken by the people of Kyrgyzstan, and a women's TV programme, *Pyramid*, is being shown. Many general-interest print publications, such as *VB* [*Vechniy Bishkek?*] and *Slovo Kyrgyzstan*, have introduced regular columns on men and women. Nonetheless, an analysis of the topics of Republic print-media articles shows that coverage of gender issues is absolutely out of touch with reality. More than 70% of articles and photographs reflect the life of men in traditional terms, and less than 30%, the life of women. Generally speaking, according to studies of the Republic's media, women are the focus of news in only 12% of reports, whereas 72% of those interviewed and 80% of the experts on timely topics raised in the mass media are men.

In general, although conscious discrimination of women is not typical of mass media, rather strong gender stereotypes continue to exist, particularly in advertising. Most of the leading periodical publications in the Republic have introduced regular columns devoted to an examination of the relationship of the sexes to each other in society and the family, and special "women's" and "family" television and radio programmes are being created.

Topics in which women are mentioned are, as a rule, women's topics and are devoted to education, health care, elder care, unemployment, and ecology. Thus, the mass media often duplicate a whole set of traditional gender stereotypes in which the woman is a passive entity, a commodity, the object of someone else's interests and desires, or a person whose social roles are confined to the family roles of mother and wife and, less often, helper and to that of someone who follows orders well on the job. Even more often encountered is the notion among journalists, repeated to audiences of many thousands, according to which gender problems are perceived as problems of women, and factors are created that foster a gender-segregated niche in the media realm.

SECTION III. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During the development of a national institutional mechanism, Presidential Order No. 96 of 27 February 2001 created the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development under the President, with a working body, the Secretariat, which is a structural subdivision of the Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The National Gender Policy Council reporting to the President, which had operated since 1998, and the State Commission for the Family, Women and Youth, which reported to Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and had been in place since 1996, were abolished. The National Council exercises its powers on the basis of the regulation ratified by Presidential Decree No. 46 of 16 February 2002.

The National Council is a coordinating and consultative body that ensures the implementation of State policy regarding women, the family and gender development, and its activities are performed on a voluntary basis. The Secretariat of the National Council (hereinafter referred to simply as the Secretariat) implements the decisions of the National Council and coordinates the administration of State gender policy and the National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality for the Period 2002–2006, which defines the State's strategy in that area.

The Government, with the first vice prime minister leading the effort, is the body that enforces the State's gender policy. To implement the National Plan of Action, the Government approved a complex of measures on 21 June 2002 for ministries, departments, State committees, and oblast, rayon, municipal State administrative bodies and local self-government bodies with regard to the implementation of gender policy and the matrix of activities for implementing it. The operative structures and officials for implementing the gender policy in oblast administrative bodies, in ministries and departments, and in local self-government bodies have been named, and the priorities in the implementation of the State policy have been indicated, as follows:

- observance of human rights and creation of a statutory base for equal rights of women and men;
- strengthening of institutional mechanisms for gender development;
- incorporation of gender perspectives in all spheres of life.

Pursuant to the matrix of activities developed by the National Council to implement the National Plan of Action, the strategic goals and directions of the activities have been formulated.

The strategic goals of the National Plan of Action are as follows:

1. Development of an institutional mechanism for achieving gender equality:
 - strengthening of the national mechanism for achieving gender equality;
 - refining of national law;
 - introduction of gender perspectives and factoring of them into national policy and planning and reporting programmes;
 - provision of the underpinning for gender development.
2. Observance of gender balance at all levels of decision-making:

- facilitation of the participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels;
 - gender component of economic development in the area of labour, employment and social welfare;
 - reduction of poverty;
 - formation of gender-balanced labour market;
 - safeguarding of social welfare for men and women.
3. Gender aspects in health care:
- expansion of access of women to high-quality medical services, preventive programs, and information throughout their lives.
4. Gender parity in education and culture:
- improvement of gender aspects of education;
 - elimination of negative gender stereotypes in traditional culture.
5. Reduction of all forms of violence against women:
- integrated measures to prevent and reduce gender violence in society;
 - prohibition of human trafficking, as well as protection and support of victims of trafficking;
 - protection of women in areas of armed conflict;
 - raising of public awareness of the problem of violence.

