

# BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION +30 NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF TÜRKİYE

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Beijing Platform laid out a comprehensive agenda for achieving equality between women and men across twelve critical areas of concern, including education, health, and economic empowerment. Its emphasis on women's rights as human rights and the recognition of the interlinkages between empowerment and sustainable development has shaped international discourse and policy frameworks.

However, the realization of its provisions globally has been impeded by ongoing disparities, worsened by modern crises. As well noted by President of Türkiye H.E Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, “21st century, contrary to expectations, is increasingly turning into an age of crisis.”

The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, has disproportionately affected women, exacerbating existing inequalities in employment, healthcare access, and domestic responsibilities. Climate change poses another significant threat, disproportionately impacting women in vulnerable communities who bear the brunt of environmental degradation and natural disasters.

Escalating conflicts further compound the challenges, displacing millions of women and girls, exposing them to violence, exploitation, and limited access to essential services. Especially, the humanitarian situation in Gaza, exacerbated by ongoing conflict and repeated Israeli attacks, has had a devastating impact on the lives of women and girls in the region. The persistent violence, blockade, and infrastructure destruction have created immense challenges, disproportionately affecting women and girls who often bear the brunt of displacement, loss, and trauma.

To address these complex and interconnected issues, a comprehensive approach is required, encompassing policy reforms, institutional capacity-building, and grassroots empowerment initiatives. Efforts must prioritize the voices and needs of women and girls, including those from conflict-affected regions and rural areas.

Establishing a more equitable intergovernmental system is imperative to effectively address regional and global disparities and achieve the goals set for 2030. Such a system should be founded upon principles of fairness, inclusivity, and cooperation, aiming to bridge the gaps between nations and ensure that progress towards the 2030 agenda is comprehensive and sustainable.

Moreover, international cooperation and solidarity are essential to address the root causes of inequality and ensure the meaningful implementation of responsive policies and programs. By leveraging the principles and priorities outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a path can be charted towards a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

Türkiye reaffirms its commitment to meeting international obligations arising from international human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The government remains dedicated to implementing policies and programs that uphold the principle of women's rights as enshrined in these conventions, despite the challenges posed by global crises.

In the past two decades, Türkiye has enacted constitutional and legal reforms aimed at enhancing the social status of women, fostering equality between women and men, safeguarding women's rights, and combating violence and abuse against women. These efforts have been underpinned by the establishment of various institutional mechanisms dedicated to women's empowerment. Collaborative initiatives with relevant organizations have facilitated the translation of legislative measures into practical implementation. Furthermore, targets for advancing women's empowerment have been integrated into national development plans, governmental initiatives, and strategic frameworks.

Significantly, Türkiye's constitution and laws have witnessed the enactment of legislative and institutional provisions addressing critical areas such as regulations pertaining to marriage and family life, employment conditions, measures to prevent violence against women, and other pertinent aspects concerning women's empowerment.

Despite the global challenges since the last global review of BDPfA, Türkiye has made significant strides towards advancing women's empowerment in alignment with the objectives outlined in the document. As stated 5 years ago by H.E. Recep TAYYİP ERDOĞAN, the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" still serves as an important roadmap for women's rights around the world.

In this regard; in the concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of the Republic of Türkiye (CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/9) **the CEDAW Committee** welcomed the progress achieved since the consideration of the State party's seventh periodic report in improving its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting equality, such as the eleventh National Development Plan (2019-2023) on equality and empowerment of women; The Strategy Paper and Action Plan on Women's

Empowerment, (2018-2023); The Action Plan on Human Rights 2021-2023. The Committee further welcomed the adoption of the 2021-2025 “Fourth National Action Plan to Combat Violence Against Women”.

The Committee took note of the measures taken by the State party to implement recovery plans that consider different needs of women and men during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee also noticed specific actions taken to help women and girls recover from the economic and social hardships caused by the pandemic.

With a long-term perspective aimed at articulating Türkiye's development vision, meeting the nation's fundamental values and expectations, enhancing the country's international standing, and improving the welfare of its people, the 11<sup>th</sup> Development Plan (2019-2023) served as the foundational roadmap. In its section on women, the plan aimed to prevent all forms of discrimination against women, ensure women's equal access to rights, opportunities, and resources across all spheres of social life, and empower them.

**The '12th Development Plan'**, which will advance Türkiye's long-term objectives through a sustainable development approach, encompass the years 2024 to 2028 in accordance with the 2053 vision, which will serve as the strategic framework for the steps to be taken to make country a global power center.

In the women's section of the 12th Development Plan (2024-2028), the fundamental goal is defined as ensuring that women, who hold a central role in the family, are duly valued and contribute to development momentum by equally benefiting from opportunities and resources in all aspects of life, particularly in education and employment. The plan aims to ensure that women live free from all forms of violence and discrimination, and to increase representation and participation at all levels and in all areas.

**The "Strategy Document and Action Plan for Women's Empowerment (2024-2028)"** is another important policy document that was developed through a collaborative process involving all pertinent stakeholders, aiming to bolster women's engagement in economic and social spheres. Its objectives include fostering equitable access to rights and opportunities for women and integrating principles of equality across key plans and policies.

One of Türkiye's achievements since the last reporting period is the progress made in the area of needs-based budgeting with a focus on women. According to the OECD 2023 Report, Türkiye has made progress by being among the 23 countries that have implemented budgeting

practices considering women's and men's specific needs and has been included in the mid-level countries. The report highlights the programs and technical assistance provided to parliamentarians and public officials under the *“Implementation of GRB in Türkiye Project* implemented under EU IPA Fundamental Rights, and states that “Türkiye has adopted GRB as part of the performance budgeting framework and developed effective measures in this direction”.

### *Disaster of the Century*

The massive earthquakes that struck eastern Türkiye in February 2023 affected around 14 million. Following the devastating earthquakes the government swiftly mobilized its resources. From the outset, the government's response was characterized by its proactive presence in the affected areas, spearheading comprehensive recovery efforts. Central to these initiatives was a targeted approach aimed at addressing the unique needs of women and girls in the aftermath of the disaster. Recognizing their vulnerability in such situations, special provisions and support mechanisms were put in place to ensure their safety, well-being, and inclusion in the recovery process. Through coordinated actions and tailored interventions, the government of Türkiye demonstrated its commitment to leaving no one behind, particularly prioritizing the protection and empowerment of women and girls during times of crisis.

Moreover, the Project on **Restructuring and Strengthening Preventive and Protective Services against Violence against Women in the Earthquake Affected Region** has been submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate for EU Affairs under the coordination of General Directorate on the Status of Women and in cooperation with UN Women and is under evaluation within the scope of IPA-II. The project aims to increase the quality of preventive/protective services in earthquake-affected areas by allocating budget for the construction and furnishing of 4 women's shelters (Hatay, Adıyaman, Kocaeli and İstanbul) in the earthquake zone and provinces with high migration from this zone, and for meeting the needs for building reinforcement, maintenance-repair and renovation in 15 provinces in need. In the project, it is also planned to carry out training activities to prevent violence against women and increase the capacity of protective services.

## II. MEASURES TAKEN TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ACROSS THE TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS

### Economic Participation and Ending Poverty

The participation and employment of women in the workforce is an important element of sustainable development. Ensuring continuity in economic growth, achieving full social development, and social justice can only be realized through the full and equal participation of women and men in all areas of social life as the implementers and beneficiaries of human-centered sustainable development. Improving indicators related to education, health, employment, and social security to elevate the social status of women and increase their participation in development, as well as ensuring equality between women and men in both legal terms and in practice, are of great importance. Empowering women and girls is among the priority areas in national policies.

When the status of women in the labor market is examined, according to Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) data, as of March 2024, the latest available data for individuals aged 15 and over, the number of employed women is observed to be 10 million 623 thousand. As a result of the efforts to increase female employment, significant progress has also been made in the participation rates of women in the labor force. In this context, the women's labor force participation rate is 36.4%, the women's employment rate is 32%, and the rate of women employed informally is 30.5%. With the progress made in recent years, efforts continue in Türkiye to reach the desired levels of women's labor force participation and employment rates.

When examining the labor market over the years, although there has been an improvement in favor of women, it is observed that there is room for improvement in terms of labor force participation and employment. Sex-based occupational and sectoral segregation occurs, low-skilled and precarious work is more common among women, a significant portion of the population not participating in the labor force consists of women, and especially the care burden within households are the main areas to be improved. Measures to improve both the working conditions of women and to ensure that women outside the labor force have access to decent work opportunities are important for increasing both women's well-being and societal welfare.

In this context, empowering women in the labor market and increasing women's participation in the workforce are among the fundamental priorities of Türkiye. Indeed, various regulations have been made at both the legal and policy levels, and many important projects and activities have been implemented. Moreover, significant progress has been made in laws regulating the labor market to ensure equality between women and men in the workplace, support women's employment, and reconcile work and family life.

In order to ensure that women are more actively involved in the changing dynamics of the labor market and to increase the participation of qualified women in the workforce, projects such as the "Empowerment of Women through Cooperatives Project," "Implementation of GRB in Türkiye Project," "Young Women Building Their Future Project," "Engineer Girls of Türkiye Project," "Financial Literacy and Women's Economic Empowerment Seminars," "Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan," and other activities carried out by the Ministry of Family and Social Services contribute to raising awareness of women's employment and increasing women's participation in the labor force.

Under the protocol signed between Ministry of Family and Social Services and Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TUBITAK), initiatives have been launched to support women entrepreneurs in the clean technology sector in growing their businesses. Within this context, as part of the Global Cleantech Innovation Programme (GCIP) of Türkiye 2024 Accelerator Program, the investment readiness levels of the startups will be assessed, and master workshops and investor meetings will be held with the entrepreneurs. Additionally, a competition inviting project submissions has been launched to support and advance the ideas of women entrepreneurs in the clean technology field. Project submissions completed on May 27. The competition plans to provide 250,000 lira in support to successful women entrepreneurs in four categories.

Furthermore, various efforts continue to support women's entrepreneurship, which is extremely important for increasing women's employment rates. In this regard, the "Cooperation Protocol for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship," signed between the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Ministry of Industry and Technology on January 30, 2024, aims to increase women's employment and entrepreneurship, develop cooperation to facilitate women's involvement in income-generating activities and employability, provide joint support, and promote activities. To increase women's entrepreneurship skills and capacities by enabling aspiring and existing female entrepreneurs to access the information and support they need, a website named "*kadingirisimci.gov.tr*" has been launched.

## *Strategic Documents*

Within the framework of policy regulations regarding women's participation in the economic life, the 11th Development Plan (2019-2023) emphasizes preventing all forms of discrimination against women, ensuring that women have equal access to rights, opportunities, and resources in all areas of social life, and empowering them as a fundamental goal.

In the **12th Development Plan** (2024-2028), the section on women emphasizes the recognition of the invaluable role of women central to the family and the acceleration of development by ensuring that women have equal access to opportunities and resources in all areas of life, especially education and employment, and live free from all forms of violence and discrimination. The main aim is to increase representation and participation at all levels and in all fields.

The following Goals and Policies outlined in the **12th Development Plan** demonstrate that the economic empowerment of women is a priority in national policies:

- Goal 306: Programs will be implemented to encourage participation in the workforce, especially for women and youth, to make non-active population economically active, to impart occupational skills required by green and digital transformation, and to increase the labor market flexibility. Policies will be enacted to enable every individual of working age to acquire skills for income generation and to acquire professions that give them a sense of belonging.
- Goal 334: Skilled human resources will be one of the main elements of steady growth envisaged during the Plan period. Priorities include enhancing workforce skills, directing them towards more efficient sectors, considering the relationship between education and employment, and equipping women and youth with the vocational skills needed in the labor market.
- Goal 337: Measures such as flexible regulations in the labor market, increased childcare services, educational opportunities, and employment-focused policies will enhance women's competencies in the labor market and support their increased participation in working life. Women's increased participation in the workforce, particularly in better jobs, will contribute to household income growth and societal welfare enhancement.
- Goal 345: During the Plan period, it is projected to create 5 million new jobs with an annual average increase of 3.0%. It is estimated that with the support of policies targeting women in the labor market, the participation rate of women in the workforce



will rise to 56.7%. Consequently, it is anticipated that the unemployment rate will decrease to 7.5% by the end of the Plan period.

- Goal 409.1: Ineffective employment incentives will be terminated, and the emphasis on incentives for women, youth, and the disabled will be increased to ensure a simple and effective incentive system.
- Goal 563.5: Support will be provided to cooperatives operating in priority sectors, especially agricultural sales cooperatives, women's cooperatives, and cooperatives with social purposes.
- Goal 650: Measures will be taken to maximize the employment creation capacity of the labor market within the framework of twin transformation in employment and working life. Active labor market policies will be enriched in content and utilized more effectively. The participation of women, youth, and the disabled in the labor market will be supported during the Plan period, and measures will be taken to protect and raise awareness among workers in occupational health and safety.
- Goal 652: Supporting well-being through the development of digital and green transformation-compatible knowledge and skills for women and girls, ensuring their inclusion in education at all levels according to the requirements of the age, and improving social services are among the main priorities. Concrete steps towards women's full and effective participation in employment and decision-making mechanisms in public and private sectors, as well as in politics, are crucial.
- Goal 697.5: The economic and physical accessibility of institutional care facilities for increasing women's employment will be enhanced.
- Goal 697.7: Microcredit projects will be expanded to strengthen and disseminate their impact on women's employment.
- Goal 721.1: Secondary legislation studies will be conducted in collaboration with public institutions, organizations, and the private sector to reconcile work and family life, increase women's employment, and preserve the dynamic population structure.
- Goal 727: "Temporary special measures" such as quotas and additional support will be defined and implemented to increase women's participation and representation in education, employment, and decision-making mechanisms.
  - Sub-goal 727.1: Gradual efforts will be made to increase the representation and participation of women, who make up half of the population, in all decision-making mechanisms and at all levels of governance.

- Goal 728: Efforts will be made to increase women's employment under conditions where equal pay for equal work principle is adopted in economic, social, and cultural life.
  - Sub-goal 728.1: Alternative models of quality, economical, and accessible care services will be developed and disseminated following pilot applications in collaboration with central and local governments, the private sector, and NGOs to increase women's employment.
  - Sub-goal 728.2: Programs in areas such as entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and cooperatives that will increase women's participation in the workforce will be expanded.
  - Sub-goal 728.3: Programs will be developed to ensure women's full, equal, secure, and effective participation in the changing labor market under twin transformation, and new skills and talents emerging in this context will be provided to women.
  - Sub-goal 728.4: Efforts will be made to increase women's education and employment in fields such as mathematics, science, technology, and engineering where women's representation is low, based on equality and inclusivity in both public and private sectors.
  - Sub-goal 728.5: Programs and projects, including production, innovative technologies, cooperation, and psychological empowerment, will be implemented to enable women producers and entrepreneurs affected by earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş and Hatay to reintegrate and sustain their lives.
  - Sub-goal 728.6: Efforts will be made to increase women's entrepreneurship and technology literacy in rural areas, create social spaces for women, provide quality, economical, and accessible care services, and register women working as agricultural laborers.
- Goal 750: Projects will be developed to support young people, especially young women living in rural areas, to enter the workforce and to develop projects that facilitate reverse migration to rural areas, revitalizing economic and social life.
  - Sub-goal 750.9: Efforts will be made to improve the life skills of young women who are not in education or employment and to ensure their participation in employment.

When examining the numerical targets of the 12th Development Plan, it is seen that the goals related to strengthening women's position in the economy include increasing the women's labor force participation rate to 40.1% and the women's employment rate to 36.2% by the end of 2028.

In the **Medium-Term Program** for 2023-2025, the goal is to continue efforts to facilitate and support women in starting and growing businesses, encourage their increased participation in decision-making mechanisms and e-commerce platforms, strengthen women's cooperatives and provide supportive services, and enhance financial literacy among women.

In the Medium-Term Program for 2024-2026, specific programs will be developed to ensure the full, equal, secure, and effective participation of women in the labor market transformed by digital and green transformation, and programs in areas such as entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and cooperatives will be expanded and disseminated to increase women's participation in the workforce.

One of the most important policy work to support women's employment is the **National Employment Strategy (2014-2023)**. The National Employment Strategy, prepared and implemented under the coordination of Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS), included strategies, policies and measures to be implemented to solve structural problems in the labor market and find a permanent solution to the unemployment problem, and was completed as of 2023.

The strategy was built on four basic policy axes and sector policies. The main policy axes included in the strategy are:

- Strengthening the education-employment relationship.
- Ensuring security and flexibility in the labor market.
- Increasing the employment of groups that require special policies.
- Strengthening the employment-social protection relationship.

The 'Basic Policy Axis of Increasing the Employment of Groups Requiring Special Policy', which aims to remove the obstacles to the participation in the workforce and employment of groups that require special policies, especially women, persons with disabilities, young people and the long-term unemployed, includes identification, targets and action plans for these groups.

The work carried out in cooperation and coordination with relevant institutions and organizations through the related action plan regarding the measures within the scope of the basic policy of reducing women's unregistered employment and increasing their participation in the workforce have been successfully completed.

Technical work have been initiated to prepare the Strategy for the 2024-2028 period. Studies are ongoing within the framework of the inclusive employment approach in the Strategy document, with special emphasis on improving the employability of women within the framework of decent work conditions and ensuring access to equal opportunities for women and men.

In addition to these, the "**Empowerment of Women Strategy Document and Action Plan (2024-2028)**" prepared under the coordination of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the national mechanism for women's empowerment, aims to strengthen women's economic and social participation in all areas of life, particularly education, health, and employment, strengthening against the impacts of climate change and to increase their representation at all levels and in all areas. The policies outlined in this plan aim to enable women to have a more active participation in the workforce and to have a say in economic life in line with the changing dynamics of the labor market. The previous Action Plan covered the period 2018-2023 and included significant activities related to women's economic empowerment.

In the "Economic Action Plan" section of the "Empowerment of Women Strategy Document and Action Plan (2024-2028)," the main goal is defined as ensuring the full, equal, and effective participation of women in the changing labor market for their economic empowerment.

