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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AB/FP	Agribusiness/Food Processing
ADB	Asian Development Bank
<i>akim</i>	Mayor (Kazakhstan)
BIO	Biotechnology Industry Organization
CA	Central Asia
CAB	Consultative and Advisory Body
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CODEV	Working Party on Development Cooperation
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAMU	Entrepreneurship Development Fund (Kazakhstan)
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DHD	Dialogue on Human Dimension
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EEAS	European External Action Service
EE	Energy Efficiency
EER	Energy Efficiency Ratio
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ESC	Economic, Social, Cultural
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
EUR	Euro
FoAA	Freedom of Assembly and Association
FoE	Freedom of Expression
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GNI	Gross National Income

GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus / Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HOA	Homeowner Association
HR	Human Rights
HRO	Human Rights Organisation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IFAS	International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JJ	Juvenile Justice
KZT	Kazakhstani Tenge
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LWG	Local Working Group
MCO	Multi Country Office
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTHCYP	National Telephone Helpline for Children and Young People
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
SWD	Staff Working Document
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TA	Technical Assistance
TALD	Technical Approach to Local Development
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now UN Women)

UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UNISDR	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WHO	World Health Organisation

1 Executive Summary

The Gender Study for Kazakhstan was carried out during February – March 2017 by the consultant team made up of Ms. Helen Dubok (Team Leader), and Ms. Dilbar Turakhanova (Gender Expert). The objectives were to provide the EU with a review of the gender situation in Kazakhstan in order to provide an understanding of whether gender inequalities persist both formally and informally, and to provide specific country recommendations to improve the gender situation and the elimination of discrimination through EU assistance.

There are still considerable gaps in knowledge and information in Kazakhstan which are a constraint to detailed gender analysis. Reliable data disaggregated by sex and age from the regions remains largely insufficient. Within the policy framework, Kazakhstan adopted a 'Concept of Gender and Family Policy of Kazakhstan' in 2016 to ensure a tangible implementation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in compliance with its international obligations and national legislation. However, it has so far failed to address gender inequalities in the public sphere and has not brought about equal outcomes for women and men in political, economic and social sectors.¹ Kazakhstan has almost reached gender parity for access to education, and women represent the majority of students at higher education institutions making up 64 percent of those studying for masters' degrees and 58 percent of those pursuing doctoral studies. Despite the high numbers of women in employment and in full-time education, Kazakh society is prone to traditional perceptions about the roles of women and men. The division of responsibilities within families remains rigid and women experience a double work burden of home-related tasks and employment in the labour force.

The National Commission on Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan was established in 2006 and is the primary institution for the realization of Kazakhstan's gender equality strategy. It is relatively high-levelled but is a purely consultative body and lacks the authority and operational capacity to mainstream gender across different sectors, or to effectively monitor the implementation of gender equality policies. Gender mainstreaming as a tool for gender equality is not well understood in Kazakhstan and has not been institutionalised across sectors. There have been a few scattered gender budgeting initiatives piloted at local level by NGOs and international organisations, but the uptake has been limited. The new 'Concept for Gender and Family Policy' however, has included gender budgeting as a priority initiative to be rolled out across all sectors.

Kazakhstan has a very high rate of juvenile suicides.² In the two decades 1990-1999 and 2000-2009, it had the highest rate in the world for boys aged 10-14 years (8.53 per 100,000), and the rate for girls was the fourth highest in the world at 2.86 per 100,000. Although the incidence of suicides amongst boys is higher, in the last two years the number of girl suicides is increasing. Child suicide particularly among girls in rural areas is related to traditional norms of marriage; lack of acceptance of sexual reproductive rights, and pregnancy outside marriage. Early marriage of girls is a blatantly unconcealed occurrence in Kazakhstan, and is practised even by male public officials holding office. The impact on girls is devastating. They do not complete their education and therefore have no qualifications. Episodes of bride-kidnapping are extremely prevalent in Kazakhstan within ethnic groups such as Kyrgyz, Kurds, Turks, and Azeri. Young girls are not protected from this even by their own families.

There is significant underemployment and unemployment among women in Kazakhstan. It is estimated that there are two million women categorized as 'self-employed'. In fact, these are either women who are informally employed or are employed in the informal sector, and are denied and lack all social guarantees, such as maternity benefit, sickness benefit, and pensions.

There is also vertical and horizontal discrimination of women in the labour market. Despite the higher education levels of women compared to men, the majority of the female labour force is predominantly concentrated in three traditional sectors such as education, health and services. A significant socially

¹ Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan (2016), Evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016: sociological study, pp.11-15.

² Kairi Kõlves and Diego De Leo (2014) 'Suicide rates in children aged 10-14 years worldwide: changes in the past two decades' Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, National Centre of Excellence in Suicide Prevention, World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. Published in The British Journal of Psychiatry

vulnerable group in Kazakhstan is rural women – especially those who have been obliged to marry early, or have low levels of education. Rural households in general, suffer from high unemployment rates and low incomes, because seasonal work for many households is the only means of earning a living. The root cause of violence against children in rural areas is frequently household poverty and lack of opportunities for women.

Homophobic attitudes persist in Kazakhstan. LGBT individuals, particularly gay men, were reportedly the most oppressed group in society.³ Kazakhstan has also reportedly failed to protect LGBT people from violence, discrimination,⁴ and unlawful detention by police on the grounds of their sexual orientation. LGBT individuals have also been refused assistance from medical specialists because of their sexual orientation.⁵

The agenda for gender equality in public and private spheres, would appear not to have been taken forward since Soviet times. Formally however, gender equality has been introduced into public policy in the post-independence period. There are some achievements (such as increased political participation of women) to meet international requirements and standards. But in reality, the gender equality agenda has not addressed the private sphere in order to break the existing patriarchal system in society and the State. The key barriers to achieving gender equality in Kazakhstan include lack of institutional capacity to operationalise gender equality policy in the line ministries, in government, and in the National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy. Gender equality legislation is poorly enforced nationwide. There are also legislative gaps in policy documents. All of the major strategy documents which are supposed to guide the country towards 2050 such as 'Kazakhstan 2030', 'Kazakhstan 2050' and '100 Steps', are completely gender-blind. Social norms are another barrier to achieving gender equality in rural areas, and such norms are the origin of negative phenomena such as bride-kidnapping and early marriage for girls. Patriarchal norms remain dominant in the country. An assessment of the situation undertaken in 2010 and which remains relevant today found that "those working in government who are familiar with the term [gender] understand it as only addressing women's issues, or ensuring equal participation of men and women in government committees or boards."⁶ Due in part also to conceptual misunderstanding, gender equality in Kazakhstan is equated with assisting women in relatively narrow spheres, and improving the status of women is interpreted as implementing State commitments to provide social protection to women as mothers, with less attention given to counteracting discriminatory practices and ensuring equal opportunities for both women and men.⁷ There is no evidence that existing gender disparities in Kazakhstan or women's vulnerabilities are given any particular consideration, nor do programmes include indicators to monitor specific benefits to, or impacts on, the lives of women and men as distinct groups. The lack of gender-specific goals means that progress cannot be gauged. In reality there is a glaring disconnect between existing legal guarantees of gender equality and actual reality and practice.