In the context of the first goal, defined in the matrix as "Development of a national [sic] mechanism for achieving gender equality", the Secretariat has done a considerable amount of work. Since 2003, for example, structures have been in place in ministries and departments to implement the gender component, and the officials (coordinators) have been named for aspects of gender policy.

The initial models for the incorporation of gender perspectives into management at ministries and departments are strategic structures of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic: the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education. In 2003, the Secretariat, together with UNDP, performed a gender audit of the activities of all structural subdivisions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, as well as of current projects and programmes in all its structures. Also, since 2003 the implementation of the project "Incorporation of gender perspectives in the activities of the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic" has been under way and, in the context of the implementation of the National Plan for education for all and the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, preparations are going well for the implementation of another project, "Enhancing the potential of specialists of the ministry of education in the development of gender perspectives in education". This project is being carried out in Kyrgyzstan as well as in other countries of the Central-Asia region and is being supported by the regional UNESCO office in Bangkok. Based on principles of partnering and interaction, the Secretariat, together with employees of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education, has developed and introduced guidelines for integrating gender perspectives in those ministries.

In other ministries, such as the Ministry of Ecology and Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic, in order to improve the advancement of gender policy, it was decided to create additional structures — women's councils — which made it possible to intensify activities as compared with activities of previous years. The Secretariat is actively collaborating with local self-government bodies; specifically, concrete plans of operation have been compiled in each *aiyl okmotu*, and individuals responsible for gender issues have been named.

One effective mechanism to ensure equal rights consists in a gender analysis of the law as indicated in the law on the bases of State guarantees to safeguard gender equality, and the mechanisms for the introduction of the analysis into executive and legislative bodies are being developed at this time. On the basis of the approved regulation on the commission for gender analysis of normative and legislative instruments under the Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development, the Government, with its Resolution No. 94 of 23 February 2004, introduced mandatory gender analysis of all draft laws under preparation. As a result of those actions, the Ministry of Justice is being guided at present by the Government regulations, including those pertaining to implementation of the gender analysis, in a legal analysis of the draft normative and legislative instruments that have been submitted. That has made it possible to regard the mechanism of gender analysis as a unique form of society's control over State structures in the solution of gender problems.

The measures slated to be implemented in the National Plan of Action are being funded by the State budget and international organizations. Some 300,000 som were received from the State budget to implement the National Plan of Action in 2002; some 400,000 were received in 2004; and 1,011,200 some are slated to be received for 2005.

In implementing the matrix of activities of the National Plan of Action, the Secretariat is using State funds and the support of international organizations to carry out measures to develop and intensify the potential of women:

- for the heads of ministries, departments, oblast and rayon administrative bodies and local self-government bodies — series of seminars, training sessions, and round tables called "Integrating gender perspectives into State administration" (UNDP, 2002–2003); "Integrating gender and democratic factors into national policy" for judges and on the development of mechanisms for implementing Kyrgyz Republic laws on the bases of State guarantees to safeguard gender equality and on social and legal protection against violence in the family (UNFPA, 2003)
- political participation of women — a conference called "Strategy for ensuring equality of the sexes in politics" (OSCE, Conrad Adenauer Fund, 2003);
- support of women's business initiatives — "First Forum of Business Women of Kyrgyzstan" (UNIFEM, OSCE, 2003);
- prevention of violence against women — a seminar called "Gender Aspects of the Coverage of Political Issues in the Mass Media" (UNIFEM, 2003), a seminar called "Analysis of the Effectiveness of Measures Taken in the Kyrgyz Republic Against Gender Violence. Refinement of the National Mechanism to Eradicate Violence" (2004)

- cooperative partnership with the country's deputies — a round table called "Integrating Gender and Demographic Factors into Political Planning" (UNFPA, 2004).
- on gender aspects in education — seminars "Development of Academic Gender in Kyrgyzstan" for instructors at higher educational institutions (UNDP, 2003), "Integrating Gender Perspectives into the Activities of the Ministry of Education and the Kyrgyz Academy of Education" for education management office staff members (UNDP, 2003)

By and large, for monitoring the implementation of the National Plan of Action, the Secretariat created a system in 2003 for monitoring and evaluating the plan's implementation, which includes the submission of forms for the requisite reporting twice a year. At present, the Government is submitting report materials on the implementation of the plan for 2003.