The strategies are outlined as follows:

- Reviewing and making regulatory improvements to facilitate women's entry into the labor market and increase their employment in decent jobs.
- Providing women and girls with new skills and talents needed in the labor market compatible with twin transformation (green and digital transformation).
- Ensuring the transformation of the public and private sectors on the basis of equality and inclusivity to support women's economic empowerment for sustainable development.
- Supporting women's entrepreneurship in all fields and strengthening women's cooperatives.

Within the scope of the objectives, strategies, and activities outlined in the Strategy Document and Action Plan, a "Yearly Monitoring Report" will be prepared in coordination with relevant institutions and organizations under the Ministry of Family and Social Services to monitor the progress of the implementation process.

### ***Best practices***

#### **Women's Empowerment through Cooperatives Project**

The "Women's Empowerment through Cooperatives Project (2021-2024)" is being implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Family and Social Services and in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The project aims to strengthen women's cooperatives, ensure their sustainability, enhance their institutional capacities, and increase their visibility. It is planned to be conducted for 30 months in 30 provinces and encompasses five components (Education and Consultancy Services, Institutional Capacity Building, Awareness-Raising, Scientific and Technical Studies, Coordination and Collaboration):

- Providing education and consultancy services for women with potential to establish/join cooperatives, women already involved in cooperatives, and male members of cooperatives.
- Increasing the institutional capacity of beneficiary and co-beneficiary institutions and relevant actors in women's empowerment and cooperativization.
- Awareness-raising activities on women's empowerment and cooperativization (Printed and visual materials, celebration of Women's Cooperatives Week).
- Scientific and technical studies on women's cooperatives (Mapping and potential studies, research on best practices and innovative areas, development of a women's cooperatives ecosystem model).
- Collaboration and coordination efforts (Local stakeholder meetings, development of marketing networks, meetings and visits for experience sharing among women's cooperatives, Women's Cooperatives Web Portal (Accessible at <https://www.kadinkoop.org/>)).

#### **Implementation of GRB in Türkiye Project**

The "Implementation of GRB in Türkiye Project (2021-2024)" has the Ministry of Family and Social Services as the main beneficiary and the Presidency Strategy and Budget Presidency as the co-beneficiary. The project's implementing partner is UN Women, and among its stakeholders are the Turkish Parliament Plan and Budget Commission and the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

The project aims to strengthen women and equality between women and men in Türkiye by systematically and sustainably developing responsive planning and budgeting.

Within the project scope, awareness seminars have been organized for both central and local level public officials in managerial positions, as well as seminars for members of the Turkish Parliament Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Plan and Budget Commissions. Additionally, technical training sessions and study visits to examine international practices have been conducted with the participation of relevant public sector personnel.

Furthermore, budget analysis focus on equality have been completed for certain programs conducted at the central level and for pilot municipalities within the project. Information seminars have also been held for personnel of public institutions involved in the Strategic Plan preparation process. The "Strategy Document and Action Plan for the Implementation of Planning and Budgeting Sensitive to Equality Between Women and Men in Türkiye," aiming to institutionalize responsive budgeting, has been shared with relevant stakeholders on February 20, 2024, identifying institutional needs, key actors, necessary steps, and roles and responsibilities for implementation.

### **“Promoting Decent Future of Work Approach with a Focus of Equality Between Women and Men” Project:**

In order to support employment and employability with a focus on equality and the future of good jobs approach, and to develop the policy-making and implementation capacity of all relevant parties of working life, MoLSS carried out the Project of Supporting the Decent Work Approach of the Future with a Focus on Equality funded under EU IPA 2 (Pre-Accession Assistance Instrument).

The project consists of service and grant components. Service component supports the activities of trainings, researches, IT system etc. in order to increase the institutional capacity of the MoLSS and all relevant institutions and organizations. The grant component supports

employment and employability of people with the aim of equality between women and men and decent future of work approach.

The service component of the Project covers the period 1 February 2021 - 30 November 2023, and ended with the Closing Meeting held on 15 November 2023. Within the scope of the grant component, contracts regarding grant projects were signed with the grant beneficiaries on October 1, 2023, and the implementation process of the projects continues.

### **Türkiye's Engineer Girls Project**

The "Türkiye's Engineer Girls Project" is being implemented in collaboration between the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Limak Foundation. The aim of the project is to support girls who aspire to become engineers in every field so that they can become role models in the profession. The project started in 2016 and the first phase ended in 2021. The project continues between 2022 and 2024 as "Türkiye's Engineer Girls Project Phase II."

The project consists of different programs: a university program for female students enrolled in universities, and a high school program for high school students.

Under the university program, students benefit from scholarship opportunities, internship and employment opportunities, English language education, and the "Leadership and Innovation Training Program in Transformative Technologies" certificate program, as well as mentorship and coaching support.

The high school program includes awareness and information activities about engineering fields for students, teachers, school administrators, and parents. Within the High School Program, role model videos continue to be published on social media.

### **Young Women Building Their Future Project (2021-2024):**

Within the scope of the Young Women Building Their Future Project (2021-2024), of which General Directorate on the Status of Women of the Ministry of Family and Social Services and MoLSS are the beneficiaries, and UNDP and Sabancı Foundation are the implementing partners, preparing the ground for making the problems and needs of NEET women visible, local/national. It is aimed to ensure that they are on the agenda and to establish solution mechanisms for these problems.

The target group of the project is NEET women between the ages of 18-29, selected from the pilot provinces of Adana, Diyarbakır and İzmir. Project activities include field research (current

situation and needs analysis), capacity development and awareness training, professional skills training, mentoring and internship, digital portal with an opportunity map, stakeholder meetings, awareness campaigns, policy recommendation document, international symposium, innovative project competition and grant program.

Currently, within the scope of the Project, field research has been carried out in Izmir, Diyarbakır and Adana to determine the current situation and needs. Trainings have started within the framework of the demands resulting from the field research. Fashion Design, Digital Skills, Autocad and Laser CNC, Medical Aromatic Plants' Assistant Chef Training, Lavender and Salep Cultivation and Marketing Training, Barista training are among the training topics provided. In addition, Trauma Information Webinar was held for the participation of all teams working in the field of social services regarding the destruction caused by the earthquake.

Within the scope of the Mentoring Program, mentoring meetings were held.

The grant program design was completed and announced, applications were received, and grant support was provided to 7 winning projects.

In addition, the digital portal ([www.geleceginikurangenckadinlar.org](http://www.geleceginikurangenckadinlar.org)), which bears the name of the Project and offers easy access to all kinds of information about the project, has the Opportunities Map, which enables NEET (Neither in Education Nor Employment) young women to access job, internship, training and enterprise support all over Türkiye. In addition to modules such as "Online Education", "Mentoring", "Grant Program", there are also many articles and statistics about the NEET concept. Work is underway to implement the remaining activities.

### **Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) Incentives**

#### **Supporting Registered Women Employment Project (WOMEN-UP):**

The EU-funded WOMEN-UP Project was launched in 2021 to support women's formal employment and women's entrepreneurship. The project aims to increase formal female employment in Türkiye and make women entrepreneurs more competitive.

The project is implemented in 7 provinces (Şanlıurfa, Kahramanmaraş, Samsun, Ankara, Aydın, Denizli and İstanbul) from different regions of Türkiye and provides grant support to 4,000 women employers and 4,000 women employees.



Applications were accepted as of 21/2/2022. Some of the key activities carried out under the Project in 2023 are as follows:

- 4th Steering Committee Meeting was held where operational progress was shared with stakeholders, contracting authority and delegation.
- The 3rd and 4th Academic Advisory Board meetings of the Project were held.
- Pilot surveys were conducted in 8 offices in 7 provinces where the project is implemented.
- "Network Meetings" were organized to inform women employers about entrepreneurship programs, financial opportunities, social security rights and obligations.
- A Media Workshop was organized with students from the Faculty of Communication.
- Entrepreneurship Workshop with students from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences

#### **Promoting Registered Women's Employment through Institutional Childcare Services (INSTCARE):**

The Project, implemented by Social Security Institution (SSI) aimed to support women with children between 0-60 months of age who are at risk of being disengaged from employment due to childcare responsibilities, by enabling them to participate in, return to, or remain in formal employment through institutionalized childcare.

The Project, financed by the Republic of Türkiye and EU funds, started to be implemented in Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Elazığ, İstanbul, İzmir and Malatya provinces on 1 April 2019. Within the scope of the project, it is aimed to provide a monthly grant payment of 100 Euros to an average of 10,250 mothers for 24 months until their children reach 60 months of age. The total budget is approximately EUR 30 million. The project ended on 30/9/2022.

Within the scope of the grant component of the project, as of 30/9/2022, 157,755 women had pre-registered, and the total number of working mothers who registered during the project was 18,632. In the period January 2020-September 2022, a total of 25 million 532 thousand 400 Euros was paid to 17,959 beneficiaries. In the January-September 2022 period only, a total of 4,927,900 Euros in grant payments were made and grant payments were completed. Within the scope of the project, 36,273 monitoring visits were carried out by the Local Office staff in order

to monitor the regular attendance of beneficiaries' children in pre-school education and care institutions.

The academic component of the project aimed to propose an innovative and holistic model that includes institutional solutions to increase women's participation in the labor force and formal women's employment in Türkiye, as well as to support the work-life balance of parents. In this context, two research reports, a policy recommendation document and an impact analysis were prepared.

### **Supporting Registered Women's Employment through the Promotion of Trained Child Caregivers Project (EDUCARE):**

The Project, implemented by Social Security Institution (SSI) and financed by the Republic of Türkiye and EU funds, aimed to support women with infants between 0-36 months of age who are at risk of being excluded from employment due to their childcare responsibilities by enabling them to participate in formal employment, return to employment or remain in the labor market by supporting them in institutional childcare. The project aimed to provide grant payments to an average of 3,700 mothers in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir for 32 months until their children reach 36 months of age.

It was also planned to provide one-time grant support to 6,000 women upon completion of caregiver certificate programs. The closing conference was held on 14 December 2022. With the Working Mother Support, a number of 5,274 insured mothers were reached and a total of EUR 22,893,675 was paid.

Under the Caregiver Training Incentive, 7,503 women were financially supported, reaching the target of at least 6,000 women. In addition, women benefiting from the training incentive received Social Security Training as a prerequisite for the incentive.

The Working Mother Support and Caregiver Training Incentive disbursements amounted to €23.84 million.

On the other hand, a number of 4,491 home visits were conducted in order to observe the employment status of child caregivers and the care of children.

### **Supporting Registered Employment of Women through Promoting Educated Child Caregivers II (EDUCARE II) Project:**

Social Security Institution (SSI) of Türkiye has been implementing the “Supporting Registered Employment of Women through Promoting Educated Child Caregivers II (EDUCARE II) Project” with a budget of €15,295,329.60.

The main objective of the project is to support women in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir provinces who have infants between 0-36 months and who are at risk of being out of employment due to their childcare responsibilities to join/stay in formal employment for 12 months. In addition, it is aimed to ensure that the childcare profession is practiced by trained/certified persons with at least minimum wage in accordance with the concept of decent work.

Within the scope of the project, 3500 working mothers will be supported with €325 if they employ trained caregivers. So, registered employment of 7,000 women (3,500 mothers and 3,500 caregivers) will be supported for 12 months during the Project.

In this way, it will be ensured that mothers and child caregivers can work formally within the scope of decent work, social security awareness will be created and registered female employment will be increased in the long term. In addition, a Strategy Paper will be prepared including an impact analysis study and comprehensive studies on the childminder system.

### **Export Akademi:**

Export Akademi is a collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Trade of Republic of Türkiye and private sector that aims to increase the participation of women-owned and women-led business in exporting and to create more opportunities for women entrepreneurs to achieve economic equality. Export Akademi equips women entrepreneurs with the necessary tools and resources to become globally competitive and increase the participation of women-owned and women-led businesses in international trade.

The program’s curriculum includes one-day compact education programme on e-trade as well as insights on how to build an export-friendly digital presence, and guidance on package flows and preparing export shipment. The program also provides networking opportunities to the participants.

The Academy has held 33 one-day events that were attended by over 6000 entrepreneurs since late 2019. The latest event was in March 2024 in Ankara, Türkiye and almost 200 entrepreneurs attended the event. The said project has also taken its place among good practice examples by the SheTrades Outlook platform of the International Trade Center (ITC) and in the report titled “Delivering on the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women’s Economic

Empowerment” prepared by the International Gender Champions’ Trade Impact Group and published by ITC.

### **W2W-National Women Exporter Network Platform:**

W2W-National Women Exporter Network Platform is an online platform created for integrating more women owned business into exports process by developing corporate capacity and building network. The platform includes a mentorship module through which women entrepreneurs who have never exported or have just started exporting, and experienced women entrepreneurs can connect and become mentors and mentees. Thus, experienced women exporters can transfer their knowledge and experience to women entrepreneurs.

On this platform, there is also a communication and information sharing module that will allow women entrepreneurs to create a B2B network, a sectors module where women owned business can be filtered on sector and city basis, a training module containing detailed information on export processes and online education programs on various subjects.

### **Half Time Working Benefit:**

The half-time working benefit makes it possible for women to take care of their children without leaving working life. In order to ensure the reconciliation of work and family life balance, beginning from the end of maternity leave after birth, women who have given birth and parents who adopt children below the age of three are granted non-paid leave upon their requests with the amount of half of the weekly working time between 60 and 360 days depending on the circumstances in which the child is disabled and there is multiple birth.

Those who meet the application and premium payment conditions are paid the half time working benefit from the Unemployment Insurance Fund for certain period of time.

In 2023, 2,991 people were entitled to receive aid and 42,211,746 TL was paid. From 2016, when the aid started, until the end of December 2023, 42,074 people were entitled to benefit from the aid and 172,181,301 TL was paid.

### **Labour Inspection Activities for Women:**

Labour inspectors working in the MoLSS carry out the audit and inspect of working life on behalf of the state. Labour inspectors visit workplaces and conduct on-site observation, examinations and inspections while carrying out their duties. Not only are the working condition, but also working environment observed by the labour inspectors.

Inspection activities on the implementation of working conditions and environment such as working hours, wages, health and safety at work, welfare of workers, child and youth labour, undeclared work, unemployment, employment and labour market practices, women's working conditions etc. are carried out in accordance with the provisions of ILO Convention No. 81 on Labour Inspection in Industry and Commerce, Presidential Decree No.1 on the Presidency Organization, Presidential Decree No.15 on the Amendment of Some Presidential Decrees, Labour Law No. 4857, Occupational Health and Safety Law No. 6331 and also main labour laws and other labour legislation.

Inspection activities are carried out regardless of workers' ethnicity, nationality, sex etc.

In Türkiye, related fundamental laws, secondary legislation arrangements, and particularly the Constitution are structured in a way that guarantees the equality between men and women about wages and payments. According to the Article 10 of the Constitution, men and women have equal rights. The State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Article 3 titled "the principle of equality before the law" of Turkish Criminal Code stipulates that no one shall receive any privilege and there shall be no discrimination against any individual on the sex, among others. Also, equality between women and men in working life is ensured by the principle of equal treatment with Article 5 of the Labour Law no. 4857.

Labour Law No. 4857 transposes considerable part of the European Union Directives on labour rights. It includes provisions regarding equal treatment in access to employment and jobs, equal pay, protection of pregnant women and workers who have newly given birth.

"The principle of equal treatment" is incorporated to the Labour Law No. 4857, Article 5; thus, discrimination based on language, race, colour, sex, disability, political thought, philosophical belief, religion and denomination in the employment relationship is prohibited in the Law. Except for biological reasons or reasons related to the nature of the job, the employer must not make any discrimination, either directly or indirectly, against an employee in the conclusion, conditions, execution and termination of her/his employment contract due to the employee's sex or maternity.

Furthermore, differential remuneration for similar jobs or for work of equal value is not permissible. The application of special protective provisions due to the sex of the worker shall not justify paying her/him a lower wage. In the case of a violation of these provisions during or upon termination of the employment relationship, the employee may request a suitable remuneration equal to their four months' pay, as well as other rights of which they were

deprived. The burden of proof regarding the employer's violation of the provisions of the above paragraph shall fall on the employee. However, the employer shall be obliged to prove the non-existence of a violation, where the employee indicates a situation, which convincingly demonstrates the possibility of existence of such violations. Protective and preventive measures for eliminating violence against women are included in the legislation.

Equal pay auditing process that often require follow-up action to address inequalities is vital important. Inspection activities are carried out on whether the principle of equality specified in the labour law is complied with. If any infringement is detected against Law No.4857, Article 5, which regulates the principle of equality, administrative fine are imposed on the workplace.

In order to combat gender pay gap and income inequalities, it is very important to increase of institutional capacity, inter-institutional cooperation include national and international institutions. For this reason, it is of great importance to have systematic reporting systems and to inspect and audit these reporting systems effectively.

Regarding women's working, there are several specific rules for women in the labour legislation in Türkiye. Labour inspections activities are carried according to the aforementioned rules. If any infringement is detected against regulations regarding women and girl, administrative fine are implemented.

The labour inspection activities that prioritize women's and children's rights will be continued in the next period.

*In order to ensure the inclusion and employment of women in working life, privileged practices have been introduced for women in incentive practices. In this context;*

Within the scope of the "Incentive for Women, Young People and Vocational Qualification Certificate Holders", until 31.12.2025, private sector employers who employ unemployed people in addition to their insured numbers will pay the amounts related to employer shares of insurance premiums calculated based on premium earnings for these people (4.100,51 to 30,753.84 TL) is covered by the Unemployment Insurance Fund for periods ranging from 6 months to 54 months. If the person employed within the scope of this support is a woman, the support period varies between 24 and 54 months.

From 2002 to the end of 2023; 4,412,249 women, in 2023; 464,138, and in the January-February period of 2024; 72,398 women were placed through Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR).

Active labor market programs are organized to facilitate women's participation in the labor market and support their sustainable employment.

February 2024, 2,516,381 women (53% of total participants) benefited from these programs.

In February 2024, 2,324 women benefited from the courses and programs.

February 2024, 1,073,242 women (58% of the total participants) benefited from vocational training courses organized for those who do not have a profession or who have a profession but want to improve their professional skills or change their profession.

In February 2024, 50 women benefited from the courses.