Despite the fact that the EU is not currently seen as actively promoting GEWE by other actors with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality, it is nevertheless perceived as having political leverage and of being influential with the Government. At no financial cost, there is space to conduct effective policy dialogue on gender issues. The EU is listened to, and is well placed to leverage its political weight to promote gender equality. EU GAP II objectives have been selected which are considered relevant to Kazakhstan, and for which the EU can add value towards achieving country objectives on gender equality, as part of national development. The recommended priority gender objectives for Kazakhstan include 'Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere'; 'Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship'; 'Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes'.

A number of new gender equality actions have also been identified which are considered of high priority. These include gender education to transform existing stereotypes: supporting the collection, analysis and dissemination of VAWG data; encouraging broad-based education for behavioural change regarding gender based violence, and engaging men and boys and communities. The specific initiatives that would contribute to improving GEWE in Kazakhstan include supporting new approaches to address domestic violence; addressing

³ United States Department of State (2014) '2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Kazakhstan' 27 February 2014 USA

⁴ Human Rights Watch (2015) "That's When I Realized I Was Nobody" A Climate of Fear for LGBT People in Kazakhstan' ISBN 978-1-6231-32637. USA.

⁵ Human Rights Watch (2015) "That's When I Realized I Was Nobody" A Climate of Fear for LGBT People in Kazakhstan' ISBN 978-1-6231-32637. USA.

⁶ S. Somach and D. Rubin. 2010. Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development. p. 18.

⁷ The Feminist League of Kazakhstan. 2010. Monitoring of the Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee. Astana.

trafficking in human beings such as male victims of forced labour; extending support to the undocumented and improving access to services of socially vulnerable groups.

2 Introduction

This report contains the findings of the Gender Study for Kazakhstan which was carried out in-country during the period 20 February – 09 March 2017 by the consultant team made up of Ms. Helen Dubok (Team Leader), and Ms. Dilbar Turakhanova (Gender Expert).

The objectives of the assignment were to produce a gender analysis and study for Central Asia to provide the EU with a review of the gender situation in each of the five countries of the region - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

The specific objectives are to provide an understanding of whether gender inequalities persist both formally and informally in each country, and to provide specific country recommendations on issues to be addressed to improve the gender situations and the elimination of discrimination through EU assistance.

2.1 Expected Outputs - Response strategies for Kazakhstan

The expected outputs include proposals concerning the objectives and opportunities for policy and political dialogue in Kazakhstan which could contribute to strengthening coordination between EU institutions and EU Member States regarding burden-sharing for the implementation of GAP II objectives based on identified gender-related initiatives by Member States in Kazakhstan.

The specific outputs are:

- Objectives to be selected from GAP II (for each thematic priority) to contribute to existing programmes / projects or future programmes / projects of DCI (i.e. those active in the bilateral focal sectors of intervention, and those of Non-State Actor / Local Authorities thematic programme);
- Adaptation to programmes in order to incorporate these objectives and adequately measure their impact;
- Following consultation with the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan, new actions to be identified and formulated where relevant and possible; and
- Priorities for forthcoming in-country calls under the EIDHR instrument to be identified.

A brief presentation of preliminary findings was made at the debriefing meeting held on 09 March 2017 in the EU Delegation with representatives of EU Member States and Delegation staff.

This report contains the detailed findings, proposed gender objectives and priorities for Kazakhstan.

3 Methodological note

The Consultants employed a combination of data collection techniques for the Kazakhstan Gender Study as follows:

- desk review of available secondary data including statistics, survey reports and publications
- key informant interviews with gender equality actors in the country
- telephone interviews with key informants
- focus group discussion with gender equality actors from civil society
- meeting with key government officers
- site visit to a rural area and rural-based NGO (Astana area).

Secondary data and literature was reviewed to assess the country's gender policy framework and to inform the development of method for in-country data collection. Where relevant and available disaggregated quantitative data was collected from key actors and stakeholders.

Participants selected for stakeholder interviews and meetings were identified according to sector, and specialism. Interviews aimed to gather qualitative data on how the entity / organization functioned and which issues were the focus of its operations. In addition, information was collected related to their experiences; views and perceptions of policy and legal issues; the impact of the organizations on beneficiaries and participants; stakeholders' knowledge and views on relevant law and policy relating to gender equality and empowerment issues, and practice and outcomes in actual situations.

The entities and people met in-country included:

- Members of the National Commission on Women's Affairs, Social and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan, and members of Expert Council
- Academic institutions (Social and Gender Studies Institute, Almaty)
- NGOs / CSOs
- International Organizations: UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, IOM
- Financial Institutions: EBRD
- Line ministries (Ministry of Labour and Social Protection; Ministry of Interior) and Office of Prosecutor General; member of the lower Chamber of the Parliament of Kazakhstan
- EU project implementing partners
- Defence lawyer for VAW cases
- EU Member States (representative from Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany).

The full list of people / entities met is contained in the annex.

3.1 Difficulties experienced

3.1.1 Knowledge / information gaps

There are still considerable gaps in knowledge and information in Kazakhstan which are a constraint to detailed gender analysis. Reliable data disaggregated by sex and age from the regions remains largely insufficient. Studies produced by UNDP indicate that significant gender inequality continues to persist in Kazakhstan outside the major urban areas.

Available data concerning the population is not recent. The last population census in Kazakhstan was conducted in 2009 and the next one is planned for 2020 in partnership with UNFPA.

Locating data can also be problematic as it is published on-line across different websites. Not all national data is available to the public, (and for Kazakhs, the data which is available is not accessible at all because it is not published in the Kazakh language).

3.1.2 Other difficulties

It was not possible to meet with officials from the Ministry of National Economy, as had been indicated in the

Inception Report as one of the main entities to be contacted in Kazakhstan.