The national "Human Rights" programme for the period 2002–2010 also provides for measures to set up city and rayon centres for women's initiatives and to create women's commissions in ministries and administrative departments, at enterprises, at institutions and in population centres. Operating in the Legislative Assembly of the country's parliament is the Committee on Education, Women, the Family and Youth. Thus, bodies engaged in addressing the problems of the family, women and children exist on all levels of executive and legislative authority in the Kyrgyz Republic. The system for managing gender policy is given in Chart 1.

The practical application of the law on the civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights of women is effected by the general-jurisdiction judicial system in Kyrgyzstan and the Constitutional Court of the Kyrgyz Republic, but extrajudicial institutions have also come into being, such as the special commission on human rights under the country's parliament and the Commission on Human Rights reporting to the President, as well as a number of commissions formed in the State administrative system. Among them are the following:

- Pardons Commission, under the President;
- Interdepartmental Commission on Refugees and Other Categories of Migrants, reporting to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- State Commission on Religious Affairs, reporting to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic;

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are also involved in advancing gender policy in the Republic. The Ministry of Justice, after considering the opinions of a number of NGOs and domestic and foreign experts, prepared a draft resolution of the Government on approval of the conceptual framework for cooperation between public associations and public funds (nongovernmental organizations) and State agencies; the resolution is aimed at providing comprehensive support to the further development and strengthening of institutions of the civil society in the Republic. The draft framework reflects an analysis of the situation today in the nongovernmental sector in the Republic and the basic goals, objectives, principles and forms of State support of nongovernmental organizations. Solution of the problems identified in the framework will serve to create a stable, effective system of partnering relations between State agencies and nongovernmental organizations, as well as to develop the civil society of the Republic.

It should be noted that many State structures at present are attempting to enlist the nongovernmental sector in joint work. The central staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, for example, is showing a great deal of interest in cooperative efforts with NGOs. The Ministry has established close contact with crisis centres and a number of NGOs of the Republic whose personnel are used to perform gender training of members of law-enforcement agencies.

The Ministry of Ecology and Emergency Situations has also set up and is maintaining partnering relations with NGOs and the academic sector, including on matters that involve helping ensure gender equality and expand opportunities for women. For example, at the initiative of the ministry, representatives of NGOs, higher educational institutions, and business circles are being invited to conferences, seminars, training sessions and round tables. October 2003 saw the first national seminar "Problems and Perspectives in the Implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the Kyrgyz Republic", which was aimed at implementing the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on the public's access to information and decision-making in environmental matters and at which attention was also devoted to gender-equality issues and the participation of women in decision-making in environmental matters.

In the context of the national strategy "Decentralization of State administration and development of local self-government in the Kyrgyz Republic up to the year 2010", work has been done in all regions of the Republic to support the potential of territorial associations of women (women's councils) in order to infuse the representatives of the women's councils with a new ideology aimed at the effective participation of women in decision-making and to expand their opportunities. With the participation of the Secretariat, new wording was developed for the regulation on the women's council in order to elevate the status in the local community, improve the quality of the work of that community body and give it a gender orientation.

A trilateral commission on regulating social and labour relations is operating under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. In 2004, plans call for a discussion of issues pertaining to the incorporation of the gender component into labour relations to be brought before the commission and for a section on the obligations of the parties in the area of gender equality to be included in the General Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Federation of Trade Unions and Employer Associations for 2005 and for subsequent years. In Kyrgyzstan, in all oblasts, in public employment offices, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, on the basis of the Kyrgyzstan law on promoting public employment (30 June 1998), is creating trilateral councils whose principal purpose is to achieve a broad consensus among various sectors in the formulation of an employment policy on the labour market, eradicate poverty and introduce gender equality on the labour market.

SECTION IV. OBSTACLES AND SUBSEQUENT FUNDAMENTAL MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Despite all the efforts made in the Kyrgyz Republic by State agencies and nongovernmental and international organizations, as well as by the local community, the process of advancing a gender policy has encountered a number of obstacles.