On-the-Job training programs are organized to ensure that theoretical knowledge is reinforced through practice in the workplace, to facilitate entry into the labor market and to ensure that qualified workforce is trained together with employers.

A total of 1,220,960 women (49% of total participants) benefited from on-the-job training programs from 2009, when the program started, until the end of February 2024.

In February 2024, 2,274 women benefited from these programs.

The half-time working benefit makes it possible for women workers to take care of their children without leaving working life. In order to ensure the reconciliation of work and family life balance, beginning from the end of maternity leave after birth, women workers who have given birth and women or men workers who adopt children below the age of three are granted non-paid leave upon their requests with the amount of half of the weekly working time between 60 and 360 days depending on the circumstances in which the child is disabled and there is multiple birth.

Those who meet the application and premium payment conditions are paid the half time working benefit from the Unemployment Insurance Fund for certain period of time.

In 2023, 2,991 people were entitled to receive aid and 42,211,746 TL was paid. From 2016, when the aid started, until the end of December 2023, 42,074 people were entitled to benefit from the aid and 172,181,301 TL was paid.

Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) provides effective job and vocational consultancy services to citizens who are at the stage of career selection, have difficulties in finding/choosing a job, are unemployed, are looking for a job under better conditions, have professional

adaptation problems, and want to improve their professional skills and change their profession/job. Since 2008, when job and vocational counseling activities began systematically, 15,748,104 individual interviews have been held with 11,245,927 women. Within the scope of consultancy and guidance services, a total of 1,226,961 individual interviews were held with 950,855 women in 2022, and 1,132,034 individual interviews were held with 876,630 women in 2023 . In the first two months of 2024 (January-February), 240,982 individual interviews were conducted with 215,103 women.

As of March 2024, 32,917 women benefited from Job Clubs operating in 112 units in 81 provinces in 2023, 674 of whom were women staying in women's guesthouses.

In total, 181,760 women benefited from Job Club services from 2017, when the Job Clubs started to operate, until the end of April 2024. In January-April 2024, 16,110 women benefited from Job Club services and 1,230 of these women were women staying in women's shelters.

#### *Women's Hand in Every Profession*

With the “Women's Hand in Every Profession” project, we support women's employment in areas where women have no or very little place in the labor market.

We want to see more women in professions such as "forklift operator, bucket operator, tower crane operator, CNC lathe operator, computerized machine operator, central control operator, weighbridge operator and warehouseman" with the cooperation we will make with the private sector, and we increase the pocket money we pay to the participants in courses and programs we organize in these professions. With the project, it is aimed for women to take more place in the manufacturing industry.

#### *Positive Discrimination Project for Women's Employment (KİPAP)*

We support women employment in production with the “Positive Discrimination Project for Women's Employment (KİPAP)” which provides employers with the opportunity to observe the professional knowledge and skills of the unemployed at the workplace, to provide training and to make accurate hiring decisions. In this way, employers have the opportunity to train the labor force they need without having to bear any costs and have the opportunity to find the right workers.

Within the scope of the Positive Discrimination Project for Women's Employment (KİPAP), employers will be able to find female participant candidates with the qualifications they have determined, or they will be able to send a request to Institutions to find participant candidates.



Conditions to Benefit from the Positive Discrimination Project for Women's Employment (KİPAP); Requirements for the Employer to Receive Support Operating in the manufacturing sector:

- Have at least two insured employees,
- Being registered with İŞKUR,
- To undertake to employ for at least twice the duration of the support payment.

Employers can request participants up to 10% of the number of insured persons they employ in their workplaces.

Within the scope of the Positive Discrimination Project for Women's Employment (KİPAP); Up to 25,000 TL monthly premium, tax and wage support is provided to employers for each female worker they employ. (<https://ispozitif.iskur.gov.tr/> )

### **Efforts on Women in Agriculture and Rural Women**

In the "Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 2024-2028 Strategic Plan", the target of "Increasing Production, Investment and Employment Opportunities for Family Businesses, Women and Youth in Rural Areas" is included under the aim of "Improving the Quality of Life, Welfare Level and Economic Diversity in Rural Areas".

Within the scope of this target, projects will be carried out for women and youth living in rural areas, women will be trained in agricultural and home economics, and agricultural extension projects will be developed for women farmers. "As a result of education dissemination studies, programs, and projects carried out for women in rural areas, women will be empowered and entrepreneurship and employment will be increased."

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has efforts on the following topics within the scope of the Beijing Declaration and Action Platform.

- 1- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- 2- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises
- 3- Budgeting sensitive to equality between men and women
- 4- COVID-19 and other pandemics
- 5- Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures

6- Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services

7- Supported women's entrepreneurship, access to markets, and business development activities

In order to empower women economically and socially, ensure equal opportunities, and increase entrepreneurship and employment;

Education and extension services are provided on agricultural and social issues,

- Studies are carried out to support the establishment of cooperatives,
- Women's entrepreneurship is encouraged and supported in agriculture-based business lines,
- Socioeconomic strengthening projects are carried out,
- Educational programs and projects for children, women and youth are prepared to protect family farming and ensure its sustainability.
- Strategy studies are carried out to solve women's problems.

#### *Women Farmers Training and Publication Studies*

In order to carry out sustainable agricultural activities and increase quality products by increasing the knowledge and skills of women farmers at every stage of the agricultural production process, training is provided in 81 provinces using various extension techniques on many agricultural subjects, from viticulture to animal husbandry, from fruit growing to greenhouse cultivation, from beekeeping to silkworm farming. In addition, training and publication activities are carried out in 81 provinces on home economics and various social issues (such as family resources and management, nutrition, child development and education, handicrafts) in order to bring the social lives of women farmers to the modern life level and to develop them socio-economically. In this context, 1.791.311 women were provided with trainings (2020-2024).

#### *Training and Publication Activities Provided to Women Farmers Where Agricultural Development Cooperatives Are Located*

"Agricultural Development Cooperatives Owned by Partners" provide support to women farmers in their locations on issues related to general cooperatives and the fields of activity of the cooperatives (animal care and nutrition, animal diseases, milking techniques and hygiene, hygienic milk production, utilization of milk in various ways, barn maintenance and cleaning , sheep breeding, beekeeping, greenhouse farming, etc.) have been given training throughout the country since 2004, and they are enabled to benefit primarily from Ministry support, taking into account positive discrimination.

Since 2004, more than 11 thousand farmer meetings have been held and more than 74 thousand women farmers have received training on cooperatives.

#### *Provincial Special Projects Program for Women Farmers*

Within the scope of the program implemented since 2015, it is aimed to increase their entrepreneurial capacity and create employment opportunities through subject-based training by ensuring that they take part in projects that contribute to regional development.

941 female farmers received training and took part in income-generating activities within the scope of the project.

#### *Women Farmers Meet Agricultural Innovations Program*

To ensure that agricultural innovations are learned and implemented by women farmers and disseminated with a focus on women, the "Women Farmers Meet with Agricultural Innovations" program has been carried out since 2015 in cooperation with the Research Institute Directorates and Provincial Directorates affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture. Agricultural extension projects are carried out within the scope of this program.

In this context, 4.021 female farmers received training between 2020-2023.

#### *Family Farming Development Program*

The Women Farmers Agricultural Extension Project aims to develop the capacities of women living in rural areas through training and extension methods in agricultural issues and economic activities, to increase the quality of agricultural production, to enable women to take a more active role in development, and to improve and strengthen their socioeconomic position.

Based on the work carried out in the provinces so far by the Ministry for women farmers, the "Family Farming Development Program", which will cover agricultural activities managed and

operated by the family and based on the labor force of family members, including women and men, has started with different projects in 5 cities in 2024.

*Leaving No One Behind: Empowerment and Ensuring Greater Participation of Women in Rural Areas in Türkiye and Central Asia Project -GCP/SEC/018/TUR*

The project which was presented in 2018 to be carried out in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), was signed by Türkiye and the project activities started in September 2021. The pilot provinces of the project, which aims to create sustainable economic opportunities at the basic level for women living in rural areas in the beneficiary countries Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan, and to improve their socio-economic status by supporting agricultural and forestry policies and programs, have been determined as Burdur, Kahramanmaraş and Ordu. Within the scope of the 2022 activities of the project, field visits were made to the pilot provinces of Burdur, Kahramanmaraş and Ordu, and project promotion meetings were held. In addition, the expectations and needs of the project were determined through farmer visits. Women's Development Units (KAGEB) were established in the project pilot provinces and data on women's studies and agricultural production in the provinces were shared with Presidency. The staff involved in the project received training on equality between men and women in Antalya between 29 November and 01 December 2022. After the training, the field analyst in the project visited three provinces and carried out field analysis in forestry and agriculture. Capacity-building training was given to all personnel involved in the project on 19-23 June 2023, and an experience-sharing activity was carried out by visiting good examples in Ankara. During the field visit held in Ordu on 18-19 July 2023 and in Burdur on 25-26 July 2023, a meeting and a visit to good examples were held with stakeholders who will contribute to the action plan of the province prepared within the scope of the project. Within the scope of the project, training was provided to 60 female farmers in Kahramanmaraş, 51 in Ordu, and 41 in Giresun. FAO has initiated tender procedures for tool and equipment support to women farmers receiving training within the scope of value chains in three pilot cities, and the process continues.

*"My Sister" Project*

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was also included in the "My Sister" project with the protocol signed with Coca-Cola Türkiye on International Women's Day, March 8, 2021.

Within the scope of the program, trainings were provided on Financial Awareness, Customer Relations and Sales, Mobile Photography, Security in the Digital World, Product Presentation

and Marketing Techniques, Advertising and Awareness Raising on Social Media, Food Safety, and Labeling Legislation. Within the scope of the My Sister Project, a total of 1273 female farmers received training in 26 provinces between 2021-2022.

### *Adapting Gender Perspective Into Climate Change, Environmental and Disaster Risk Reduction Policies and Programmes*

Groups heavily impacted by the social and economic consequences of climate change and environmental disasters, including women, require a focus on equality when transitioning to a climate-resilient, green economy.

As the institution responsible for regulating working life, the MoLSS carries out the coordination of just transition studies in Türkiye. Equality perspective is maintained in studies carried out at different dimensions, from raising awareness about a just transition to strengthening the institutional capacities of stakeholder institutions, from developing policies to ensure the adaptation of labor markets to climate change, to developing inclusive employment, and strengthening social dialogue and participation in this field.

Contributions were made with this approach to policy documents prepared by stakeholders, such as mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change and the action plan for women's empowerment. Studies have been carried out with this perspective in all policy axes of the new national employment strategy, which is currently under preparation, improving skill harmonization, increasing inclusive employment, strengthening the protection-employment relationship and developing sustainable employment in rural areas. In addition, it is foreseen that the empowerment of women and the development of equality between women and men will be among the principles and important policies of the national just transition strategy which is planned to be prepared in the medium term.

### **Social Assistance**

With the social assistance Programs carried out by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, citizens in the lowest income group of the society with different disadvantages are supported.

With the approach that women are more affected by poverty and may face the risk of poverty more, regular social assistance Programs carried out by the MoFSS General Directorate of Social Assistance support women's right ownership. Social assistance programs are established and maintained on the basis of need with a household approach without any sex discrimination within the framework of the principle of social justice.

Providing positive discrimination to women and girls due to social, structural and cyclical obstacles has a special place in the shaping of social assistance programs. In this context, while there are no obstacles for women and girls to access social assistance, thematic social assistance Programs are implemented to protect disadvantaged women and girls from risks.

In the year of 2023, 62% of social assistance beneficiaries were women. Regular assistance Programs such as Conditional Cash Transfer Programs, Regular Cash Assistance Program for Widow Women and Assistance Program for Needy Family Whose Men in Compulsory Military Services have a significant share among all social assistance Programs supported by the General Directorate of Social Assistance. In scope of these assistance Programs, payments are made primarily to women. Thus, it is aimed to strengthen the economic and social status of women and increase their participation in social life. In addition, quota and grant practices targeting women in project supports and practices that increase women's participation in economic and social life such as Family Support Centre Projects have been implemented. Also, special housing support Programs for disadvantaged women provide housing support to deceased women with at least 3 children under the age of 18 by building or buying a house.

Türkiye Family Support Program, launched in 2022, aims to lift citizens who are below the extreme poverty line out of poverty by including them in the social assistance system. With the program, cash assistance is provided to support citizens who face situations such as working poverty, pensioner poverty, etc., and citizens who cannot benefit from regular social assistance due to the lack of any disadvantage besides poverty. In this context, for the first time in Türkiye, cash and regular support is provided without any additional thematic criteria (disability, old age, being a relative in the military, etc.), only taking into account income. With the "Child Support Component" within the scope of the program, additional monthly cash assistance is provided according to the number of children in the household.

The Conditional Cash Transfer for Education has been implemented for over 2.5 million children each year on the condition that they attend regular schooling. With this Program, which has proven to be effective in preventing child labour, investment is made in human capital and regular payments are made to families to send their children to school regularly. With this feature, the Conditional Education Assistance Program aims not only to overcome the problem of poverty, but also to eliminate social norms that prevent families in need from sending their children to school. Payments are deposited into the mothers' accounts and aim to cover the school expenses of the child who is a student and contribute to the family budget. Payments

made to girls are higher than those made to boys. Thus, more contribution is made to the participation of girls in education.

The Conditional Cash Transfer for Health aims to support the nutritional needs of pregnant women in need during pregnancy, delivery and puerperium in order to minimize early child mortality and health problems encountered during pregnancy. In scope of the Program, families in need are provided with regular support on the condition that they take their children aged 0-6 years to regular health checks, pregnant women have regular health checks and give birth in a hospital.

Additionally, the Birth Assistance Program supports households with children through one-off payments and the Multiple-Birth Assistance Program provides monthly payments to meet the nutritional and self-care needs of needy households with children aged 0-2 years born through multiple births.

Within the scope of strengthening the link between social assistance and employment, employment incentives are provided to encourage women aged 18-55 receiving social assistance to participate in employment and reduce their need for social assistance in order to improve women's economic opportunities, especially their full and productive employment, decent work, equal pay or equal value for equal work and to strengthen their resilience to shocks.

In addition to all these, the General Directorate of Social Assistance carries out assistance Programs for foreigners in need in Türkiye with the financing of the European Union. Within the scope of the Programs, monthly cash assistance are provided within the framework of determined criteria (household size, disability rate, age, etc.) and it is aimed to increase the welfare of families and children in need who seek refuge in Türkiye, to raise children as educated and healthy individuals and to increase their social cohesion.

In conclusion, Türkiye aims to protect women and girls from risks by increasing their access to social assistance in view of the fact that women and girls feel the effects of poverty more, and special social assistance programs for women and girls are continuously developed.

## Women’s Leadership and Participation in Decision Making Mechanisms

The participation of women in leadership positions and decision-making mechanisms is considered one of the indispensable elements of democracy and development. The greater presence of women in leadership roles and decision-making processes influences the creation of inclusive and fair policies and strengthens women's rights. It also promotes equality, helping to transform societal norms and contributing to the promotion of women's economic and social rights. Therefore, the participation of women in leadership and decision-making mechanisms is one of the priority issues for countries that aim to achieve development goals and advanced democracy, striving for equal representation of women in all areas of life.

At the policy level, the 12<sup>th</sup> Development Plan 2024-2028 of Türkiye for the first time includes provisions on temporary special measures. The plan states “to increase women’s participation and representation in education, employment and decision making mechanisms, “temporary special measures” such as quotas and additional support will be defined and implemented”.

One of the main headings of the "Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan (2024-2028)" is "Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making Mechanisms." The primary objective of this section is "to increase the representation of women in politics, leadership, and decision-making mechanisms at national and local levels and to ensure their effective participation in decision-making processes." Under this objective, three strategies have been developed:

- Enhancing the capacity of institutions to increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes.
- Conducting activities to raise social awareness to increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making mechanisms.
- Conducting research and implementing regulations to contribute to women's participation in political life and their involvement in authority and decision-making processes.

For these strategies, 13 specific activities have been planned.

Turkish women obtained the right to vote and be elected in local elections in 1930 and in parliamentary elections in 1934, earlier than many countries known today as advanced democracies. The increase in women's representation in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) over the past 10 years is extremely significant. In the 2002 General Elections, the



number of female deputies in Parliament was 24, with a representation rate of 4.4%. In the General Elections of June 24, 2018, the number of female deputies increased to 104, with a representation rate of 17.45%. Most recently, in the General Elections of May 14, 2023, the number of female deputies reached 119, with a representation rate of 19.83%.

Currently, there is one female Minister in the Cabinet (5.88%). Additionally, out of the 70 Deputy Ministers serving in various Ministries, 6 (8.57%) are women. The increase in women's representation in Parliament is a notable positive development. This improvement is attributed to the efforts of NGOs, the rise in societal awareness, public criticisms directed at political parties, the increase in role models, and the positive shift in women's perspectives on politics. Considering all these factors, it is evident that enhancing social awareness and encouraging women through various initiatives, as well as collaborating with NGOs, are of paramount importance.

One of the important indicators of women's participation in leadership and decision-making mechanisms is local politics. Following the March 2024 local elections, number of women's participation at the local level has seen a remarkable surge. According to the unofficial data of the 2024 local elections, the number of women mayors elected at the provincial level increased from 4 to 11 out of 81 provincial mayors, marking a growth from 4.9% to 13.6%. The number of women mayors at district level ascended from 36 to 67 out of 1321 total, marking an increase from 2.7% to 5%.

In terms of female participation in judicial bodies, as of May 14, 2024, the total number of judges and prosecutors in Türkiye is 23,787. Of these, there are 16,191 judges and 7,596 prosecutors. The sex distribution is as follows:

There are 16,191 judges, consisting of 8,608 men and 7,583 women.

There are 7,596 prosecutors, consisting of 6,276 men and 1,320 women.

Overall, the judiciary consists of 14,884 men and 8,903 women.

Another significant area regarding women's participation in leadership and decision-making mechanisms is higher education. Women's involvement in academic staff is crucial for increasing productivity in the scientific field and offering new perspectives. The proportion of female lecturers at universities is 46.49%. Among professors, the proportion of women is 34.43%, among associate professors it is 41.95%, among assistant professors it is 47.46%, and

among research assistants it is 53.97%. Out of 204 universities, 19 (9.31%) have female rectors, with the proportion of female vice-rectors at 17.19%, female deans at 21.6%, and female vice-deans at 34.9% (GDSW, 2023).