4 Current situation

4.1 Legal and human rights framework

Kazakhstan ratified the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1998. It also ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. It is a member of UN Human Rights treaties ensuring civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights which include the provision of non-discrimination and equality. Kazakhstan, as a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) has also ratified ILO fundamental conventions calling for the prohibition of discrimination in employment, and the establishment of equal pay for work of equal value. It also ratified ILO technical conventions establishing maternity protection and guarantees for workers with family responsibilities. ILO raised concerns that the Government of Kazakhstan had seriously failed to submit information requested by the ILO Committee of Experts on the implementation of several ILO instruments including on freedom of association, equal remuneration, discrimination in employment and occupation.⁸ ILO also raised concerns related to the existence of the list of occupations prohibited to women as these measures are protective and such protections should therefore be limited to maternity protection cases only.⁹

The Constitution of Kazakhstan proclaims the prohibition of discrimination on various grounds including that of sex (Article 14). The principle of non-discrimination and equality is further established in all the basic laws of Kazakhstan, such as the Civil Code, Labour Code, and Code on Administrative Violations. However, the inclusion of this principle is not universally applied to all the laws of Kazakhstan, and legislation does not establish a comprehensive definition of discrimination. For instance, it does not mention that sexual orientation and gender identity are grounds for discrimination and does not provide comprehensive and effective protection from discrimination in both public and private spheres. Kazakhstan has legalised change of gender identity, but legal identity can only be changed only upon mandatory sterilisation and genital surgery.¹⁰

Kazakhstan decriminalised homosexuality in 1998 although homophobic attitudes still persist. A recent report highlighted that LGBT individuals particularly gay men, were the most oppressed group in society.¹¹ Kazakhstan has also reportedly failed to protect LGBT people from violence, discrimination,¹² and unlawful detention by police on the grounds of their sexual orientation. LGBT individuals have also been refused assistance from medical specialists because of their sexual orientation.¹³

The legislation of Kazakhstan does not establish a definition of temporary special measures such as quotas. In this respect, it has not introduced a quota for women's participation in political life, nor in other areas where inequality between women and men still exists.

The Law "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Women and Men" was adopted in 2009. It prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender and sex. However, the definition of discrimination established by the Law does not cover direct and indirect discrimination in public and private spheres as prescribed by CEDAW. It further establishes a number of guarantees for gender equality in public service, health, education and the labour market. However, the Law does not stipulate any tough enforcement or oversight mechanisms. In the same year, the Law 'On Prevention of Domestic Violence' was also adopted. The Law extends protection from violence of spouses; former spouses; cohabitants and former cohabitants; close relatives, and persons who have a child or children in common. Thus, it covers all types of existing family relations in Kazakhstan. This Law requires the adoption of by-laws establishing standards of social services for survivors of domestic violence. In 2016, the 'Standard of Provision of Special Social Services for Victims of Domestic Violence' was adopted by Decree of the Minister of Health and Social Development. It is applicable to both governmental and non-governmental service providers and covers such service providers as crisis centres; centres of social support to victims of domestic violence; shelters; and other organisations

⁸ http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3292125

⁹ http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3298729

¹⁰ National Action Plan on the Field of Human Rights for 2017-2020, draft. 2016

¹¹ United States Department of State (2014) '2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Kazakhstan' 27 February 2014 USA

¹² Human Rights Watch (2015) "That's When I Realized I Was Nobody" A Climate of Fear for LGBT People in Kazakhstan' ISBN 978-1-6231-32637. USA.

¹³ Human Rights Watch (2015) "That's When I Realized I Was Nobody" A Climate of Fear for LGBT People in Kazakhstan' ISBN 978-1-6231-32637. USA.

providing services to victims of domestic violence.¹⁴ Currently, two State crisis centres are operational in Astana and Almaty. Other crisis centres are supported by donor funds and through State orders. However, not all forms of discrimination against women are prohibited in Kazakhstan. Sexual harassment, for example is not recognized. Current protection mechanisms to prevent violence against women established by the administrative and criminal legislation are not always effective. For instance, the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence are to be initiated by victim and supported by evidence collected by the victim. Thus, the burden of proof of such violence lies with the victim. Investigation per se, could be done by investigation bodies only.

The current Law on Domestic Violence has a number of other shortcomings. Key ministries such as the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Information and Communication; the Ministry of Religion, and civil society organizations are not included as bodies responsible for implementing the Law. No coordinating body has been established as being responsible for the Law's enforcement. The 'National Action Plan on Implementation of the Law' was not adopted, and there are no resources allocated from the national budget for its implementation. The prosecution of perpetrators is also inadequate. Actions such as beatings, light or medium degrees of injury and even rape are considered as cases for private prosecution: cases are opened upon reports filed by victims. Currently discussions are on-going concerning even decriminalising these articles / clauses.

The current emphasis in Kazakhstan is to focus on perpetrators of domestic violence and to introduce psychological programmes for their rehabilitation. The focus of the legislation is on prevention and there are no indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the preventive measures undertaken by the State. State response to support and rehabilitate victims does not take into account the realities of victims of domestic violence, such as their lack of identity documents, as these can be easily and deliberately destroyed or taken from the victim - nor an assessment of her family situation. Working with the entire family instead of focusing only on the victim would be a more effective approach.

(The issue of domestic violence is also addressed as an important country-relevant issue for investigation in Section 3.10.3 below - 'Levels of Violence').

Kazakhstan does not have effective legislation for combating trafficking in human beings. In the Criminal Code, it establishes articles for punishing trafficking in human beings, however, certain guarantees such as a time period for victims to decide whether to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, or for requesting a residence permit extension in order to be able to testify against perpetrators in court, are not made available in the legislation. These gaps prevent the effective prosecution of traffickers and actually result in the impunity of perpetrators. Kazakhstan legislation does not establish any legal requirement to conduct gender analysis of current and proposed draft laws or policies.¹⁵

4.2 Policy framework at national level

On 6 December 2016, the country adopted a 'Concept of Gender and Family Policy of Kazakhstan' to last until 2030. The overall objective of this Concept is to ensure a tangible implementation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in compliance with Kazakhstan's international obligations and national legislation. One of the key objectives is the mainstreaming of gender in the process of development; in implementation and monitoring of national legislation; in national and local budgets, and in State social and economic programmes. In this respect, the implementation of gender budgeting is envisaged, as well as gender expertise of by-laws, strategies, sub-national strategies and programmes, and evidence-based gender perspectives in public policy. The expansion of educational activities to establish a proper understanding of gender is also foreseen and a halt to the dissemination of gender stereotypes. The Concept further outlines priority activities of the State to ensure gender equality in the political and economic sphere and in education, and the elimination of discrimination, violence, and the use of gender stereotypes. The participation of women in ensuring peace and security is considered essential. It is foreseen that the Concept will be implemented in three consecutive phases: 1) 2017-2019: during this phase the development of a clear plan for implementing planned outcomes stipulated in the Concept is foreseen; 2) 2020-2022: during this phase the actual