Chief among them are the following:

1. Significant gender gaps remain at the decision-making level in terms of women having less access to various management structures and fewer opportunities to affect the activities of those structures. By and large, that is due to the existing traditional notions about the place of the woman in State administration, the low level of gender sensitivity among officials and their lack of understanding of the essence of a policy for gender equality, the absence of proper training of women leaders and the absence of supporting legislation providing equal opportunities for women to participate in State administration.
2. As it turns out, the development of legal norms guaranteeing women basic human rights and freedoms is a necessary, but insufficient step in eliminating discrimination against them. Experience shows that the effectiveness of the law in changing gender stereotypes for behaviour is not completely dependent on the extent to which it corresponds to the orientations prevailing in society or on the toughness of the remedies applied to put the norms of the law into effect. As a result, it is in this very area that the so-called prescriptive right is often at odds with the law, which is reflected in the formation of unequal opportunities for women.
3. New trends of gender inequality are coming about in education in which rural schoolchildren in general and boys in particular have fewer chances to get a quality education, which increases for rural youth the probability of being excluded from the competition for well-paying jobs on the labour market. In that context, the existing weak academic base for the development of gender studies and the shortage of qualified personnel and research literature and textbooks on gender theory and practices are reflected in the absence in the State education standard of disciplines that involve gender problems, developed technologies for performing gender analysis of textbooks and teaching aids, and broad incorporation of gender disciplines in the system of secondary and higher schools.
4. The level of socially significant diseases such as tuberculosis, iodine deficiency disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, and AIDS continue to rise, which lowers public health indicators, especially for women of childbearing age.
5. The existing gender inequality on the labour market makes for the lower demand for professionally trained women than for men who are professionals, which is why the vertical and horizontal labour segregation of women remains. There is an imbalance between men and women in terms of incomes. Employment-policy problems associated with funding mechanisms limit women in terms of economic activity and active incorporation into the labour market.

6. There is no gender analysis of internal and external migration of the population for a more balanced approach to the creation of jobs and labour markets, and principles for joint management of the family economy are not developed, which generally prevents improvement of the situation regarding providing women with equal access to property and resources.
7. The level of violence against women remains high, which stems from the latency of many types of violence, the ineffectiveness of the system of preventive measures, and the existence of traditional gender stereotypes that maintain attitudes about authority and subordination in the culture of the peoples of Kyrgyzstan.
8. There is an institutional weakness in many women's nongovernmental organizations, although they are actively brought into the processes for the development of society and are working with authorities in important areas.

For further progress in that area, the Secretariat of the National Council on Women, Family, and Gender Development reporting to the President feels that it is necessary to be more focused in continuing to carry out the planned steps in the National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2002–2006 and to accelerate the practical implementation of the economic, socio-cultural, organizational and other measures for strengthening social and legal institutions such as the family, motherhood, labour, and the social protection of women. First and foremost, measures aimed at the following have been selected:

1. Increasing the participation of women in the work of Republic, oblast and rayon institutions, local self-government bodies and structures created in local communities for purposes of ensuring gender balance in the system of State administration.
2. Upgrading the normative and legislative base that affects protection of women's rights and would promote a leveling of the wages of men and women and reduce gender segregation.
3. Creating broader opportunities for developing and maintaining business initiatives for women, for training personnel for the market economy and for integrating women in them.
4. Refining the complex of socio-economic measures to enhance support of the family and harmonize family and labour relations.
5. Strengthening measures to provide medical education relating to the health of women and girls and aimed at introducing the principle of personal responsibility for one's health.
6. Accelerating the process of institutionalizing gender training in the system of secondary and higher education, in executive structures, and in oversight agencies.
7. Improving the process of gender education and socialization of the individual, and creation of new equal-partner models of communication based on observance of the human rights of the woman, mutual respect, and a new vision of the role of women and men in the surrounding world.
8. Elevating the status of gender problems through the creation of positive measures of a strategic nature for supporting writers, researchers, journalists and the mass media in general.
9. Maintaining the active enthusiasm of women's nongovernmental organizations not only through public recognition of the value their activities, but also with specific measures of a political and financial nature.