Principle 4.3.9, included in the Corporate Governance Principles published as an annex to the Capital Markets Board's Corporate Governance Communiqué No. II-17.1, sets a voluntary target of a minimum of 25% female membership on the board of directors. This principle encourages the establishment of a target ratio and timeframe, the creation of policies to achieve these targets, and the annual evaluation of the progress made by the board of directors in reaching these targets under the "comply or explain" approach.

In conclusion, to increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making mechanisms at local and national levels, it is necessary to implement initiatives and practices that raise social awareness and encourage women. Policies that ensure women's equal participation in all areas of social life should be resolutely continued during this planning period, as in the past.

## Education

Since February 1, 2018, under the auspices of President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN and First Lady Emine ERDOĞAN, the Ministry of National Education (MEB) has initiated a Literacy Campaign to ensure that all illiterate adults learn to read and write. From the onset of the campaign until the end of 2022, a total of 1,384,235 individuals at all levels have been reached, with 1,096,036 female participants attending literacy courses across all levels.

The literacy rate among individuals aged 6 and above was 97.2% in 2019, increasing to 97.6% by 2023. During the period from 2019 to 2023, the literacy rate among women increased from 95.3% to 96%. The average years of education for the population aged 25 and above rose from 8.7 years in 2019 to 9.3 years in 2023, with women averaging 8.6 years and men averaging 10.1 years of education in 2023.

In terms of preschool education, significant progress has been made between 2002 and 2023, with a considerable increase in the number of children attending preschool education institutions. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the gross enrollment rate for 5-year-olds reached 95.21%, which is the highest schooling rate increase observed among OECD member countries after 2010.

Additionally, the net enrollment rate in preschool education for the age group of 3-5 years was 51.38%, with slightly higher rates for boys (51.41%) than girls (51.34%).

The net enrollment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education for both sexes have shown steady improvements. In the 2022/2023 academic year, the net enrollment rate in primary education was 93.85%, while in secondary and tertiary education, it reached 91.21% and 91.70%, respectively. As of the 2022-2023 academic year, the schooling rate of girls at the secondary school level surpassed that of boys, reflecting progress in gender parity in education. Additionally, legislative regulations have been introduced to support teachers, including provisions for pregnant teachers and those with disabilities.

Regarding higher education, there has been a remarkable increase in the net enrollment rate from 18.85% in 2005/06 to 46.02% in 2022/23. Notably, the net enrollment rate for women rose from 17.41% to 51.19% during the same period. In state universities, the proportion of women at the master's and doctoral levels was 46.49% and 48.57%, respectively, while in foundation universities, these figures were 54.26% and 52.45%, respectively.

Türkiye's efforts to ensure equal access to education for girls and boys have included the establishment of boarding schools in rural areas without schools and economically disadvantaged areas. As of the 2023-2024 academic year, there were 22,536 boarding students, with 47.03% being female.

Furthermore, within the framework of widespread education, Ministry of National Education (MEB) reported that out of 11,587,178 learners enrolled in courses opened through the e-widespread system, 63.9% were women.

Türkiye, aiming to ensure equal participation of boys and girls in education, initiated an educational mobilization campaign. In rural areas where schools are not available, boarding and dormitory primary schools have been established to provide primary education services to the population of primary school age and children from economically disadvantaged families. According to the data for the 2023-2024 academic year, the number of boarding students is 22,536, with 10,599 (47.03%) being female (MEB, December 31, 2023).

To improve access to quality education for boys and girls in sparsely populated and underserved areas, combined classes are implemented in schools, and the "Mobile Primary, Secondary, and High School Program" is carried out to ensure equal opportunities in education. The number of students benefiting from the Mobile Primary and Secondary School Program is 744,625, with 367,486 (49.35%) being female (MEB, December 31, 2023).

Families living in the poorest households, unable to afford sending their children to school due to financial constraints, receive "Conditional Education Assistance" on the condition that their children attend school. The amounts of assistance provided to girls and students transitioning from primary to secondary education are higher, and the payments are made to mothers. Impact analysis of the Conditional Education Assistance shows that the absenteeism rate among recipients decreased by approximately 50% compared to non-recipients, with a higher reduction in absenteeism observed in rural areas and among girls compared to boys (MEB, December 31, 2023).

To encourage enrollment and attendance of foreign students in schools, the "Conditional Education Assistance for Foreigners" (YŞEY) is provided through EU funding in collaboration with the Turkish Red Crescent and MEB. Under this project, families receive payments every two months (in January, March, May, July, September, and November) to their Red Crescent cards, provided that students attend school regularly (no more than 4 days of absenteeism per month).

In collaboration with the Directorate General of Migration Management and the Directorate General for Lifelong Learning, courses (SUYE) are organized for all adult foreigners (aged 17-65) with legal residency rights in Türkiye to facilitate their integration into social, economic, and cultural life. In 2023, a total of 68,137 children benefited from the child playrooms in the Public Education Centers, with 8,570 being foreign nationals and 59,567 being Turkish children.

Under the widespread education activities for foreigners, general courses, vocational and technical courses, and Turkish language courses are provided through Public Education Centers to enable foreigners residing in Türkiye to benefit from the universal right to education and facilitate their social integration. Turkish language teaching programs are prepared according to age groups to improve the language skills of all foreigners, with a specific aim to enhance the language development of foreign women.

In areas where preschool classes cannot be opened, alternative access models such as the "Mobile Teacher Class" and the "Transportation Center Preschool Class" have been implemented. Through these models, children are provided with quality education by gathering them in suitable areas under the guidance of a teacher in the case of the Mobile Teacher Class, and by transporting them from remote villages to selected transportation centers with accompanying staff in the case of the Transportation Center Preschool Class. In the 2018-2019 academic year, 1047 children benefited from alternative access models, while in the 2022-2023 academic year, this number increased to 4440 children.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, the Mobile Teacher Class model was implemented in 16 provinces, covering 29 districts and 141 education centers, benefiting 683 children. The Transportation Center Preschool Class model was implemented in 32 provinces, covering 82 districts and 161 education centers, benefiting 1742 children. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the Mobile Teacher Class model was implemented in 32 provinces, covering 47 districts and 178 education centers, benefiting 950 children. The Transportation Center Preschool Class model was implemented in 41 provinces, covering 103 districts and 237 education centers, benefiting 3490 children.

To support children from disadvantaged households who do not have access to preschool education, the "My Toy Box Set," containing 52 different materials, has been prepared. Additionally, an alternative access model has been developed, where the set is delivered to the child and the family through the preschool teacher and school principal, followed by regular

home visits to monitor and support the child's development and provide guidance to the family. In the 2022-2023 academic year, 13,200 "My Toy Box Sets" were delivered to children's homes.

To enrich preschool education, the shooting of the "TRT EBA Preschool" program, consisting of 492 episodes for preschool children, has been completed. Broadcasted daily in the mornings and evenings throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, the program provided quality content to approximately 4 million children aged 3, 4, and 5 in Türkiye and thousands of children abroad. Moreover, the program was complemented by the "Family" segment targeting parents, aiming to support children in receiving quality education in all environments and opportunities.

### ***Initiatives***

#### *EU Code Week and Digital Skills Development:*

MoNE the Digital Skills Department of the General Directorate of Educational Technologies and Innovation has been actively involved in promoting girls' participation in education through initiatives such as the EU Code Week. This grassroots movement celebrates creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration through programming and tech activities. In 2023, over 3 million participants engaged in EU Code Week events, with more than 50% being women. This highlights the commitment to equality between women and men and inclusivity in the coding community.

#### *Technical Assistance for Increasing Attendance and Enrolment Rates in Secondary Education (ODAP):*

Under the EU IPA II program, the Technical Assistance for Increasing Attendance and Enrolment Rates in Secondary Education project has been implemented in 14 provinces and 50 pilot schools. The project aims to enhance the attendance and enrolment rates of girls in secondary education through comprehensive interventions. Measures have been taken to address the specific needs of disadvantaged students, particularly girls, to improve their access to, retention in, and completion of secondary education.

#### *Digital Literacy and Digital Marketing Training for Women:*

Since 2020, the Digital is My Job Project has been implemented, focusing on providing digital literacy and digital marketing training to women learners, thereby enhancing their digital skills and promoting their participation in the digital workforce. In the first phase, 5117 women learners received training, leading to the employment of 86 learners. The ongoing third phase

includes training for women living in earthquake-prone provinces, reaching approximately 25,000 learners as of March 2024.

These initiatives demonstrate Türkiye's commitment to promoting literacy and education for all, with a particular focus on improving access and participation among women and girls.

## Health

Within the framework of the Women's Health Monitoring Program for Ages 15-49; all women aged 15-49 are monitored at least twice a year by primary health care institutions to acquire information about fertility behaviors, detect risky situations, identify early pregnancy, gain knowledge about reproductive health methods, and receive counseling on women's health and reproductive health methods for on-site education purposes. These findings are reported to the Ministry of Health.

**Pre-Marital Counseling Program:** The program aims to provide individuals applying for pre-marital health reports with the necessary level of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding reproductive and sexual health issues.

Within the scope of this program; counseling services are provided on healthy family structure, reproductive health, reproductive health methods, sexually transmitted infections, consanguineous marriage, and genetic diseases (hereditary blood diseases-hemoglobinopathies). Counseling is also provided to couples applying for pregnancy, with the aim of identifying and taking early measures against conditions that may pose a risk to maternal and infant mortality.

In 2023, Pre-Marital Counseling services were provided to 590,684 individuals and Pre-Marital Counseling Training was provided to 1,397 health personnel (Ministry of Health, December 31, 2023).

**Antenatal Care Program:** Aimed at improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality, this program is implemented nationwide as part of routine services. According to the "Antenatal Care Management Guide" prepared, if pregnant women have no risk, they are provided with at least 4 check-ups. Additionally, protocols for high-risk pregnancies are prepared.

**Pregnancy Information Class Program:** The program aims to ensure that all pregnant women are knowledgeable about prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care, and to provide expectant parents with information and skills to adopt their new roles. In 2022, a total of 682,253 pregnant women received education in pregnancy information classes in community health centers and secondary and tertiary health care institutions. In 2023, this number was 569,561 (Ministry of Health, December 31, 2023).



**Hospital Deliveries Monitoring Program:** This program aims to ensure that every pregnant woman gives birth safely in a hospital, to maintain reasonable rates of cesarean sections, and to eliminate inequalities (region, place of residence, age, sex).

**Postnatal Care Program:** Developed to prevent maternal and infant deaths due to preventable causes in the postpartum period, this program ensures that mothers are not discharged from the hospital before complete recovery after childbirth. Postpartum follow-up is carried out according to the "Postnatal Care Management Guide". If the mother has no risk factors, she should be followed up at least 3 times in the health institution where the delivery took place, and at least 3 times at home/health institution by the family physician/family health worker after discharge.

**Reproductive Health Services Program:** The aim of reproductive health services is to enable couples to have children whenever they want and as many as they want, and to understand the reasons for infertility in infertile couples and to provide treatment. In Türkiye, information and counseling services play a very important role in providing reproductive health services. Reproductive health counseling and method presentation services are provided free of charge to citizens applying for them by the Ministry of Health, preventing risky and unwanted pregnancies.

**Maternal Mortality Monitoring and Prevention Program:** The program aims to investigate every maternal death according to its cause and to prevent maternal deaths due to preventable causes. In each province, "Provincial Maternal Mortality Detection and Prevention Unit" and "Provincial Investigation Commission", within the Ministry of Health "Maternal Mortality Preliminary Investigation Commission" and "Central Investigation Commission" have been established.

In the Ministry of Health Maternal Mortality Preliminary Investigation Commission, all maternal deaths related to pregnancy from provinces are evaluated, and according to the three-delay model and ICD-10 classification, causes of death and preventability are decided, and maternal death classification is made. Deaths whose causes and delay model cannot be fully determined are discussed in the Central Investigation Commission with the names of the hospital, physician, and mother kept confidential.

**Baby-Friendly Hospital Program:** The aim is to create environments where expectant mothers' rights, safety, and privacy are considered during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. As of January 30, 2024, there are 123 health facilities that have been awarded the title

of Baby-Friendly Hospital (Ministry of Health, Directorate General of Public Health, December 31, 2023).

Program to Ensure Male Participation in Reproductive Health Services: In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Turkish Armed Forces Health Command, and UNFPA, education on reproductive organs, sexual health, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS and its social consequences, formation of pregnancy, reproductive health/reproductive health method, safe motherhood, equality between women and men, and domestic violence are provided to non-commissioned officers and soldiers in all military units nationwide.

Health services are provided on-site to individuals who have difficulty accessing services through mobile health services and home care services. It is predicted that access to health services for women will increase within this framework. In addition, Family Health Centers have been established in every neighborhood according to the population, facilitating access to health services. Contraceptive material distribution continues in these centers.

Mobile health service practices have been developed to reach the most remote settlements in rural areas with the aim of delivering health services to rural areas. With these practices, the rate of providing services to the population in need has reached up to 99%.

In the last 5 years, the capacity for emergency patient transportation has increased threefold both in terms of station numbers and ambulance numbers. In addition, the number of snowmobile ambulances serving rural areas with severe winter conditions has increased, reaching 100% of the rural population with 112 services. Furthermore, an air ambulance fleet has been established, strengthening the capacity for emergency service delivery.

In addition to the health supports provided by Family Health Centers, Conditional Health Aid is implemented to create a social security network aimed at ensuring full access to basic health services for the neediest families' children.

Within the framework of the protocol between MoFSS and the Ministry of Health, Conditional Health Assistance Birth Aid is provided once to expectant mothers belonging to the neediest segment of the population.

Within the scope of Conditional Health Aid, monthly cash assistance is provided to families in the poorest segment of the population, with conditions including taking their children for regular health check-ups (completing the vaccinations specified in the vaccination schedule and general health check-ups) for children aged 0-6, monthly assistance of 100 TL, monthly

assistance of 200 TL for pregnant women who undergo regular health checks during pregnancy, one-time assistance of 500 TL for hospital births, and cash assistance of 300 TL for conditional postpartum care for the first 2 months after birth.

Furthermore, since May 15, 2015, childbirth assistance has been provided to Turkish citizens and Blue Card holders who have given birth. 300 TL is paid for the first child born alive, 400 TL for the second child, and 600 TL for the third and subsequent children. Birth assistance, paid to the mother if she is healthy and a Turkish citizen, is provided for live births that occurred on or after May 15, 2015.

Since November 2018, an assistance program has been implemented to support the nutritional and personal care needs of households with multiple births, ensuring the preservation of dynamic population structure and adhering to the principle of a social state. A support program has been implemented to assist households with multiple births in meeting their nutritional and self-care needs. Monthly payments of 400 TL per child are made to households where the monthly income per capita is less than one-third of the net minimum wage. These payments are intended for children aged 0-2.

The payments are deposited into bank accounts opened in the mothers' names. The aim is for women to use these funds, which are their own responsibility, to meet the needs of their children for care and health, while also elevating their status within the family and society.

In accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), the National Cancer Control Program, which encompasses registration, prevention, screening, and treatment efforts, is implemented. Screening programs are carried out for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers, tailored to the resources and disease burden of the community.

Cancer screenings nationwide are conducted in community-based and opportunistic approaches. Community-based screenings are provided free of charge at primary health care facilities, including Cancer Early Detection, Screening, and Education Centers (KETEM), Healthy Life Centers (SHM), Family Health Centers (ASM), and Mobile Cancer Screening vehicles affiliated with Community Health Centers.

As of December 2023, there are at least 381 Cancer Screening Centers in each province (88 independent, 247 within Social Service Centers, and 46 mobile units). Mobile cancer screening vehicles provide services to rural and disadvantaged groups.

Between January 1 and December 31, 2023, a total of 2,378,541 women and 615,324 men benefited from cancer screening services at these centers. Additionally, between January 1 and December 31, 2023, 172,344 public education activities were conducted by these centers, benefiting 1,167,091 women and 384,733 men (Ministry of Health, December 31, 2023).

In addition to these programs:

- The "Guest Mother Program" was initiated in 2008 to identify and accommodate pregnant women residing in areas with unfavorable weather and transportation conditions, as well as those who may face difficulties accessing healthcare facilities during childbirth due to social reasons. These pregnant women are transferred to safer settlements as their expected delivery dates approach, where they can stay and give birth in hospitals. After the health status of both the mother and the baby becomes appropriate after birth, they are taken back to their homes. Furthermore, within the framework of the ongoing Family Medicine Practice, there is an assigned family physician responsible for each individual.
- Mobile healthcare services and home care services are provided on-site to individuals facing difficulty accessing healthcare services. It is anticipated that this will increase women's access to healthcare services. Additionally, Family Health Centers have been established in every neighborhood according to the population, facilitating access to healthcare services. Distribution of contraceptive materials continues in these centers.
- In the last five years, the capacity for emergency patient transportation has increased threefold both in terms of the number of stations and ambulances. Especially, the number of snow-tracked ambulances serving rural areas with severe winter conditions has been increased, reaching 100% of the rural population with 112 emergency services. Additionally, an air ambulance fleet has been established, strengthening the capacity for emergency service delivery.
- In addition to the health support provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Conditional Health Aid is implemented to create a social security network aimed at ensuring full access to basic healthcare services for the most vulnerable segment of the population, namely the children of families in need. Within the framework of the protocol with the Ministry of Health, Conditional Health Aid for childbirth is provided once to expectant mothers who are among the neediest.
- National guidelines for the management of pre-pregnancy care, childbirth and cesarean section, postpartum care, and emergency obstetric care have been revised and

implemented in accordance with national data by scientific committees. Standards have been established to ensure quality service delivery by healthcare personnel nationwide. In addition to these protocols, a "High-Risk Pregnancies Management Guide" has been published. The prepared guide consists of Management Guides for Venous Thromboembolism in Pregnancy, Pregnancy and Cardiovascular Diseases, Management Guide for Diabetic Pregnancy, Management Guide for Asthmatic Pregnancy, and Management Guide for Epileptic Pregnancy. The Management Guide for Venous Thromboembolism in Pregnancy has been revised and sent for implementation to all healthcare institutions and personnel providing pre-pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care services in 81 provinces for women aged 15-49. Emergency Obstetric Care Program activities continue with interventions for obstetric complications, safe referrals, safe blood transfusions, and intersectoral collaboration components. Within the scope of emergency obstetric care for doctors and midwives, as of 2022, 1128 healthcare personnel received managerial training, 5038 healthcare personnel received support staff training, 218 obstetricians and gynecologists received clinician training, 1576 emergency medicine specialists and general practitioners received clinician training, and 859 midwives and nurses received clinician training.