¹⁴ <http://www.mz.gov.kz/ru/node/343107>

¹⁵ Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan (2016), Evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016: sociological study, p.15.

implementation of planned long-term objectives and activities specified in the Concept will be initiated; and 3) 2023 – 2030: the long-term objectives and activities of the Gender and Family Policy will be undertaken and put into action in order to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The process of this implementation phase is expected to contribute to Kazakhstan's entry into the group of 30 most developed countries in the world. The Concept sets an ambitious goal of achieving gender equality in public and private spheres through for example the introduction of gender education at all levels of education, and the establishment of the family based on egalitarian principles.¹⁶ The adopted Concept has been heavily criticised by the international community and women's NGOs in the country because of its bringing together of gender and family issues under one umbrella. The government has explained that family policy has been introduced in order to address gender inequality in the private sphere, and to ensure that gender inequality does not persist in successive families. Family policy as contained in the Concept is mainly concerned with addressing the low reproductive capacity of modern families and high divorce rates. However, the Concept does not establish any clear definition of what is a family nor how inequalities will be addressed at the family level.

The current Concept of Gender and Family Policy is based on the achievements of Kazakhstan's Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2006-2016. It did not prove to be fully effective however, due to a lack of funding for all the activities as well as poor capacity of local governments to achieve the Strategy's goals and objectives.¹⁷ The Gender Equality Strategy was assessed as being a rather formal document that did not include clear and measurable indicators for assessing progress, and whose objectives were not translated to State sectoral policies; line ministry strategic plans; central-level agencies, or local development plans. The main achievement of the Strategy was that it ensured that the gender agenda formally entered into legal and policy discourses. However, it failed to address gender inequalities in the public sphere and did not bring about equal outcomes for women and men in political, economic and social sectors.¹⁸

4.3 Political setting

Kazakhstan is a presidential republic which has been ruled by the same leader for 25 years and who will remain in power until 2020 following the results of early elections which were held in 2015. Freedom House, a US-based NGO defines Kazakhstan as a consolidated authoritarian regime with a democratic score of 6.61.¹⁹ The bi-cameral Parliament currently consists of the President's supporters. In accordance with the Constitution, the President has the power to dismiss Parliament and appoint the Chairperson of the Supreme Court. Thus, Kazakhstan could be described as a supra-presidential republic without a proper system of checks and balances. In March 2017, the President signed a Decree finalising constitutional reform that he had initiated in January 2017. The reform aims at redistributing selected Presidential powers between Parliament and the Government. Following reform, Parliament has received the power to form a Government; oversee Government activities and call for a vote of no-confidence. Government has received the power to adopt State programmes; decide on funding allocation to cover salaries of public servants and other staff, which is paid out of the national budget. The President has relinquished the power to initiate the drafting of legislation which is now bestowed on the Government. The Government can now be held accountable by Parliament and must report on its actions to both the President and Parliament. The President, however, retains the power to preside in Government meetings which deal with important issues including discussing appointments of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence. There are also several amendments concerning the role of the Supreme Court and Constitutional Council. However, these reforms have not substantially changed the constitutional order of Kazakhstan *per se*, as they did not produce any firm separation of powers.²⁰

¹⁶ Concept of Gender and Family Policy until 2030.

¹⁷ ADB (2013), Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank

¹⁸ Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan (2016), Evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016: sociological study, pp.11-15.

¹⁹ The rating encompasses 7 indicators used for assessment: national democratic governance, electoral process, civil society, independent media, local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence and corruption. It is based on scale from 1 to 7 where a score of 1 indicates the highest level of democratic process and 7 the lowest. Lillis, J (2016), Kazakhstan. Nations in Transit,

https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NiT2016_Kazakhstan.pdf

²⁰ Pistan C (2017), 2017 Constitutional Reform in Kazakhstan: increasing democracy without political pluralism, <http://www.constitutionnet.org/news/2017-constitutional-reform-kazakhstan-increasing-democracy-without-political-pluralism>

There are currently no viable opposition forces in the country. Parliament includes members of the ruling Nurtan party and other political parties that are loyal to the current regime. The registration of political parties is a non-transparent and cumbersome process due to the lack of detailed regulations for checking lists of signatures, and no exact timeframe for registration.

There are 18,092 non-governmental organisations registered in Kazakhstan with the majority of NGOs operating in Almaty and Astana. About 40 percent of NGOs focus on multiple issues, and four percent of NGOs focus specifically on gender equality. In 2016, the Ministry of Religion and Civil Society was established to streamline cooperation between the State and civil society. The Ministry introduced a requirement for all NGOs to register in a special database. Interaction between civil society and the State on important social issue is maintained through public councils that are established under line ministries at central level, and local executive authorities for provincial level to district levels. These public councils include not only NGOs, but also businesses, political parties, trade unions and mass media. They may undertake studies; monitor the provision of public services, hold public hearings on important reforms, and make recommendations related to current and proposed legislation and policies.²¹ Despite these formal frameworks for cooperating with State bodies and participating in public policies, experts have noted that space for civil society in Kazakhstan is shrinking due to the disclosure requirements enforced recently which require NGOs to declare to tax authorities whether they receive funding from foreign states or international organisations, and whether funds were donated to provide legal aid (i.e. provision of information, counselling and assistance in the courts), or for implementing sociological studies involving the collection and analysis of information (other than for commercial purposes) and disseminating their findings. Violation of these rules may result in fines and a suspension of organisations' activities for up to three months.²² These legal requirements put the existence of NGOs critical of government policies at risk. In January 2017, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions was critical of existing legislation related to freedom of association and the protection of workers' rights, and was subsequently shut down by the economic court of Kazakhstan. Its leaders were also harassed by the authorities. Any political dissent and criticism of government policies are not tolerated in Kazakhstan.²³

Upon re-election in 2015 the President proposed a Programme - "100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms" that included reforms in government, the civil service, the rule of law, industrialisation and economic growth. Political reform however was not envisaged. The President has justified strong presidential power and a lack of political reforms as being necessary for a stable political regime and to advance the country's economic and social development. This stability, however, has always been challenged by internal political struggles both between and inside the country's political clans. Political clan struggles have been further exacerbated by the lack of clarity concerning the continuity of the President's power, as his successor and the process of transfer of power is still unresolved. Stability has been further challenged by recent popular protests regarding pressing social and economic problems, such as the oil workers' strike in Zhanoazen in 2011; disputes over land reforms in 2016, and the population's general discontent with the economic situation in Kazakhstan following the financial crisis and drop in oil prices. Since 2011 Kazakhstan has also witnessed an increase in terrorist attacks by radical Islamists.²⁴