- In the provision of maternal and child health services, the existing situation of "Labour, Birth, Postpartum (LBP)" rooms in public health facilities has been evaluated with the aim of creating birth units that encourage normal delivery and provide quality service to expectant mothers in private, dignity-based environments. Transition to birth units consisting of single-person rooms based on privacy in maternity hospitals has been supported, considering the number of LBP rooms required according to the annual number of deliveries in health facilities where childbirth is performed. As of the end of 2023, there are 1,380 LBP rooms in 285 health facilities.
- The "Hydrotherapy-Assisted Labour (HET)/Water Birth Pilot Study," which means the expectant mothers spending the first stage of labor in a tub/pool filled with water at certain intervals, depths, and temperatures, has been conducted since 2018. Currently, 28 Hydrotherapy-Assisted Labour (HET) units are providing services in 17 healthcare facilities within public hospitals. As of the end of 2023, a total of 2392 patients have benefited from HET services.
- Türkiye Institute of Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health (TIMCAH) aims to be a leading institution in Türkiye that defines, solves, and prevents problems in maternal,

child, and adolescent health through national and international multi-stakeholder, evidence-based advanced research and projects.

- In line with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), the National Cancer Control Program, which includes registration, prevention, screening, and treatment activities, is being implemented. Screening programs tailored to the resources and disease burden of the community are being carried out for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers. Cancer screenings nationwide are conducted in the form of community-based and opportunistic screenings. Community-based screenings are provided free of charge in primary healthcare institutions, including Cancer Early Diagnosis, Screening, and Training Centers (CEDSTC), Healthy Life Centers (HLC), Family Health Centers (FHC), and Mobile Cancer Screening vehicles, which operate under the Public Health Centers. As of December 2023, there are at least one 381 Cancer Screening Centers (88 independent, 247 within HLC, 46 mobile) in each province. Mobile cancer screening vehicles provide services to rural and disadvantaged groups. Between January 1 and December 31, 2023, a total of 2,378,541 women and 615,324 men benefited from cancer screening services at these centers. Additionally, between January 1 and December 31, 2023, a total of 172,344 public education activities were conducted by these centers, benefiting 1,167,091 women and 384,733 men (Ministry of Health General Directorate of Public Health, December 31, 2023).

## Media

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the pivotal role that women play in shaping media narratives and representations. However, despite advances women continue to face significant challenges in achieving equal representation and empowerment within the media industry. Recognizing the importance of addressing these issues, various initiatives have been undertaken to empower women, and enhance women's representation in the media. Among these initiatives, training programs have been particularly instrumental in raising awareness and fostering a more inclusive media landscape.

Between 2019 and 2023, training sessions were provided on "Equality between women and men, Women's Empowerment, and Women's Representation in the Media" for specialists and assistant specialists working at the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK). A total of 188 personnel were directly reached through these training sessions.

In 2022, in cooperation with the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and Ministry of Family and Social Services, online Media Literacy and Digital Media training was provided for a total of 5,000 female personnel at all levels working in the Central Organization of the Ministry and 81 Provincial Directorates, and for women serving in organizations. The training addressed the scope of media literacy and how media can be used more functionally while avoiding harmful content. Information was provided on the production and consumption stages of both traditional and social media content. At the end of the training, questions from approximately five thousand participants were answered.

On July 26, 2022, empowerment of women and representation of women in the media training was provided to 33 TRT personnel at the TRT General Directorate.

The "Turkish Women in the 100th Year Photo Contest and Exhibition" was organized by Ministry of Family and Social Services to showcase the achievements of Turkish women in social, cultural, artistic, scientific, and sports activities in the 100th year of the Republic of Türkiye, to create an effective archive in this field, and to support the art of photography. A total of 3,059 photographs from 420 photographers were submitted to the competition, featuring images of women who are the architects of modern and contemporary Türkiye in various fields ranging from health to education, from art to sports. Awards were given to the winning photographs in the competition organized by the Ministry in collaboration with the Türkiye Photo Journalists Association.

As a result of the competition, 38 photographs were selected for the exhibition. The opening ceremony of the exhibition took place on April 10, 2023, at the TAV Gallery Exhibition Area at Esenboğa Airport, with approximately 200 participants, including members of parliament, representatives of public institutions and organizations, universities, and civil society organizations.

The IV. National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women was shared with the public on July 1, 2021, and implementation has begun.

One of the strategies under the main goal of "Increasing Social Awareness and Sensitivity for Comprehensive Combat Against Violence" in the National Action Plan is ensuring that "traditional and new media play a supportive role in combating violence against women." Within this scope, the following activities were planned for the year 2023:

A Working Group was established with the aim of Improving Women's Representation in the Media and Combating Violence against Women through the Media.

Awareness Training Programs on Combating Violence against Women were organized for regulatory and supervisory staff in the media field. On May 2, 2023, a training on "Equality between women and men, Women's Empowerment, and Women's Representation in the Media" reached 18 personnel, including experts and assistant experts, working at RTÜK.

Furthermore; the Radio and Television Supreme Council, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Ministry of Family and Social Services collaboratively prepared the Ethical Principles Guide as part of the 4th National Action Plan for Combating Violence Against Women, and this guide was shared with the public during a launch event. The ethical principles are as follows:

- Avoid expressions that demean or portray women as helpless in news content, and use language that points to the perpetrator instead of the victim.
- When reporting on incidents of violence, avoid language and explicit narrations that legitimize the event; raise awareness about various types of violence, including psychological, economic, and cyber violence.
- Avoid expressions that give credibility to or mitigate the crime of the perpetrator (e.g., "a spouse experiencing a mental breakdown," "a husband who has been unemployed for a long time") and avoid descriptions that condone the crime (e.g., "a respected businessperson," "a father of two," "a famous artist"). Do not focus on the conditions



and situations in which the incident of violence occurred (e.g., "in a park at midnight") or the individual characteristics of the woman (e.g., her attire, marital status, personality). Protect the personal data and privacy of the victim and their family.

- Do not use raw footage, detailed close-ups, technical details that instruct on the crime, or atmospheric music and sound effects that judge and include triggering details of violence in all productions and broadcasts.
- In all broadcasts, especially children's programs, consider the negative impacts of real and fictional violence, present responsibilities regarding life, work, and home in a balanced manner, and convey messages emphasizing the division of labor between men and women.
- To eliminate stereotypes, portray women as strong and successful characters representing different ages, professions, cultures, and socioeconomic groups (e.g., national athletes, successful farmers, entrepreneurial housewives), and increase the visibility of female role models.
- To enhance deterrence, share the punishments given to perpetrators with the public and frequently repeat messages that violence will not go unpunished.
- Media content creators should consult experts on violence against women (e.g., psychologists, pedagogues, lawyers, sociologists), establish ethical committees as part of the development of self-regulation mechanisms, and increase awareness of public mechanisms for violence prevention and support

For the year 2024:

Activities will be conducted in collaboration with the Directorate of Communications to effectively and accurately announce the efforts in combating violence against women to the public.

Collaboration will be established with radio and television regulatory authorities to effectively combat violence against women in the media.

Awareness activities will be conducted to promote an egalitarian and non-violent discourse instead of sexist and violent language in everyday life and social media.

A media workshop will be organized for communication faculty students.

Awareness campaigns will be conducted with animation department students, children's program producers, and cartoon scriptwriters on combatting violence in children's productions.

## Ending Violence against Women and Girls

Government of Türkiye continues its work with a firm belief that violence against women is unacceptable. These efforts encompass a wide range of activities within the framework of the "Zero Tolerance" principle, with comprehensive cooperation from all parties, including access to justice and legislation, policy and coordination, protective and preventive services, societal awareness, and data and statistics.

### *LEGISLATIVE WORK*

The Law No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women, which came into force in 2012, is the most important indicator of the strengthening of the legal infrastructure concerning the fight against violence against women in Türkiye and the elevation of this struggle to a higher level.

Sub-legislation has been prepared for the effective implementation of Law No. 6284, including the Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women, the Regulation on the Opening and Operation of Women's Shelters, the Regulation on Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers, and the Regulation on the Use of Technical Methods for Monitoring Systems under Law No. 6284, which came into force in 2021. Furthermore, on November 25, 2023, the Presidency issued Presidential Circular No. 2023/16 on "fighting violence against women," emphasizing the institutional responsibilities of the public sector and establishing the "Coordination Board for the Fight against Violence against Women" at the central level.

### *POLICY AND COORDINATION EFFORTS*

#### National Action Plans

National action plans that determine the roadmap for combating violence against women and outline the key policy priorities have been regularly prepared and diligently implemented since 2007.

The III. National Action Plan, covering the years 2016-2020, expired, and considering legislative provisions and policy documents, the relevant public institutions and organizations, civil society organizations, and women's research centers at universities collaborated to prepare the "IV. National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women (2021-2025)." It was launched on July 1, 2021, with the participation of over 700 invitees.

For the period 2021-2025, the IV. National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women sets five main objectives for the new roadmap to combat violence:

- Access to Justice and Legislation (3 Strategies, 22 Activities)
- Policy and Coordination (5 Strategies, 35 Activities)
- Preventive Protective Services (8 Strategies, 65 Activities)
- Social Awareness (8 Strategies, 77 Activities)
- Data and Statistics (4 Strategies, 28 Activities)

Seven meetings were held at the central level with representatives of relevant institutions and organizations to introduce the National Action Plan. Additionally, 532 meetings were conducted to introduce and implement the plan in the 81 provinces, reaching 20,000 people. Furthermore, efforts were made to implement the IV. National Action Plan at the provincial level, and Action Plans were put into effect in all 81 provinces in 2022.

Under the activity of "creating annual activity plans to determine policy priorities," cooperation between the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs was established to prepare and implement the 2022 and 2023 Activity Plans for Combating Violence Against Women. In this context, the 2024 Activity Plan for Combating Violence Against Women was recently prepared and continues to be implemented in cooperation with the relevant parties.

The IV. National Action Plan's main objective under "Policy and Coordination" is to incorporate the zero-tolerance principle for violence into all plans, programs, and policies. To achieve this:

Action plans for combating violence against women have been implemented in all 81 provinces to enhance the effectiveness of local policies.

Coordination, Monitoring, and Evaluation Commissions for Combating Violence against Women have been established at the provincial level, with meetings held every six months in each province.

Training on Planning and Budgeting sensitive to equality between men and women has been provided to Members of Parliament, public administrators, and policymakers.

A booklet titled " Budgeting Analysis Sensitive to Equality Between Men and Women: Central Public Institutions Pilot Application" was prepared and introduced to relevant units within the Ministry of Justice, Gendarmerie General Command, General Directorate of Security, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of National Education.

A Women's Rights Symposium was organized under the coordination of the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye.

Focus units were identified in the field organizations of 11 ministries that do not directly provide services in combating violence, a significant step towards mainstreaming violence prevention within the public system.

Consultations were conducted with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye to ensure the participation of the private sector in combating violence against women, resulting in the preparation of a cooperation protocol.

Field visits were conducted by the Ministry of Interior's provincial units to monitor activities related to "Combating Violence Against Women" in all 81 provinces, and the outcomes were shared with stakeholder institutions.

#### Protective and Preventive Services

Ministry of Family and Social Services provides services for victims of violence in accordance with Law No. 6284 and related secondary regulations. These services are carried out within the framework of various institutional units.

#### *Women's Shelters*

Women's shelters are residential social service institutions where women and their accompanying children who have experienced physical, emotional, sexual, economic, and verbal abuse or violence can temporarily stay, with the aim of protecting them from violence, resolving their psycho-social problems, empowering them, and meeting their needs, including those of their children, if any. In 81 provinces, 112 women's shelters under the MoFSS provide services with a capacity of 2.805. In addition, women's shelters are also provided by municipalities, the Presidency of Migration Management, and NGOs.

Efforts to specialize women's shelters to provide more effective and efficient services to different needs groups continue. In this context, 17 women's shelters in 15 provinces have been transformed into specialized institutions. In the establishment of specialized institutions, a risk-

based approach has been adopted, and a "Women's Shelter Service Standards Guide," to be applied in all 81 provinces, has been prepared. The guide includes physical, managerial, and professional standards based on principles of confidentiality, security, and empowerment. Additionally, a "Women's Shelter Self-Assessment Guide" covering internal and external evaluations in residential service institutions has been prepared.

#### *Capacity Building Project for Specialized Women Shelters*

The Capacity Building Project for Specialized Women's Shelters is being carried out in order to evaluate the services and needs of specialized women's shelters by involving both service receivers and service providers in the process, to identify their shortcomings, to improve cooperation with other institutions and organizations, and to increase the professional capacities of all staff working in these shelters.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- \* Conducting a profile analysis of those who receive services from women's shelters and determining in detail the reasons for women applying to the service and developing preventive and monitorable service policies for the reasons for women's shelter applications,
- \* Determination of the need for specialized institutions and analysis of the current situation,
- \* Developing the institutional capacity of specialized organizations by examining examples from other countries,
- \* Establishing standard training programs to improve the staff capacity of specialized women's shelters,
- \* Making necessary arrangements to ensure inter-institutional coordination and cooperation,
- \* Preparing a plan for specialized organizations that can be established on a regional basis.

#### *Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (VPMC)*

Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers provide counseling, guidance, referral, and monitoring services aimed at effectively implementing preventive measures and preventing violence. These social service institutions, which preferably employ female staff and operate on a 24/7 basis, offer psychosocial support, legal support, education and vocational support,

health support, economic support, and counseling and referral services to victims of violence under Law No. 6284. Currently, VPMC operates in all 81 provinces. In 2023, a total of 313,475 individuals, including 273,222 women, 28,352 men, and 11,901 children, received services from VPMC. By opening a second VPMC in Mersin province, the number of centers has been increased to 82, and plans are underway to open second centers in seven more provinces to ensure more effective service delivery in the upcoming period. Efforts to enhance the institutional capacity of VPMC continue. A "VPMC Service Standards Guide" has been prepared to determine standard practices in all 81 provinces. The guide includes physical, managerial, and professional standards based on principles of confidentiality, security, and empowerment.

Additionally, a "VPMC Self-Assessment Guide" covering internal and external evaluations in residential service institutions has been prepared. The correct identification of risk in cases of violence against women and the effective management of identified risks are crucial. Within the scope of developing the Risk Analysis and Management Module to integrate a risk-focused approach into services provided by women's service units, efforts have been made to develop a system encompassing scientifically valid and reliable risk assessment and planning of social service interventions according to the identified risk level. Activities are ongoing to improve the effective use of the module in Ministry's women's service units and its integration with law enforcement units. The Risk Analysis and Management Module aim to strengthen the chain of accurate identification - qualified intervention - effective service, providing a scientific evidence-based starting point and roadmap for services.

### *Social Service Centers*

Established in collaboration with public institutions and organizations to ensure social service intervention and monitoring at the district level, Social Service Centers have been created within 411 centers. These centers serve as points of contact for combating violence, where measures for victims of violence under Law No. 6284, including monitoring and follow-up of measures, psychosocial support, guidance, counseling, and referral services, have been initiated.

In order to provide more qualified psychosocial support services to victims of violence, emdr solution focused therapy positive psychotherapy trainings were organized for professional personnel working with victims of violence in the VPMC and women shelters in the 2022-2023 period. 100 professional personnel benefited from these trainings. Professional personnel who

have received specialized training and gained competence in VPMC and Women's Shelters provide these trainings to victims of violence, as needed.

### *Victim Support Systems*

#### Monitoring with Technical Methods

Following the pilot applications carried out in the 2015-2020 period, the Electronic Bracelet Application has been implemented throughout the country as of 2021, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Family and Social Services, for the effective monitoring of preventive measures within the scope of Law No. 6284.

The technical infrastructure works carried out by the Ministry of Interior regarding the dissemination of the application throughout the country were completed in 2021, and as of January 25, 2021, the General Directorate of Security Public Order Department within the Security and Emergency Coordination Center (GAMER) of the Ministry of Interior, in accordance with the technical methods and follow-up decisions taken within the scope of Law No. 6284. It has started to be carried out in the "Electronic Monitoring Center" established under the Ministry of Health, covering the whole country (81 provinces and districts, police and gendarmerie areas of responsibility). In addition, the "Regulation on the Use of Tracking Systems with Technical Methods within the Scope of Law No. 6284" was prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, with the contributions of the Ministry of Interior, and it was published on September 4, 2021 and entered into force. Studies are continuing to ensure the effective implementation of electronic handcuffs throughout the country.

#### Alo 183 Hotline

"Alo-183 Hotline", which operates within the Ministry of Family and Social Services, works as a psychological, legal and economic consultancy line for women and children who have been subjected to violence or are at risk of being subjected to violence and who need support and assistance. It provides information to these people about their rights and where to apply.

In addition, precautionary notices are received to prevent cases of neglect, abuse and violence or custom and honor killings. Considering the urgency of the situation, the emergency response team responsible and/or law enforcement officers of the province where the case is located are notified and intervention is ensured. This line operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is free of charge. The line, which also provides service in Arabic and Kurdish languages, also has a text message communication feature and 3G feature for hearing-impaired individuals.



Victims of violence who call the Anti-Violence Line can reach the relevant support personnel without waiting in any queue by pressing the "0" button. As of May 2024, it has been providing services to citizens via WhatsApp and BIP application on ALO 183 Anti-Violence Line. Relevant support personnel can be reached on the ALO 183 Anti-Violence Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, via the designated contact number.

#### Women's Support (KADES) Mobile Application

In collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Women's Support (KADES) Application was developed to ensure rapid and effective access of victims of violence to law enforcement. The application was made available to women as of March 24, 2018. To enable foreign nationals residing in Türkiye to effectively use the KADES application and to facilitate access to the application, the interfaces were translated into five languages including Arabic, Persian, French, English, and Russian and updated. As of June 28, 2022, the application has also been translated into Kurdish, German, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Spanish, making it accessible in a total of 11 languages. Additionally, non-Turkish citizens can now register and use the application by entering the passport or document serial number upon entry into Türkiye.

As part of awareness activities aimed at promoting and expanding the use of the KADES Application, as of May 8, 2024, 6,438,808 people have downloaded the KADES application. Additionally, the KADES application was awarded by the 2021 Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly held in Italy.

#### *Efforts Targeting Perpetrators of Violence*

Within the scope of Law No. 6284, the Family Violence Awareness Seminar Program is implemented in all 81 provinces, aiming to provide basic awareness on concepts such as violence, anger management, and effective communication in interpersonal relationships for perpetrators of violence subject to preventive measures. In 2022, the training needs of the provinces were reviewed, and online training sessions were provided to 58 personnel in 4 provinces, namely Istanbul, Kırşehir, Sakarya, and Erzurum. The program's effectiveness is ensured through feedback from trainers, and when necessary, these training sessions are repeated.

Within the scope of Article 15/3 (c) of Law No. 6284, a half-day seminar is conducted for perpetrators of violence referred to the VPMC by court order. In the period 2021-2023, 1,419 perpetrators of violence were reached through these seminars.

Furthermore, in order to effectively combat violence against women, a comprehensive approach to violence cases and the effective implementation of preventive service models for perpetrators of violence are aimed to be established within the investment project approved by the Presidency Strategy Budget Directorate for the period 2022-2024. With the project titled "Modeling Psycho-Social Support Services for Those Who Perpetrate Violence", creating a social service model for perpetrators of violence, defining the processes and institutional responsibilities related to support services for perpetrators, modules for rehabilitation-oriented support and intervention programs, as well as educational content for service providers, handbooks, guides, and printed materials are aimed. Currently, the preparatory work for the project in question continues in cooperation with TUBITAK.

#### AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

In 2023, the "Family Education Program" was prepared to provide services to married couples or couples planning to marry with the aim of preventing violence in families, increasing the level of harmony and happiness in marital life, ensuring better communication and empathy among family members, and raising awareness about family issues and solutions.

The program was implemented as a pilot in ten provinces: Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, Bursa, Adana, Konya, Gaziantep, Kocaeli, and Mersin. A total of 1,960 individuals, including 2,010 women and 1,140 men, participated in the program in these provinces.

Furthermore, efforts to create awareness about violence against women are carried out in various fields such as television, radio, cinema, theater, social media, and mobile applications. Awareness-raising activities are also conducted through events, panels, and conferences organized with the participation of Ministry of Family and Social Services and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Within the framework of Law No. 6284, to ensure the specialization of personnel regarding the role and procedures of law enforcement and to prevent any procedural disruptions, 716,140 law enforcement personnel have been trained over the past 5 years, including 247,804 in 2023. Additionally, between 2020-2023, training on combating domestic violence has been provided

to 48,989 students of the Police Academy and the Gendarmerie and Coast Guard Academy, as well as to 362,413 private security officers.

Conscripts serving within the Gendarmerie General Command are being trained on combating violence against women and issues related to early and forced marriages. A total of 101,320 conscripts received this training from 2020-2023, including 54,849 in 2023.

In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 510 district governors received training on combating violence against women. Additionally, the Ministry's Education Department provided similar training to 922 deputy governors and all district governors, totaling 1,327 civil administrators.

Under the collaboration between the Ministry of Interior and the UNFPA, 420 law enforcement personnel received trainer training in 2022 and 2023 (180 in 2022 and 240 in 2023). Furthermore, 100 law enforcement officers received training on preventing violence against children.

In cooperation with UN Women, an "Experience Sharing and Capacity Building" activity was conducted for law enforcement personnel tasked with combating violence against women in disaster areas effected by earthquake.

Also, in partnership with UN Women, a workshop on "Combating Post-Disaster Violence Against Women for Civil Administrators" was held on March 6-7, 2024, for 82 district governor candidates doing their internship in the earthquake region.

As part of the basic information and awareness training for men on combating violence against women, videos, brochures, and posters were prepared and digitally sent to the 81 provincial governorships under the coordination of the Ministry of Interior, with participation from representatives of the Ministries of Justice, Family and Social Services, National Education, Health, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs.

As of May 8, 2024:

28,086,601 men have received training,

653,222 banners/posters have been displayed,

8,834,602 brochures have been distributed.

The aim is to provide information and awareness training to an additional 3,000,000 men in 2024.

With the trainings initiated since 2007 within the scope of combating violence against women under the coordination of the General Directorate of the Status of Women of the Ministry of Family and Social Services; training and seminars were given to a total of 4,342,887 people, including 1,536,039 privates and non-commissioned officers, 261,406 public officials, 117,072 religious officials, 663,886 healthcare workers, 631,954 teachers, 869,996 law enforcement officers, 1,837 civil servants, and 260,697 citizens.

## DATA AND STATISTICS

Ministry of Family and Social Services attaches great importance to the collection, analysis, and publication of data and statistics on violence against women and domestic violence. In this context, studies have been carried out to improve the quality of data on violence against women and to increase the reliability and comparability of data.

In 2023, the "Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation of Activities Aimed at Combating Violence against Women" were updated to provide guidance to relevant institutions and organizations on data collection and reporting activities. Additionally, studies are underway to improve the methodology for data collection on violence against women, including the development of an integrated data collection system and the establishment of a national database on violence against women.

The "Violence against Women Data Reporting System" (KSSBYS) was established to collect and report data on violence against women in a systematic and coordinated manner. In 2023, training on the use of KSSBYS was provided to 1,332 personnel from relevant public institutions and organizations.

To obtain the necessary statistical data on "crime victims, women victims of violence, children involved in the judicial process, and disadvantaged groups" through National Judicial Network Project (UYAP), a working group was formed under the coordination of the Directorate General of Criminal Records and Statistics. As a result of the work carried out, statistics on femicide/violence against women and victims have become producible.

In this context:

- The concept of femicide has been defined, and a 'Femicide' button was integrated into UYAP as of March 2021, allowing Ministry of Justice to start compiling femicide data.
- The crimes that need to be addressed under violence against women and children have been identified.
- A femicide button has been added to the screens where data on intentional homicide is entered, and it has been made mandatory to enter relevant variables such as the relationship status, the method of the crime, and the location of the crime into UYAP.
- It has been made mandatory to enter data regarding the attempt clause.
- In cases of intentional homicide and sexual abuse of children, it has been made mandatory to record the victim's or deceased's Turkish ID number, and if this is not possible, to enter their sex.
- Variables related to the number of victims assigned an attorney by the bar in investigations involving crimes against women and the reasons for acquittal in acquittal decisions have been integrated into UYAP.
- Studies have been conducted to produce detailed statistics on judicial interview rooms, child monitoring centers, judicial support rooms, and issues covered under Law No. 5395 and Law No. 6284.

#### **Data Integration Studies**

The integration work carried out between the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Ministry of Justice regarding the sharing of precautionary measures issued within the scope of Law No. 6284 via UYAP has been completed. "6284 Decision Tracking System", which will contribute to the effectiveness of tracking and monitoring decisions, has been made available for use by Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers. The "Information Sharing Protocol between the Ministry of Interior and the (repealed) Ministry of Family and Social Policies" signed in September 2017, the "Registration Form for Incidents of Domestic and Violence Against Women within the Scope of Law No. 6284" issued by the General Directorate of Security and the "Registration Form issued within the scope of Law No. 6284" Work on electronically sharing data regarding precautionary measures with the Ministry of Family and Social Services has been completed. With the Protocol signed between the Gendarmerie General Command and the Ministry of Family and Social Services on April 15, 2020, the "Domestic and Violence Incidents Registration Form" started to be shared electronically. Data integration work shortens the time it takes to reach individuals who are victims of violence and increases the effectiveness of protection. In the 2022 Activity Plan for Combating Violence Against Women, "It will be ensured that the confidentiality decisions made within the scope of Law No. 6284

are communicated electronically to the relevant institutions and organizations." Within the framework of its sub-goal, "prepared to determine the necessary procedures and principles to ensure that the confidentiality decisions made about the victims of violence and/or their relatives within the scope of Law No. 6284 are processed electronically to the central database of the Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Population and Citizenship Affairs (NViGM) via ASHB ABS" "Cooperation Protocol on Data Integration between the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Ministry of Internal Affairs" was signed in October 2022. Technical studies on data sharing are ongoing.

### **Research on Violence Against Women in Türkiye 2024**

In addition to administrative data and statistics, preparatory work for the "Violence Against Women in Türkiye Survey 2024", the last of which was conducted in 2014 and is planned to be repeated in 2024, continues. With the research within the scope of the official statistics program of the Turkish Statistical Institute, a comprehensive field research will be conducted throughout Türkiye, the current situation regarding violence against women will be examined according to sociodemographic characteristics, and scientific evidence will be obtained that will form the basis for policies and services in this field. In addition, as a research output, a "Data Warehouse" will be developed in the fight against violence against women, artificial intelligence models will be used and a psychosocial support model will be prepared for victims of violence.

#### *Sexual violence and intimate partner violence, including marital rape:*

The Turkish Penal Code No. 5237, which is one of the fundamental legal regulations in combating violence against women, entered into force in 2005. Article 102 of Law No. 5237 regulates the crime of sexual assault, Article 103 regulates the crime of sexual abuse of children and unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor, and Article 105 regulates the crime of sexual harassment. Article 102 defines the crime of sexual assault, including when it occurs between spouses, as a qualified offense.

The crime of sexual harassment is regulated as an aggravating qualified offense when committed:

By taking advantage of the convenience provided by public duty, service relationship, or domestic relationship,

By persons such as guardians, educators, instructors, caregivers, foster families, or those providing health services, or persons with duties of protection, care, or supervision,

By taking advantage of the convenience provided by working at the same workplace,

By taking advantage of the convenience provided by postal or electronic communication tools,  
it is increased by half.

*Domestic violence perpetrated by other family or household members:*

Femicides:

With the enactment of Law No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and the Prevention of Violence Against Women in Türkiye, the legal infrastructure has been strengthened, and the fight against violence against women has been taken to a higher level.

The Turkish Penal Code No. 5237, which is one of the fundamental legal regulations in combating violence against women, entered into force in 2005. According to Article 81 of the Turkish Penal Code, which is one of the most serious consequences of acts of violence against women, "... shall be punished with aggravated life imprisonment."

- It has regulated the qualified form of the act being committed against ascendants or descendants or spouse, divorced spouse, or sibling, and the penalty has been determined as aggravated life imprisonment.
- By adding the phrase "with a motive of tradition" to the article that regulates the aggravated forms of the crime of intentional killing, it has been accepted to punish the perpetrators of honor killings with the highest penalty.
- By regulating the provocation clause, it has been stipulated that provocation can only be applied if it occurs as a result of an unjust act, and it has been stated in the rationale of the article that family members and relatives who kill a woman who has been sexually assaulted for the sake of honor and other relatives cannot benefit from provocation reduction, and not every unjust act constitutes provocation.
- With the law adopted on 08.07.2021, the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237 was amended, and the commission of intentional killing, intentional injury, torture, and deprivation of liberty against the divorced spouse was also regulated as a qualified form, thereby increasing the criminal sanctions accordingly.
- With the legal amendment made in Law No. 5237 on 27.05.2022,

The commission of intentional killing, intentional injury, torture, harassment, and threat crimes "against women" has been regulated as a reason for increased penalties.

While the punishment for the crime of intentional killing is life imprisonment according to the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237, as a result of the aforementioned amendment, the act of killing being "committed against a woman" has been considered a reason for increased penalty, allowing it to be punishable by "aggravated life imprisonment."

Similarly, the commission of intentional injury, torture, harassment, and threat crimes "against women" has been accepted as a reason for increased penalties, and penalties have been increased in varying proportions.

Persistent tracking actions, previously considered as part of other crimes, have been regulated as a separate offense with Article 123/A added to the Turkish Penal Code.

Crimes such as sexual assault, sexual abuse of children, persistent tracking, intentional injury against women, torture, or harassment committed against women and children have been included in legal aid.

Also, Presidential Circular No. 2023/16 titled "Combatting Violence Against Women" was published in the Official Gazette dated 25 November 2023.

With the Ministry's Circular No. 154/1 on the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of the Family and the Prevention of Violence Against Women dated 17.12.2019, it was requested that "Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women Investigation Bureaus" be established in all courthouses to investigate domestic and sex-based violence crimes, and that specific public prosecutors be assigned to these bureaus. Within this framework, "domestic violence and violence against women investigation bureaus" have been established under the offices of the Chief Public Prosecutors to effectively combat violence against women and domestic violence crimes.

The aforementioned Circular was revised and updated as Circular No. 154/2 on "The Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women" on 10.01.2023. In the updated Circular, it was also requested that public prosecutors assigned to domestic violence and violence against women investigation bureaus should not be assigned to other tasks except in mandatory situations, and that no changes in the division of labor contrary to this purpose should be made to ensure specialization.



Currently, these bureaus are operational in a total of 225 courthouses, including 144 district courthouses in 81 provinces. Regular training and awareness activities are organized for the public prosecutors working in these bureaus. Additionally, efforts have been made to expand these bureaus as part of the studies conducted in line with the Human Rights Action Plan.

*Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (e.g., online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images):*

#### *Legal Infrastructure*

Türkiye is a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention). Based on Article 46 of the Budapest Convention, the Cybercrime Convention Committee has been established to facilitate the effective use and implementation of the Convention, exchange of information, and assessment of future changes. The Committee has found that there is currently no systematic catalog of crimes considered cyber violence in most countries, and many types of cyber violence are interconnected or consist of combinations of actions.

In Türkiye, acts of cyber violence committed through information and communication technologies can find application within the scope of various provisions of the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237. Some of these are as follows:

Crimes of sexual exploitation and sexual harassment, within the scope of crimes against sexual integrity, are directly related to cyber violence when committed through information and communication technologies. Acts of cyber sexual harassment can be punished according to Article 105/2-(d) of the Turkish Penal Code, which regulates electronic harassment as an aggravating factor when taking advantage of the convenience provided by electronic communication tools.

With the regulation of the persistent tracking offense within the scope of the Turkish Penal Code, a separate offense has been established with Article 123/A, which entered into force with the Law No. 7406 dated 12.5.2022. According to Article 123/A of the Turkish Penal Code, for the offense of persistent tracking to occur, there must be a serious disturbance caused to the victim or the victim's family member's sense of security by persistently physically following or attempting to establish contact through communication and communication tools, information systems, or third parties.

Offenses against freedom committed through information and communication include threats, blackmail, and disturbing the peace of individuals.

Within the scope of offenses against honor, the offense of insult can be committed through information and communication.

One of the areas where cyber violence is most effective is in offenses committed against privacy and the secret sphere of life. Especially through information and communication technologies, crimes such as violation of communication privacy, eavesdropping on conversations, recording conversations, violation of privacy, recording personal data, transferring data unlawfully to others, and obtaining data can be committed.

These provisions find application based on the specific examination and evaluation of the type of cyber violence that occurred.

Additionally, the Law No. 5651 on the Regulation of Publications Made on the Internet and the Fight Against Crimes Committed through These Publications was enacted in 2007. With this law, regulation of the internet, combating crimes committed on the internet, prevention of human rights violations on the internet, and similar issues were regulated in detail for the first time.

According to Article 5 of Law No. 5651, the host provider is not obliged to control the content it provides or to investigate whether an unlawful activity is taking place. However, if the host provider is informed about unlawful content it provides according to Articles 8 and 9 of this Law, it is obliged to remove the content. Additionally, it must keep traffic data of its services for a certain period, ensuring their accuracy, integrity, and confidentiality.

According to Article 6 of Law No. 5651, the access provider is obliged to block access upon being informed in accordance with the provisions of this law about any unlawful content published by any of its users.

Decisions regarding the removal of content and blocking access can be made according to Article 8 of the Law. If there is sufficient suspicion that the content of any publication made on the internet constitutes a publication that constitutes the crimes listed in subparagraphs (2), (5), and (6) of subparagraph (a) of the first paragraph of Article 8, access to the content may be blocked ex officio by the President of the Information Technologies and Communication Authority (BTK). If the identities of those who publish such content can be determined, a criminal complaint may be filed by the President to the public prosecutor's office.

In case of alleging a violation of personality rights due to the content published on the internet, according to Article 9 of the Law, those who claim that their rights have been violated may request the removal of the content by applying to the content provider or, if they cannot access it, to the host provider through a warning method, or they may directly apply to the Peace Criminal Judge to request the removal of the content and/or blocking access to the content.

Those who claim that their privacy has been violated due to the content published on the internet can request the blocking of access to the content by applying directly to the Information Technologies and Communication Institution in accordance with Article 9/A of the Law.

Furthermore, in cases where cyber stalking occurs among the types of cyber violence, measures can be taken under the provisions of Law No. 6284 regulating persistent tracking. According to Law No. 6284, unilateral persistent tracking is defined as any action taken by the perpetrator towards the victim, causing the victim to feel fear and helplessness physically or psychologically, regardless of the content, through any means of communication and behavior that puts pressure on them. Thus, necessary protective and preventive measures can be taken under Law No. 6284 in cases of cyber violence and persistent tracking cases conducted using communication technologies.

Cyber violence should not be completely separated from other types of violence; it should be acknowledged that it can coexist with other forms of violence. In cases of violence against women, which encompass many reasons and require a multidisciplinary approach, often multiple types of violence occur simultaneously.

Research on the prevalence of cyber violence, a new type of violence against women emerging with the increasing digitization, shows that women and girls are increasingly subjected to cyber harassment/stalking at serious rates.

*Under the IV. National Action Plan, cyber violence will be addressed as follows:*

Activity 1.2.2. The Turkish Penal Code will be reviewed in terms of existing types of crimes and aggravating factors, particularly in the context of persistent tracking, cyber violence, forced marriage, etc., and a report will be prepared.