Kazakhstan is ranked as being a highly corrupt country by the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International where it occupies 126th place. Corruption is widespread and systemic and is pervasive in both the public and private sector. It is perceived as a key constraint for business development in the country and also significantly affects government effectiveness.²⁵

Kazakhstan is an active player in regional integration politics. Along with the Russian Federation and Belarus, Kazakhstan established a Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in 2014 that was later joined by Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. In 2016 Kazakhstan was accorded the status of non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018.²⁶

²¹ http://www.din.gov.kz/rus/deyatelnost/grazhdanskoye_obshestvo/

²² National Action Plan on the Field of Human Rights for 2017-2020, draft. 2016

²³ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/11/23/we-are-not-enemy/violations-workers-rights-kazakhstan>

²⁴ Ionova E (2016), Internal Political Problems of Kazakhstan, Russia and New States of Eurasia, No.3, pp.20-32.

²⁵ OECD (2016), Multi-dimensional review of Kazakhstan, Vol.1 Initial Assessment.

²⁶ <http://www.kazakhstanunsc.com>

4.4 Overall economic situation

In Central Asia, Kazakhstan is the most prosperous state which has transitioned from lower middle-income to an upper middle-income country in less than two decades. High GDP growth since 2002 contributed to a sharp reduction in poverty and an improvement in social indicators. Kazakhstan is rich in natural resources such as oil and gas. It has the ninth largest oil reserves in the world. The oil sector accounts for 60 percent of total exports and more than 25 percent of GDP. The recent fall in oil prices and recessions in both the Russian Federation and China, which are Kazakhstan's main trading partners resulted in a slowdown in economic growth and a devaluation of the Kazakh currency. Following the 2016 slowdown, growth was expected to strengthen to 2.5 percent in 2017, reflecting higher oil production and the effect of substantial fiscal stimulus spending.²⁷ The sharp exchange rate depreciation in late 2015-early 2016 triggered a surge in consumer prices, but inflation came down to levels consistent with the National Bank of Kazakhstan's target range. The medium-term outlook has improved, with growth in the non-oil sector of the economy expected to gradually pick up to 4 percent, benefitting from structural reforms and a resumption of bank lending. However, the economy remains vulnerable to commodity price swings and a sustained decline in oil prices. Fiscal policy in recent years has been supportive of economic activity, mainly through the 'Nurly Zhol' initiative, which has provided funding to infrastructure, SMEs, and housing. At the end of 2016, the authorities approved a new framework and rules for the National Fund that aim to sustain strong buffers and reduce the dependence of the budget on oil revenues. Also, in the context of transition to inflation targeting, the National Bank (NBK) strengthened its policy toolkit and improved analytical capacity and communications. However, significant vulnerabilities remain such as problems in the banking sector which have accumulated and may create risks to public finances.²⁸

Kazakhstan pursues an objective of diversifying its economy in order to reduce its dependency on natural resources, and has adopted several policy measures for industrial innovation. However, structural bottlenecks remain which are hindering economic diversification.

In 2012, the President outlined the Strategy - "Kazakhstan-2050" to take Kazakhstan into the group of 30 most developed countries in the world. The seven primary objectives are: 1) further developing and strengthening statehood; 2) transitioning to new principles of economic policy; 3) comprehensive support for entrepreneurship which will be a leading force of the national economy; 4) forming a new social model; 5) creating modern and efficient education and healthcare systems; 6) increasing accountability, efficiency and functionality of the State apparatus; and 7) establishing adequate international and military policy that is responsive to new challenges. This Strategy is an overarching vision of Kazakhstan which is to be translated into ten-year strategic development plans. These development plans are to be implemented through sectoral State programmes and local development plans. In the Strategy, the President emphasised the role of women as mothers, wives and daughters. However, it was also stressed that every young girl should receive quality education; should progress her career and should be free from domestic violence. The Government was called upon to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and to establish and practice equal rights and opportunities for women. This commitment, however, does not cut across all strategic and sectoral policies in order to ensure that there is gender mainstreaming in national development planning as well as gender budgeting.

The agricultural sector and business climate for the development of small and medium enterprises are the focus of planned economic reforms in Kazakhstan until 2050. In line with these reforms several State programmes aimed at supporting the development of businesses are to be implemented. Among them are a number of unified programmes to support business development entitled 'Roadmap of Business 2020', and 'Roadmap of Employment 2020' and diverse programmes of the Fund of Development of Entrepreneurship – 'Damu'. Damu runs special credit lines for the development of women's entrepreneurship in partnership with EBRD. A special programme for the development of the agricultural sector – 'Agro-business 2020' for the period 2013-2030 has also been adopted. This Programme establishes a separate credit line for the development of cooperatives for crop production, cattle breeding and the production of dairy and meat products. However, the credit line is not specifically aimed at women, despite the fact that in 2015, every third

²⁷ IMF (2017) Country Report No. 17/108 2017 'Article IV Consultation – Press Release and Staff Report. Washington DC USA.

²⁸ IMF (2017) Country Report No. 17/108 2017 'Article IV Consultation – Press Release and Staff Report. Washington DC USA

loan was taken out by a woman.²⁹

The economic activity of the population of Kazakhstan is high and the country's economically active population grew from 7.8 million to 8.6 million during the period 2004–2010. 76.1 percent of men and 66.4 percent of women are classified as economically active. Despite the high employment levels of women (61.8 percent) in Kazakhstan compared with other Central Asian countries, women are subject to occupational segregation. They are found in traditional sectors such as education and health care (representing 70 percent of the total number of employees). They are also highly represented in sectors such as food and hospitality (66.4 percent), and in the financial and insurance sector (65.3 percent). Men dominate in industrial sectors and these sectors offer the highest paid jobs. In addition to horizontal segregation, women are also subject to vertical segregation occupying lower level managerial positions in small, medium and large enterprises. Women make up 40 percent of heads of small and medium businesses, but only a few women head large businesses.³⁰ About 20 percent of the economically active population (2.8 million) are self-employed and their labour is mostly concentrated in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (56 percent). Others are in trade and the construction sector. Half of the self-employed population (48 percent) is concentrated in South Kazakhstan, Zhambyl and Almaty regions which are predominantly agricultural.³¹ The Labour Force Survey (2009) revealed that 35.6 percent of all persons employed were informally employed³² with women making up 59.2 percent of those employed in the informal sector, and 34.6 percent of those self-employed.³³ The level of unemployment among women is higher than for men. In 2015, the level of unemployment among women was 5.7 percent compared with 4.3 percent for men. Women are also more likely to be in long-term unemployment compared to men.³⁴

The country's economic development has also impacted the social protection system which has undergone a number of reforms resulting in transiting from a less protective approach to more individual responsibility.³⁵ The current social security system includes guaranteed benefits, mandatory social insurance and a voluntary accumulated pension system. Social protection currently includes provision for income support, social measures aimed at reintegrating individuals into the labour market and provision for integrated social services. The system consists of cash and in-kind transfers to vulnerable groups of the population based on means testing; investments in education and health, and social care services. Public expenditure for the social sector is equal to 51 percent of the national budget. Expenditure for education increased from 0.7 percent in 2000 to 4.1 percent in 2014. Investment to social support and welfare was higher and made up 4.12 percent of GDP in 2012. Investments in health services have led to improved life expectancy and reduced infant and mortality rates, however, the quality and access to health services remains a challenge considering the significant out-of-pocket payments made by the public for health services. National sex-disaggregated statistics on utilization of social assistance are not available in Kazakhstan. A review of social assistance provided to families and children conducted by UNICEF in 2015 revealed that available assistance is pro-poor, but not fully inclusive, i.e. it is not reaching extremely poor and vulnerable families. The benefits were assessed as making important contributions to family budgets, but they still did not fully cover the basic needs of eligible recipients such as children and people living with disabilities.³⁶

4.5 Socio-economic situation

The population of Kazakhstan in 2016 was 18.3 million and women made up approximately 52 percent of the total population. Kazakhstan has a young population and the median age is 30.3 years comprising 29 years for men and 31.6 years for women. With the largest land area of the Central Asian states Kazakhstan is a

²⁹ Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship held by the NGO Women and EXPO and Coca-Cola, 2 March 2017, Astana.

³⁰ Ibid.; National Action Plan on the Field of Human Rights for 2017-2020, draft. 2016

³¹ OECD (2016), Multi-dimensional review of Kazakhstan, Vol.1 Initial Assessment.

³² Informally employed means persons employed informally in formal sector, persons employed by informal enterprises and persons working in households.

³³ ADB (2013), Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank; Lyubova M. (2013) Assessment of Contribution of Women to National Production of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Main Findings and Recommendations for Further Registration, UN Women.

³⁴ Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan (2016), Evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016: sociological study.

³⁵ OECD (2016), Multi-dimensional review of Kazakhstan, Vol.1 Initial Assessment.

³⁶ Ibid.; Babajanian B., Hagen-Zanker J., Salomon H., (2015) Analysis of Social Transfer for Children and Their Families in Kazakhstan, UNICEF, Astana, pp.54-55, 69.

sparsely populated country with 6.3 persons per square km. In the ‘Concept of Gender and Family Policy’ the Government strongly emphasises the role of the family in the reproduction of nation. However, it has failed to develop a comprehensive population policy that links sustainable development with reproductive health, gender equality and family support.³⁷ The country has a large gender gap in life expectancy with almost a ten-year difference between men (67.2) and women (75.9). Kazakhstan has achieved significant progress in reducing infant and maternal mortality rates however the progress is uneven across the regions. In Mangistau and Zhambyl provinces maternal mortality rates remain high and are estimated at 21.2 deaths per 100,000 births in Mangistau and 18.1 deaths per 100,000 births in Zhambyl. The country’s population growth rate is 1.04 percent.

In the past decade, there has been a significant reduction in the poverty rate, which fell from 46.7 percent in 2001 to 5.3 percent in 2011. Approximately 55 percent of the total Kazakh population lives in urban areas. The gap between urban and rural living standards, however, is still high: the poverty rate is less than 5 percent in towns, while it is approximately 10 percent in rural areas. Overall, about 30 percent of the population receives some sort of social assistance.³⁸ There are also regional differences in poverty levels. The highest proportion of rural poor population (42.4 percent) and poor urban population (21.6 percent) is found in South Kazakhstan province. The difference is a result of uneven regional development across the country. Regional development is dependent on industrial specialisation, available natural resources, and infrastructure development. Obviously, the most developed regions with the highest GDP growth per capita are the oil and gas extraction regions of Western Kazakhstan and Kyzylorda. Cities such as Astana and Almaty are also among the most developed regions due to the booming construction sector.³⁹ In rural areas, people have restricted access to water due to the deterioration of water supply systems and polluted surface and ground waters. Consequently, rural women spend a considerable amount of time transporting and treating water. In addition, it has been calculated that rural women spend about 50-60 percent of their time collecting fuel, shopping and other tasks required for the household.⁴⁰ Women also have restricted access to health care services and medical drugs. Schools located in rural areas are not always supplied with water or equipped with decent toilet facilities or central heating.⁴¹

Kazakhstan has almost reached gender parity for access to education. Women represent the majority of students at higher education institutions: they make up 64 percent of those studying for masters’ degrees and 58 percent of those pursuing doctoral studies. Patterns of education are correlated with the horizontal segregation of women in the labour market. Women are concentrated in traditional fields of study such as education, health and administration. Men are concentrated in technical fields such as hydrocarbon, transport and energy industries.⁴² Access to pre-school education remains a major challenge that also affects the participation of women in the labour market. Only approximately 52.3 percent of children are currently enrolled in pre-school education. The Balapan State Programme aims to improve pre-school education by attaining 100 percent coverage of children of eligible age with pre-school education by 2020. Despite the universal coverage of education, the quality is variable and still requires substantial improvements. A lack of well-qualified teachers especially in rural areas; lack of schooling infrastructure; outdated curricula; relatively low public expenditure in education, and a mismatch between education and labour market needs impacts the quality of education in Kazakhstan.⁴³ The Law ‘On Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Women’ (2009) explicitly guarantees gender education in line with gender equality policy (article 12). However, gender education has not been formally introduced into curricula at all levels of education. Sixteen gender-sensitive programmes and courses were introduced into the curricula of 22 higher education institutions in 2010. However, these are elective courses, and are rarely selected by students. There has been no systematic effort by the Government to introduce mandatory gender education into education including higher (tertiary)

³⁷ UNFPA Country Programme Document for Kazakhstan for 2016-2020.

³⁸ Bendini R. (2013), Policy Briefing Kazakhstan: Selected Trade and Economic Issues. European Union, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2013/522303/EXPO-INTA_SP\(2013\)522303_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2013/522303/EXPO-INTA_SP(2013)522303_EN.pdf)

³⁹ UNDP (2016), Regional Human Development Report 2016 Inequality and Human Development in Eastern Europe, Turkey and Central Asia, Thematic Study Regional Difference and Inequality in Kazakhstan.