Explanation: ... The law should also be evaluated within the framework of the concept of cyber violence, which has become one of the frequently committed forms of violence against women in line with technological advancement. Investigations and research should be conducted on identified deficiencies in crime definitions, and recommendations should be made.

Activity 4.4.1. A study on "students' perception of violence" will be conducted.

Explanation: The aim of the study is to measure the knowledge levels and attitudes of secondary school students, especially regarding violence, peer bullying, cyber violence, violence against women, and its types.

Activity 4.4.4. Seminars will be held in secondary education institutions.

Explanation: Seminars provided to secondary school students will cover topics such as neglect, abuse, domestic violence, violence against women, peer bullying, early and forced marriages, and cyber violence. It is particularly important for topics relevant to this age group, such as cyber violence and peer bullying, to be included in seminar programs.

In this context, the Ministry of National Education has incorporated strategies to address cyberbullying, promote responsible technology use, and mitigate the negative impacts of the internet on secondary school students. These strategies have been integrated into both guidance and counseling programs, as well as regular educational programs.

Activity 4.4.8. Awareness-raising activities based on observation and practice will be increased in the media literacy course curriculum and textbooks for topics such as "violence against women in the media" and "cyber violence on social media."

Activity 4.6.9. Awareness-raising activities will be conducted for male and female students staying in dormitories under the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Explanation: Training sessions on topics such as violence against women, equality between women and men, and cyber violence will be organized for students staying in dormitories under the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Within the scope of the IV. National Action Plan, work will be carried out in collaboration with responsible and relevant organizations. The process of preparing educational materials is

underway, specifically targeting students staying in dormitories under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. After the preparation of the materials is completed, training sessions will be conducted for university students staying in dormitories, focusing on ways to protect themselves from cyber violence against women and the mechanisms for reporting incidents.

Additionally, in collaboration between the General Directorate on the Status of Women and the Information Technologies and Communication Authority (BTK), awareness sessions are conducted on Zoom on "Digital Violence and Cyberbullying" to create awareness about the risks women and children staying in women's shelters may encounter online and to enhance their skills in dealing with these risks. "Parent and Family Module" sessions are provided for women receiving services, and "Student Module" sessions are provided for children. The first session was held on 03.04.2023, and the sessions are repeated regularly on a monthly basis. The content of the sessions includes topics such as perspectives on the digital world, digital needs, safe/unsafe internet extensions, social media footprint, risk factors/risky practices, signs of cyberbullying in children, mechanisms for reporting digital violence, etc. In 2023, 2043 women and 832 children participated in Digital Violence and Cyberbullying training.

#### *Early and Forced Marriages*

Efforts to prevent early and forced marriages are being carried out comprehensively with the participation of relevant stakeholders, including public institutions and organizations, universities, and civil society organizations in Türkiye.

Since the fourth quarter of 2017, efforts have been underway to prepare and implement local policy documents for provinces with high rates of early and forced marriages under the coordination of the Directorate General on the Status of Women. In this regard:

Field visits have been conducted to provinces such as Ağrı, Aksaray, Antalya, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hatay, Iğdır, İzmir/Kiraz, Kahramanmaraş, Kars, Kilis, Mardin, Muş, Nevşehir, Niğde, Şanlıurfa, Van, and Yozgat.

Reports on the situation of early marriages in the provinces have been prepared by the Ministry's Provincial Directorates, and "Provincial Action Plans to Combat Early and Forced Marriages" have been prepared for each province based on discussions with relevant public representatives and the priority needs of the province.

Training sessions were organized to support the implementation of Provincial Action Plans in Van and Mardin in 2022, with the participation of managers and professionals from

Afyonkarahisar, Ardahan, Edirne, and Siirt provinces, thereby extending the reach of the Action Plans to these provinces.

These Action Plans consist of short-term activity plans focusing on raising awareness; conducting research on early marriages; preparing visual and written materials; organizing meetings between girl children and role model women, among other activities.

Furthermore, in response to the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş in February 2023, instructions were given to prepare Provincial Action Plans for earthquake-affected provinces that did not have such plans in place. Accordingly, Action Plans were prepared for Adana, Adıyaman, Elazığ, Osmaniye, and Malatya provinces.

To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the Provincial Action Plans to Combat Early and Forced Marriages in the 28 provinces, various activities have been undertaken by the Directorate General on the Status of Women, including:

- Signing joint work plans with UNICEF to strengthen the protection, development, and participation rights of disadvantaged children, with a focus on preventing early and forced marriages.
- Organizing online workshops for the exchange of experiences among provinces, where various projects and initiatives from different provinces were shared, and new projects were developed.
- Conducting training programs in Van and Mardin to support the Provincial Action Plans and enhance the skills of professionals working in the community.
- Organizing a workshop in Ankara Kızılcahamam in September 2023, in collaboration with UN WOMEN, for 100 managers and professionals from provinces with Provincial Action Plans, including earthquake-affected provinces, to further support the efforts to combat early and forced marriages.

In addition, the "Technical Assistance Project for the Support of Children's Rights in Türkiye", carried out within the scope of IPA-II, of which the General Directorate on the Status of Women is the final beneficiary together with the General Directorate of Children's Services, was launched in November 2021. The project will continue until November 2024.

In this context, within the scope of the relevant Project, awareness studies are carried out to prevent early marriages, informative materials for different target groups and public service announcements are prepared for the public.

## Women's access to justice

The provisions in the Turkish Penal Code and the Turkish Civil Code, including Law No. 6284 concerning the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence and the protection of the family, are in force and meticulously implemented.

In order to clarify the duties and responsibilities of institutions within the framework of combating violence against women, Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Justice have issued Circulars (Nos. 154/1 and 154/2). The Circular on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women entered into force on June 16, 2021, and was distributed to all 81 provinces.

Specialized courts responsible for Law No. 6284, "Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women," have been designated by the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK).

Investigation Offices for Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women Crimes have been established in Public Prosecutor's Offices.

The Regulation on Judicial Interview Rooms was published in the Official Gazette on 24/02/2017, the Presidential Decree No. 63 on the Support of Crime Victims was issued on 10/06/2020, and the Regulation on Judicial Support and Victim Services was published on 30/04/2021, all of which are in force.

Specialization in combating violence has been pursued in law enforcement units under the Ministry of Interior, such as the AİKM (Family and Violence Against Women Investigation Office) within the General Directorate of Security and the Family Violence and Child Branch Directorate within the Gendarmerie General Command, with efforts to enhance their capacities. For instance, in 2023, 36,612 personnel from the General Directorate of Security and 211,192 personnel from the Gendarmerie General Command received training on combating domestic violence and violence against women. Also, in 2023, 54,849 conscripts received awareness training within the Gendarmerie.

In 2020, the Ministry of Interior reviewed and updated the directive concerning the duties and authorities of police liaison officers in Family Support Centers

As part of a pilot program, "Women's Medical Support Units" have been established to provide services to adult victims of sexual crimes in Ankara, Istanbul (3), Gaziantep, Giresun, Izmir, and Konya, and 8 units have started providing services.

Within the scope of the "Access to Justice and Legislation" fundamental objective of the IV National Action Plan, with the aim of reviewing and effectively implementing legislation and facilitating victims' access to justice during the period 2021-2023:

Special centers have been established in the Bar Associations of Denizli, Balıkesir, Mardin, Antalya, Samsun, and Rize to facilitate women's access to justice.

Data integration studies have been conducted within the scope of the cooperation protocol signed between the Ministry of Interior for the electronic transmission of confidentiality decisions given under Law No. 6284.

In-service training sessions have been organized for prosecutors and assistant judiciary personnel working in the field.

The number and capacity of judicial interview rooms, which facilitate victims' access to justice, have been increased.

- Capacity-building efforts have been carried out for professionals working in VPMC and Women's Shelters to enable effective utilization of legal aid and Criminal Procedure Code (CMK) practices by women who are victims of violence. Training sessions on women's access to justice have reached 169 professionals. In 2023, 110,844 women were informed about legal aid practices.

- Best practices regarding women's access to justice in other countries have been examined.

- Online platforms designed to facilitate access to information about women's rights for victims of violence have been improved.

To support victims after crimes, provide guidance services, and prevent repeated victimizations, the Victim Rights Department was established within the Directorate General of Criminal Affairs of the Ministry of Justice in 2013. With Presidential Decree No. 63 on Supporting Crime Victims, published in the Official Gazette on 10.06.2020, it was reorganized as the Judicial Support and Victim Services Department, becoming a main service unit of the Ministry of Justice.



Additionally, with this Decree:

- If the victim or their family members apply, necessary measures will be taken by law enforcement units to prevent the recurrence of the crime or the commission of another crime.
- Upon the victim's request, except in cases mandated by criminal procedure, measures will be taken to prevent contact between the suspect or defendant and the victim.
- If victims are forced to change their residence or school, their continuation in schools providing the same type of education will be ensured upon their request.

Within the Judicial Support and Victim Services Department, judicial support and victim services offices have been established in courthouses to provide information, guidance, and psycho-social support to all crime victims. Starting in 2019 with services in 7 pilot courthouses, the number of judicial support and victim services offices has increased by 160 since 2020, reaching a total of 167 in 81 provinces. These offices provide information and guidance services to victims, as well as psycho-social support throughout the judicial process, through specialists working in these offices. Efforts are made in these offices to enhance the access to justice for individuals involved in the judicial process.

Within the scope of the Access to Justice and Legislation target of the 4th National Action Plan on Combating Violence Against Women, “**Training on Facilitating the Training of Victims of Violence to Justice**” was organized by the General Directorate on the Status of Women in August 2023, in cooperation with UNICEF, for professional personnel working at Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers, and a total of 77 personnel participated.

The training in question was repeated in October 2023 in cooperation with UN Women, and one professional staff member from 81 provinces, working inVPMC, and 18 professional staff working in women's shelters in 11 provinces affected by the earthquake on February 6, 2023, participated.

## Elderly Women and Women and Girls With Disabilities

The policy of the Republic of Türkiye regarding disability and ageing aims to ensure that persons with disabilities and older persons, including women, enjoy their human rights without discrimination and participate equally in social life. The international basis for the national disability policy is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Nationally, this policy is founded on the Constitution and the Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities, enacted in 2005. The CRPD, adopted by the United Nations in 2006 to promote and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities and to strengthen respect for their human dignity, was ratified by the Republic of Türkiye in 2009, with the Optional Protocol ratified in 2015. The Constitution forms the national foundation of the ageing policy, while the international foundation is the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002. Türkiye regularly reports on MIPAA, with a review and appraisal process occurring every five years to develop policies that encompass all life stages and age groups.

The Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) is the focal point responsible for promoting and implementing national policies on disability and ageing. MoFSS determines policies and strategies at the national level, provides social services for persons with disabilities and older persons, and ensures cooperation and coordination with relevant institutions.

### **Disability**

Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities stipulates that in developing and implementing policies and services for persons with disabilities, it is essential to respect their individual autonomy based on the inviolability of human dignity and honor. This includes freedom and independence to make their own choices, non-discrimination, participation in policy-making, decision-making, and service delivery processes, equality of opportunity, ensuring accessibility, preventing abuse, protecting family integrity, and preventing multidimensional discrimination against women and girls with disabilities. The best interests of children with disabilities must be observed, and the Ministry of Family and Social Services must be consulted in legislative arrangements for persons with disabilities.

Although criteria for assessing disability vary between countries, according to the World Health Organization, people with disabilities constitute 15% of the world population (2011).

Determining the number of persons with disabilities through administrative records is crucial for institutions developing relevant policies. To address the need for data, a "National Disability Database" based on Disability Health Board Reports was established within the MoFSS. As of the latest figures, 3,540,125 persons with a disability rate of 40% and above are registered, with 1,515,398 men and 2,024,727 women.

Significant progress has been made in healthcare, care, education, employment, and community-based services to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in social life. In Türkiye, employment of persons with disabilities in the open labor market is prioritized. Key policy measures include a quota/levy scheme, supported employment, sheltered employment, and incentives for employers and employees with disabilities and disabled entrepreneurs.

Under the quota scheme based on Labor Law No. 4857, private sector employers with fifty or more workers must employ 3% workers with disabilities, and public workplaces must employ 4% workers with disabilities in suitable jobs. According to Civil Servants Law No. 657, public institutions must employ 3% of their staff as civil servants with disabilities. Since 2012, the Disabled Public Personnel Selection Exam (EKPS), a centralized exam, has been applied to encourage public employment of persons with disabilities, with approximately 80% of EKPS application fees covered by the general budget. This method has significantly increased the number of civil servants with disabilities.

To promote independent living, social service and assistance models have been developed. Since 2006, a monthly Home Care Allowance (7,608.71 TL for the first six months of 2024) has been provided to family members or relatives caring for persons with disabilities at home. As of March 2024, 535,267 caregivers have benefitted from this allowance, with 91.5% being women. The Home Care Allowance is seen as economically supportive for women unable to work due to care responsibilities. Employed women with children requiring care are entitled to early retirement.

In 2023, the Home Care Support Program was launched in cooperation with MoFSS and UNHCR to support family members, primarily women, caring for relatives with disabilities in three pilot provinces. Families under temporary protection receive technical information, care, and psychosocial support. Additionally, day care centers for persons with disabilities are being expanded nationwide to support independent living and family members. As of March 2024, 1,873 persons with disabilities receive services from 136 day care centers free of charge.

While reducing the need for institutional care, individual-oriented residential care services are also provided. As of March 2024, 6,970 persons with disabilities receive care in 106 care centers, and 29,275 receive services in 313 private care centers. Services for persons with disabilities in MoFSS-affiliated centers are free of charge, and costs for those in private centers meeting Social Service Law No. 2828 conditions are covered by the general budget.

Temporary care services are provided in MoFSS-affiliated centers to support families of persons with disabilities. In this process, all needs of persons with disabilities are met free of charge.

The 2030 Barrier-Free Vision Document, launched in 2021, sets out the vision of "building an inclusive society in which persons with disabilities can realize their potential." This document includes 'equality between women and men' among its principles, with 31 goals and 107 action areas identified in eight policy areas:

- Inclusive and Accessible Society
- Protection of Rights and Justice
- Health and Well-Being
- Inclusive Education
- Economic Security
- Independent Living
- Disaster and Humanitarian Emergencies
- Implementation and Monitoring

The Vision Document will be realized through three-year action plans. The “National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,” implemented between 2023 and 2025, was prepared with civil society organizations' participation and began implementation based on a Presidential Circular published on February 3, 2023. The plan emphasizes equality between men and women, particularly protecting women and girls with disabilities from exploitation, violence, torture, and degrading treatment.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Board on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, established in 2013, was revised in 2021 to strengthen civil society organizations' participation. This board,

comprising senior public institution representatives and two leading disability-focused civil society organizations, coordinates national disability policy implementation.

## **Ageing**

The proportion of older persons in Türkiye is increasing due to declining fertility and mortality rates, improvements in healthcare, and higher living standards and life expectancy. As of the end of 2023, the number of older persons was 8,722,806, making up 10.2% of the total population. Among this population, 44.5% are male, and 55.5% are female. The life expectancy at birth is 74.8 years for men and 80.3 years for women. The median age is 33.2 for males and 34.7 for females.

To develop holistic and evidence-based ageing policies, the Survey on Profile of the Older Persons was conducted in 2023, with results available at:

<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Turkiye-Yasli-Profil-Arastirmasi-2023-53809>

Social assistance and services are provided to support older persons to live in their preferred environments. The Elderly Support Program (YADES), launched in 2016, funds local government projects to enhance home care, home support, and day services for older persons. Over eight years, 74 projects by 42 municipalities reached 128,691 older persons in 87,987 households.

Day care and active living centers, which provide services and activities for older persons, are expanding nationwide. As of March 2024, 962 older persons receive services from 37 centers.

Institutional care and rehabilitation services are provided in nursing homes affiliated with MoFSS or other public and private institutions. As of March 2024, 14,696 older persons receive care in 168 MoFSS-affiliated nursing homes.

To promote active and healthy lives, various sports tournaments and physical activities are organized for older persons in nursing homes. In 2023, the sixth Bocce Tournament was held. Digital Spring Rooms were established in nursing homes to improve digital literacy, and digital and financial literacy training was provided to help older persons adapt to a changing world and develop independent living skills.

The Ageing Vision Document, launched on April 29, 2023, outlines the vision of "building a society where older persons can realize their rights, receive services in accordance with their

needs and demands, and transfer their life experiences to future generations." The document identifies 51 action areas for 16 goals in six policy areas:

- Active and Healthy Ageing
- Participation in Social Life
- Age-Friendly and Accessible Environments for All
- Disaster and Humanitarian Emergencies
- Rights of Older Persons
- Implementation and Monitoring

The Ageing Vision Document is envisaged to be implemented with 3-year action plans and the first National Action Plan on the Rights of Older Persons, covering the years 2023-2025 and including 183 activities, was prepared with a participatory approach.

## Women, Peace and Security

Türkiye attaches great importance to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the agenda of "women, peace, and security." Recognizing the pivotal role of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and the maintenance of international security, Türkiye actively endeavors to prioritize and promote this agenda within international fora.

In the recent address during the 68th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the esteemed Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş referred to Resolution 1325 as "an important milestone in addressing the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflicts on women." Emphasizing the gravity of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the minister underscored the significance of implementing key provisions of Resolution 1325.

In addition, also on the margins of the 68th CSW Session, the situation of women and girls in conflict zones was discussed during a side event organized by Türkiye. **“Revealing the Untold: The Devastating Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls”** was held at UN headquarters in New York under the coordination of Türkiye's Ministry of Family and Social Services and hosted by the minister. The side event underscored the imperative for collaborative endeavors and the significance of amplifying women's voices amidst war and conflict, with a specific focus on the plight of women and girls, notably in Gaza.

Türkiye is making significant efforts to stop civilian deaths in Gaza and to prevent Israeli attacks. With nearly 54,000 tons of aid, Türkiye is the country providing the most humanitarian assistance to Gaza. Every week, 127 tons of clean drinking water are sent to Gaza, where water sources have been destroyed. Additionally, over 400 Gazan patients and injured individuals, including cancer patients, are being treated in Turkish hospitals.