⁴⁰ ADB (2013), Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

⁴¹ Female and Feminist’s NGOs Initiative on CEDAW (2014), Combined Third and Forth Alternative Report to the UN CEDAW Committee, www.ohchr.org

⁴² ADB (2013), Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank

⁴³ OECD (2016), Multi-dimensional review of Kazakhstan, Vol.1 Initial Assessment.

education.⁴⁴ The current Concept of Gender and Family Policy also envisages the introduction of elective gender courses. This education gap undermines Kazakhstan's efforts to eliminate gender stereotyping and address the private sphere where gender inequality persists.

Kazakhstan has developed a strong legal framework for the protection of health and access to health care services including reproductive health. These guarantees are outlined in the Constitution; in the Code of Population Health and Health Care; in the Law 'On Mandatory Social Health Insurance' (2015)⁴⁵; in the State Programme of the Development of Health Care – 'Densaulyk' (2016); in Decrees of the Ministry of Health on pregnancy termination; in the introduction of youth friendly services; and in the 'Roadmap of Strengthening Reproductive Health of Citizens of Kazakhstan', and so on. Amongst the achievements of the health care system are a sharp reduction in maternal and infant mortality; free health treatment for people living with HIV (paid for by the State, and not by donors); and the introduction of State guaranteed benefit packages. Despite this legal framework, and a fixed regular resource allocation from the national budget for primary health care, disease prevention and good health promotion has been neglected. One of the areas of concern is reproductive health. There is a persistently high abortion rate (20.8 per 1000 women at the age of 15-49 including 2,700 abortions among girls in the 15-18 age group), and increased sexual transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). There is a lack of access to a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services including family planning, prevention of HIV and STIs and sex education in general. Only 38 percent of women of reproductive age (2012 data) use any family planning method. Contraceptives remain unaffordable for those of low-income; the unemployed; young people under 25 years of age; families with several children; single-parent families; migrants; sex workers and people living with HIV. Access to contraceptives by women from conservative families particularly in the southern regions of Kazakhstan is further restricted by husbands and in-laws who impose strict controls over women's reproductive rights, and restrict the use of family planning methods.⁴⁶ Kazakhstan has high rates of self-harm and suicides. Globally it ranks second for injuries and third for suicide rates (17.42 suicides per 100,000 persons in 2014). Suicide is particularly prevalent among teenagers.⁴⁷

4.6 Socio-cultural context

Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic state. Ethnic Kazakhs make up 66.48 percent of the total population. The second largest group is ethnic Russians (20.61 percent). Other groups in significantly smaller numbers are Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Uighurs, Tatars, Germans, and Koreans. In the eight years following independence Kazakhstan experienced a high level of emigration. It is estimated that during these years 3.3 million people left the country. Amongst them about 65 percent were persons of employable age. During the period of economic growth, Kazakhstan experienced an increased demand for labour and became an attractive destination for migrant workers from other countries. Approximately 820,000 migrants temporarily resided in Kazakhstan during this period. In 1992 Kazakhstan also implemented a policy to attract the return of ethnic Kazakhs (oralman). During 1992-2014 about one million ethnic Kazakhs returned to Kazakhstan from Uzbekistan, China, and Mongolia.⁴⁸

Families in Kazakhstan have undergone transformation in recent decades. The total number of families in the country is more than four million and has increased by 13.8 percent since 1999 mainly due to an increase in the number of families in rural areas estimated at 30.3 percent compared with 13.4 percent in urban areas. Despite the increased number of families, average family size is decreasing. The population census conducted in 2009 revealed that on average, a family consisted of 3.5 members. Extended families are not very common in Kazakhstan and families composed of two family members are most common (30.1 percent).

⁴⁴ Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan (2016), Evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016: sociological study, p.33.

⁴⁵ Not all the provisions of this Law are in force yet.

⁴⁶ Joint submission of the Kazakhstan's Association of Sexual and Reproductive Health & Sexual Rights Initiative to the 19th Session on Universal Periodic Review of Kazakhstan, 2014, http://www.sexualrightsinitiative.com/wp-content/uploads/Universal-Periodic-Review-of-Kazakhstan-SRHR_KMPA_March2014_Final.pdf; OECD (2016), Multi-dimensional review of Kazakhstan, Vol.1 Initial Assessment; State Programme of Development of Health Care in the Republic of Kazakhstan "Densaulyk" for 2016-2019.

⁴⁷ Association of Business Women of Kazakhstan (2016), Evaluation of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016: sociological study.

⁴⁸ OECD (2016), Multi-dimensional review of Kazakhstan, Vol.1 Initial Assessment, p.69.

⁴⁸ Mapping of Irregular Migration in Central Asia, IOM, 2014, Astana, 2015.

They are followed by families with three family members (22.2 percent) and four members (22.2 percent). The remaining families consist of five or more family members. Kazakhstan has a relatively large number of single-parent families and every fifth child is estimated to be brought up in a single-parent family. The number of single mothers is twice that of single fathers (15.1 percent as against 6.4 percent). 55 percent of all families have children but only 10 percent of families have four or more children. About 75 percent of families have up to two children. Kazakhstan has a slightly larger number of female-headed households compared with male-headed households (50.9 percent).⁴⁹ Single mothers are subject to social stigmatisation by two-parent families or those from affluent backgrounds. Families with disabled children; poor and low-income families and families with several children, are also stigmatised by health and education staff, and society as a whole. These attitudes exacerbate their vulnerability and exclusion.⁵⁰

Despite the high numbers of women in employment and in full-time education, Kazakh society is prone to traditional perceptions about the roles of women and men. It is particularly noticeable in families where the division of responsibilities remains rigid. Women experience a double work burden, where they are in paid employment, and at the same time are primarily responsible for home-related tasks and chores, such as taking care of children and looking after the household. Time-use studies of women and men reveal that women spend three hours more per day than men on household activities. These stereotypes are also entrenched outside the family circle. They explain the under-representation of women in politics; in managerial positions and in formal employment.

The process of national identity building in the post-independence period triggered an upsurge in traditional practices and attitudes which have negatively affected the status of women and have contributed to the prevalence of early marriage, bride-kidnapping and polygamy. Kazakhstan has taken measures to address domestic violence. The need to combat domestic violence is systematically reiterated in the President's speeches and in national strategies. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has reported a reduction in cases of domestic violence. The statistics of crisis centres indicate an increase in requests for assistance. In general, women do not trust law enforcement agencies and try to avoid official prosecution of abusers for a number of reasons including economic reasons, and institutional hurdles related to filing applications and investigations. There are several weaknesses in the enforcement of protection established by the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, for instance, there is no prohibition of the abuser remaining in the survivor's home; alternative housing for survivors is absent, and there is no monitoring of enforcement of restraining orders. Gender-based violence such as sexual harassment is still not legally defined or prohibited despite reports of sexual harassment of women.