Since the beginning of internal conflicts in March 2011, an increasing number of Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) citizens have been coming to Türkiye seeking international protection. Türkiye provides these individuals with "temporary protection." The rapid increase in human rights violations in Syria in 2012 and beyond has led to dramatic increases in humanitarian aid needs. Since the onset of the internal conflicts, Türkiye has pursued an "open-door" policy for Syrian citizens affected by this situation.

Including in the temporary accommodation centers, educational services are available for all school-age children, including preschool, and healthcare services are provided at the same standard as those given to Turkish citizens. Places of worship are established for foreigners, and markets are set up to meet their needs. There are also adult education centers for Syrians under temporary protection, helping those without a profession to acquire sufficient skills and gain employment.

Furthermore, all women and girls under migrant or temporary protection status, including those displaced by conflict, are eligible to access equivalent services provided to Turkish citizens at women's shelters and violence prevention and monitoring centers.

### *Measures in the Field of International Protection*

Provincial Directorates of Migration Management are responsible for the registration and status determination procedures for foreigners seeking international protection in Türkiye. They also handle the temporary protection registration procedures for Syrian nationals. Women under international or temporary protection in Türkiye have access to all rights and services without discrimination, including based on sex.

### *Protection Desks' Duties for Women*

In 2017, the Directorate General of International Protection of the Presidency of Migration Management established protection desks as part of the Verification Project. These desks identify foreigners under temporary protection with special needs, refer them to relevant public institutions for services, inform these institutions about the individuals, and address urgent cases on site.

Currently, under the Support to Provincial Directorates of Migration Project, protection desks assess the status of persons with special needs to ensure the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to life. They refer individuals to legal solution mechanisms, psycho-social support, rehabilitation services, and institutions that facilitate access to social and economic resources. They also perform risk assessments (low, medium, high) and intervene in emergencies.

Foreigners under international/temporary protection who apply to Provincial Directorates of Migration Management are referred to protection desks for detailed interviews to assess vulnerability. Those identified with special needs are informed about their rights and services, and their living conditions are reported. Based on the interviews, individuals are referred to



appropriate public institutions and organizations, such as the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Red Crescent, Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations, and the Police Department.

Special needs assessments are conducted for women-specific cases, such as single women, single women with children, victims of violence, early marriage, and victims of sexual violence. Women are then referred to relevant public institutions and organizations. Victims of violence are referred to the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, and if they wish to file a complaint, the Provincial Police Departments intervene immediately. Those seeking legal support are referred to bar associations affiliated with the Union of Turkish Bar Associations. Socio-economic support is provided through the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations, and the Turkish Red Crescent.

All interviews conducted by protection desks are reported to the Presidency by commissions within the Governorships, coordinated by the Directorate of Migration Management. Cases submitted under the "Women at Risk" criterion are prioritized for resettlement if they meet the admission criteria of the destination countries.

Additionally, if women under international protection request a specific sex for their interviewer or interpreter during registration/interview procedures, their preference is accommodated to the extent possible, ensuring sensitivity to their request.

#### *Measures in the Field of Regular Migration*

Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection includes provisions to protect foreign survivors of domestic violence. Article 34, paragraph 6, titled "Family Residence Permit," states: "In case of divorce, a foreigner married to a Turkish citizen may be granted a short-term residence permit, provided that he/she has resided with a family residence permit for at least three years. However, if it is established by a court decision that the foreign spouse is a victim of domestic violence, the three-year period is not required." This provision ensures the protection and legal stay of foreign spouses who are victims of domestic violence in Türkiye.

All procedures in the field of regular migration are conducted without discrimination. Foreigners with special needs are given priority in accessing rights and services.

With steadfast dedication, Türkiye strives to ensure the visibility and recognition of women's contributions to peace and security in global processes, advocating for their meaningful participation and empowerment at all levels of decision-making.

### III. NATIONAL PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF BD & PFA

#### **National Machineries**

In Türkiye, the Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW), established as a national mechanism to ensure that women are much more actively, productively, and strongly involved in all aspects of social life and benefit equally from rights, opportunities, and resources, and to prevent discrimination against women, has been restructured as one of the main service units of the Ministry of Family and Social Services through Presidential Decree No. 1. The DGSW, which undertakes the task of conducting and coordinating protective, preventive, educational, developmental, and rehabilitative social service activities for women, continues to carry out its activities effectively and efficiently within the framework of relevant legislation. Its duties include:

- Coordinating necessary efforts to determine national policies and strategies,
- Carrying out social services and assistance activities within the scope of combating violence against women,
- Facilitating cooperation and coordination among relevant institutions and organizations, as well as voluntary organizations in this field.

Programs for which the national women's machinery is directly responsible for implementation include:

- 12th Development Plan (2024-2028) related policies and measures and measures included in the scope of the Directorate General's field of work in other policy documents prepared within the scope of the Development Plan
- Relevant measures included in the Annual Programs of the Presidency
- Relevant measures in the Strategic Plan and Performance Programs of the Ministry of Family and Social Services
- Women's Empowerment Strategy Paper and Action Plans
- National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women

Policy documents prepared by the DGSW are developed with the contributions of women's organizations, as well as stakeholders from academia, the private sector, and representatives of

public institutions and organizations, and are implemented in close collaboration with relevant parties.

Consultation meetings are organized under the chairmanship of the Minister of Family and Social Services, bringing together stakeholders from women's rights organizations, relevant civil society representatives, and academia, among others, to discuss matters related to women's rights.

Significant developments have been made in the institutional structure in Türkiye in the context of combating violence against women. Women's shelters and Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (VPMC), established under Law No. 6284, also operate within the structure of the General Directorate on the Status of Women (GDSW). VPMCs provide empowering and supportive counseling, guidance, referral, and monitoring services aimed at preventing violence and effectively implementing protective and preventive measures. These centers have sufficient and necessary staff, preferably employing female personnel, and operate on a twenty-four-hour basis, seven days a week.

Women's shelters, which provide shelter services to victims of violence, are residential facilities aimed at protecting women who have been subjected to physical, emotional, sexual, economic, or verbal abuse or violence. Their purpose is to protect women from violence, solve their psycho-social and economic problems, empower them, provide shelter for them and their children if any, and meet their other needs during this period.

In addition to the VPMCs serving in all 81 provinces, Violence Prevention Points have been established within Social Service Centers to ensure social service intervention and follow-up at the district level, in collaboration with public institutions. These contact points undertake tasks related to monitoring and following up on measures for victims of violence according to Law No. 6284, providing guidance, counseling, and referral services, particularly psychosocial support. Monitoring mechanisms established at both central and local levels are essential components of the fight against violence.

The Law No. 5840, regarding the establishment of the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (KEFEK) within the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), came into force after being published in the Official Gazette on March 24, 2009. KEFEK was established to monitor developments in Türkiye and internationally concerning the protection and advancement of women's rights and equality between women and men, inform the TBMM about these developments, discuss matters referred to it as primary or secondary, and provide

opinions to specialized commissions on draft laws and legislative decrees submitted to the TBMM when requested.

Within the TBMM, the "Parliamentary Inquiry Commission for Determining the Causes of Violence against Women and Identifying Necessary Measures" was established in January 2015. The "Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission Established for Determining the Causes of Violence against Women and Identifying Necessary Measures" prepared by the Commission was published on May 8, 2015.

In 2021, the "Parliamentary Inquiry Commission for Investigating All Aspects of Violence against Women and Determining Measures to Be Taken" was established within the TBMM. The "Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission Established for Investigating All Aspects of Violence against Women and Determining Measures to Be Taken" prepared as a result of the Commission's work conducted between April 2021 and March 2022 was adopted by the TBMM General Assembly on March 8, 2022.

Another institution active in the field of human rights is the Turkish Human Rights and Equality Institution (TIHEK). TIHEK operates in line with the principles of protecting and enhancing human rights, ensuring equal treatment for individuals, preventing discrimination in the enjoyment of legally recognized rights and freedoms, and effectively combating torture and ill-treatment, thus fulfilling the role of a national preventive mechanism. The institution is tasked with investigating and adjudicating human rights violations *ex officio* and addressing allegations of discrimination and violations of the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment either *ex officio* or upon application.

Additionally, the Public Ombudsperson Institution, which is an independent institution with a special budget under the Turkish Grand National Assembly, operates to examine, investigate, and make recommendations on all actions, transactions, attitudes, and behaviors of the administration in terms of compliance with law and equity within the framework of a justice understanding based on human rights.

The provision in Article 7 of Law No. 6328, which envisages the Chief Inspector to regulate the division of work among Public Ombudsman, including assignment in the field of women's and children's rights, assigns special importance to women and children's areas in the Law. The Public Ombudsman Unit responsible for women's and children's rights monitors, evaluates, and reports on the practices of administrations through a complaint mechanism in accordance with the legislation in this field, contributing to the protection and enhancement of women's and

children's human rights. Additionally, unlike other institutions, a structure has been established in Türkiye where all children, including girls, can directly apply through the Ombudsman Institution Children website, ensuring that child applications are received.

Within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Health, the units responsible for addressing violence against women are the Directorate General of Public Health, General Directorate of Public Hospitals, and General Directorate of Emergency Health Services - 112 Emergency Health Services Department.

In the provincial organization, there are Provincial Public Health Directorates and Public Hospitals Unions. Family Health Centers (ASM), Community Health Centers (TSM), and hospitals are institutions providing services related to violence against women in provinces. Emergency services, Crisis Intervention Units, and Medical Social Services Units are particularly important in hospitals. Finally, in cases requiring emergency medical intervention, the 112 Emergency telephone line provides free service 24/7.

Women's counseling centers affiliated with bar associations work under names such as women's rights center/board/commission, conducting studies on ensuring equality between women and men, especially in the Civil Code, and providing free legal counseling to women who lack sufficient information on women's rights and how to apply for them. According to December 2022 data from the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, women's rights centers/boards/commissions are present in all 83 Bar Associations.

Union of Turkish Bar Associations Women's Law Commission (TÜBAKKOM), composed of bar representatives with women's law commissions, works to solve problems arising from all forms of discrimination against women, including domestic violence.

Furthermore, within municipalities, there are women/family counseling centers providing services such as legal, psychological, and social counseling. According to data from the General Directorate of Local Administrations of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change as of December 31, 2022, there are women/family counseling centers in 237 municipalities across Türkiye.

### **Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT)**

#### *Environment and Sustainable Development Statistics Department*

TurkStat is responsible of the coordination in the production of SDG indicators of Türkiye. This coordination duty is twofold in the sense that it includes the coordination of data production by

related public institutions and departments of TurkStat. The responsible parties have been explicitly defined in the Official Statistical Programme.

TurkStat has been compiling SDG indicators from various sources for Türkiye to be in accordance with the global metadata of the indicators since 2015. The first publication on SDGs was a news bulletin in 2019 including time series data for years 2010-2017 and it was followed by two consecutive news bulletins in 2020 and 2021 with increasing number of indicators. In 2022, the web portal on SDGs “sdg.tuik.gov.tr” has been launched replacing the annual news bulletins. As of 2024, 150 unique indicators for Türkiye are available on the web portal. Where compliance with the global metadata is not possible with the available sources proxy indicators have been presented on the portal.

The main goal of TurkStat concerning the SDG indicators has been increasing the number of available indicators as well as improving the information provided by the disaggregation of indicators in accordance with the principle “Leave no one behind”. For the moment 47 of the published indicators are available with sex disaggregation. Efforts continue to motivate and coordinate data sources to produce sex disaggregated data and increase this number for suitable indicators. Major surveys such as Labour Force Survey and Survey on Income and Living Conditions which constitute data sources for the SDG indicators in Türkiye include disaggregations other than sex, which are geographic location, income, age, education and marital status.

#### *Demographic Statistics Department*

Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) produces reliable and timely statistics to produce and develop national policies in order to present the differences between women and men in society in Türkiye, ensure equality between women and men, determine the place of women in society and strengthen women’s contribution to socio-economic development. In this respect, the press release of “Women in Statistics” which includes recent gender statistics/indicators has been disseminated through the website of TurkStat special to March 8 International Women’s Day since 2012. Additionally, “Gender Statistics” electronic publication is also disseminated through the website of TurkStat.

The Gender Indicators/Statistics Data Set which consists of 141 indicators/statistics under 17 topics is updated annually and published through the website of TurkStat since 2008. The Gender Indicators/Statistics Data Set includes indicators under the topics of population, fertility, health, disability, marriage, family life, divorce, education, labour force, selected

occupations, satisfaction from work and earning, political life, violence and safety, time use, poverty and mortality. Additionally, there are Sustainable Development Indicators under the heading “Aim 5-Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls” in the dataset. Available indicators for Türkiye of the United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators (52 indicators) is also published through the website of TurkStat since 2017. Studies on updating and improving The Gender Indicators/Statistics Data Set are continued.

In addition, TurkStat carried out the pilot study in 2023 to calculate the Gender Equality Index of Türkiye. With the pilot study, Gender Equality Index which are calculated by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for European Union countries, was calculated for the first time for Türkiye with official data, and the Gender Equality Index was comparable to EU countries. Studies are continued to obtain the 2024 index value of Türkiye.

#### *Social Statistics Department*

European Union Statistical Office (Eurostat) set up a Task Force on Equality and Non-Discrimination Statistics in 2023 and its activities will continue until 2026. This task force mainly focuses on statistical concepts, standards and classification about six discrimination grounds: sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability and age. Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) is a member of this group and participates in meetings. TurkStat also follows the United Nations-Praia Group Task Team on Non-Discrimination and Equality activity. This Task Team’s online meetings have been followed.



#### IV. FORWARD-LOOKING REFLECTIONS ON FUTURE CHALLENGES

As Türkiye continues to advance its agenda on women's rights and empowerment, several forward-looking reflections and strategies will be considered to navigate future challenges effectively. Central to these reflections are the concepts of family centrality and sustainable development, which play pivotal roles in shaping equitable and inclusive policies.

Türkiye believes that strong societies are built with strong families, and strong families are built with strong women.

##### *Emphasizing Family Centrality*

The family unit remains a cornerstone of Turkish society, contributing significantly to social cohesion and stability. Strengthening the role of women within the family context is essential for the overall empowerment agenda. Policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, accessible childcare services, and parental leave, are crucial. These measures enable women to participate fully in economic activities while fulfilling their family responsibilities. By enhancing the support system for families, Türkiye will ensure that women are not forced to choose between career advancement and family obligations, thereby fostering a more inclusive workforce.

Factors such as disasters, globalization, demographic changes, digitalization, and individualization are weakening family bonds and leaving individuals vulnerable. Harmful trends and habits threaten family structures and values. The decline in marriages and the increase in the average age of first marriages and divorces reflect these challenges. Additionally, the fertility rate has been below the population replacement level since 2018, bringing numerous socio-economic changes and risks. The ageing population is a significant concern. By 2030, it is projected that 13% of the population will be over 65, increasing to 16% by 2040, and one in four people will be elderly by 2080. This demographic shift necessitates urgent measures to strengthen families.

In this regard; the Vision Document and Action Plan for Protecting and Strengthening the Family (2024-2028) has been adopted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. This plan has been prepared taking into consideration the family workshops conducted in all provinces, interviews held in 15,480 households, and the 8th Family Council Elderly Profile Research.

The document demonstrates our holistic approach to social policy and is compatible with the other strategic documents on women. Considering that strong women play a significant role in building a strong family and society, the "Strategy Document and Action Plan for Women's Empowerment (2024-2028)" has been implemented to bolster women's engagement in economic and social spheres. Its objectives include fostering equitable access to rights and opportunities for women and integrating principles of equality across key plans and policies. The meticulously defined goals of the action plan, aligned with sustainable development targets, will guide policies in the upcoming period.

### *Sustainable Development and Women's Empowerment*

Sustainable development is intrinsically linked to the empowerment of women. Türkiye's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the importance of integrating equality between women and men into all aspects of national policy. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without the active participation of women in all sectors, particularly in education, employment, and political representation. Programs that enhance women's skills in STEM fields, promote entrepreneurship, and ensure equal pay for equal work are vital. Additionally, sensitive to equality between men women and policy-making will continue to be prioritized to address systemic inequalities and allocate resources effectively to women's initiatives.

### *Progress and Challenges in Women's Rights*

Türkiye has made significant strides in promoting women's rights, as evidenced by legislative reforms and increased female representation in the workforce and political arenas. The increase in women's representation in the Turkish Grand National Assembly from 4.4% in 2002 to 19.83% in 2023 marks substantial progress.

Efforts will be intensified to overcome ongoing barriers, including the targeted support for women candidates. Furthermore, enhancing women's representation in executive roles is imperative.

### *Addressing Future Challenges*

Looking forward, Türkiye will address several key challenges to sustain and accelerate progress in women's empowerment:

*Economic Inclusion:* Ensuring women's full participation in the labor market requires addressing barriers to employment, such as childcare responsibilities and discriminatory

practices. Expanding microcredit projects, enhancing vocational training programs, and supporting women's cooperatives and entrepreneurship are effective strategies to increase women's economic participation.

*Educational Attainment:* Bridging the gap in education, particularly in STEM fields, is crucial for preparing women for future job markets. Initiatives that encourage girls to pursue higher education and careers in science and technology will be prioritized.

*Combating Violence Against Women:* Persistent violence against women remains one of the significant barrier to empowerment. Strengthening legal frameworks, providing comprehensive support services for victims, and conducting widespread awareness campaigns are essential steps to eradicate violence and ensure women's safety.

*Resilience in Crisis:* The recent earthquakes in Türkiye highlighted the vulnerability of women in disaster situations. Building resilient communities through disaster preparedness programs and ensuring inclusive responses in emergencies are critical for protecting and empowering women in crisis scenarios.

#### *Vision for the Future*

Türkiye's vision for the future is one where women enjoy full equality and empowerment in every aspect of life. This vision aligns with global commitments and national development plans that prioritize equality as a fundamental pillar of progress. By fostering an environment that values and supports women's contributions, Türkiye will achieve sustainable development, enhance social cohesion, and build a more equitable society.

In conclusion, the path forward involves a multi-faceted approach that integrates family centrality, sustainable development, and robust policies to further enhance women's rights. With continued commitment and collaborative efforts, Türkiye will create a future where women's rights are fully realized, and their potential is harnessed for the nation's growth and prosperity.