4.7 Government, civil society (in particular women's organisations), international community and private sector response

Gender Equality National Machinery

The National Commission on Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan was established in 2006. The National Commission is the successor to the Council on Problems of Families, Women and Demographic Policy established in 1995 under the President, and the National Commission on Family Affairs and Women established in 1998 also under the President. The reform was undertaken to expand the authority of the National Commission. It is the primary institution for the realization of Kazakhstan's gender equality strategy, tasked with implementing official gender equality policy in the context of 'Kazakhstan 2030', the national development strategy.

The adviser to the President chairs this Commission. It is chaired by the State Secretary of the Republic of Kazakhstan and is managed by the Chancellery of the Prime-Ministry of Kazakhstan. The President of Kazakhstan approves the number of members and the individual members. The National Commission includes Members of Parliament, Deputy Ministers of National Economy, and Justice, representatives of NGOs, academia, Astana opera, and commercial companies. There is a three-person Secretariat, and the Commission members serve on a voluntary basis. Meetings are held quarterly and discussions are largely

⁴⁹Concept of Gender and Family Policy until 2030; Statistics Committee under the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2014), *Women and Men of Kazakhstan 2009-2013*, p.30.

⁵⁰ Babajanian B., Hagen-Zanker J., Salomon H., (2015) *Analysis of Social Transfer for Children and Their Families in Kazakhstan*, UNICEF, Astana, p.70

formal.

All regions, provinces and districts, plus the cities of Astana and Almaty, have a Commission for Women's Affairs, Family, and Demographic Policy within the Office of the *akim* (representative of the President and Head of the *akimat*—executive office of municipal, district, or regional government). The objective is to develop the most effective measures to improve the status of women, children and families and ensure opportunities for the participation of women in political, social, economic and cultural life.

The National Commission is relatively high-levelled but is a purely consultative body. It lacks the authority and operational capacity to mainstream gender across different sectors, or to effectively monitor the implementation of gender equality policies. A solid gender strategy and consistent plan based on performance indicators, is lacking. A further weakness is the Commission's lack of a multi-sectoral approach to addressing gender equality issues. Gender equality protocols produced by the National Commission are circulated to all regional offices. However, despite having received extensive capacity building, local commissions have been less than effective in implementing gender policy at regional level.

4.8 Mapping of other actors with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality

UN agencies in Kazakhstan coordinate around gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) issues, with UN Women leading the Country Gender Theme Group.

1. UN Women has a multi-country office in Almaty and has a tripartite mandate:

(1) normative – which includes the implementation of CEDAW, and the Sustainable Development Goals; (2) coordination of the UN agencies in the Gender Theme Groups in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and other synergies, and (3) an operational function addressing issues such as violence against women, gender responsive budgeting and planning, and economic empowerment of women in vulnerable groups.

As well as CEDAW, its programmes are guided by the Beijing Platform for Action and UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and six supporting resolutions – 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122. It also assists Central Asian countries to implement gender-specific recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council.

In Kazakhstan, UN Women has expanded the Gender Theme Group to include additional members such as ADB, EBRD, OSCE, and EU with the objective of expanding the dialogue platform through advocacy and a coordinated approach. UN Women operates in Astana, Almaty, Kyzylorda, Aktau and until now has not been active in rural areas.

It is currently the lead organization with expertise and capacity in gender-sensitive budgeting. Recently, it was approached by the Ministry of National Economy which expressed an interest in applying a gender budgeting methodology in national planning. Based on a recent signed Memorandum of Understanding, the Government will allocate funding to UN Women to implement capacity building in gender budgeting for the agricultural sector.

Through a recent project loan, ADB have been tasked with training personnel responsible for formulating local budgets from over 1000 local authorities. However, the training curriculum does not include gender budgeting methodology which is a missed opportunity. Gender budgeting as yet remains largely externally-driven by donors, apart from some NGO initiatives in rural areas.

2. Further UN actors with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality in Kazakhstan:

UNFPA is principally addressing issues related to reproductive health with a focus on youth, sexual rights and violence against women.

UNICEF is principally addressing issues related to children's rights; early childhood development; strategies for the prevention of violence against children; access of children to justice; children with disabilities; Committee on the Rights of the Child and violence against children.

UNDP plays an active role in supporting the national gender machinery; policy formulation and in mainstreaming gender in its operations. It has collaborated with the National Commission in addressing issues of gender equality and local government issues. It is implementing a Women Empowerment Project which has formulated the 'Concept on Family and Gender' Strategy.

UNISDR (UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) is addressing the need to engender disaster risk responses

WHO is addressing health issues particularly of Kazakh men who have a significantly lower life expectancy than women.

IOM – recently accorded UN agency on migration is addressing human trafficking (see 9 below).

In addition, **OSCE** (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) is involved in addressing sexual harassment and issues related to ‘Women, Peace and Violence’.

3. MCO Kazakhstan (Central Asian) Civil Society Advisory Group

In 2012/2013, UN Women established a sub-regional Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) for Central Asia to increase strategic dialogue with civil society partners. The MCO Kazakhstan (Central Asian) CSAG is a consultative forum for dialogue between UN Women and civil society.

Structured dialogue with women’s rights organizations is central for gender equity actors because it provides access to hands-on experience and context-specific analysis, expertise and knowledge.

The MCO CSAG members in Kazakhstan include the following:

Table 1: MCO CSAG members in Kazakhstan

Organisations in Kazakhstan
NGO "Sana Sezim" (Shymkent)
Association of Civil Society Development (ARGO) (Almaty)
Union of Crisis Centers of Kazakhstan (Almaty)
Kazakhstan Network of women living with HIV
Coalition of NGOs from equality de-jure to equality de-facto
IWPR Kazakhstan (Almaty)
Association of women with disability (Almaty)
Feminist League (Almaty)
Central Asian Association of People living with HIV

The group’s goals are to:

Enable UN Women to consult with civil society and draw upon its perspectives, knowledge, expertise, experience, outreach and networks;

Foster dialogue and engagement, to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment goals;

Serve as a consultative forum of ideas and strategies for UN Women’s programming, including identifying the region’s most pertinent and emerging gender equality issues.

4. Civil Society Organizations / NGOs in Kazakhstan

A number of NGOs which are focusing on gender issues have achieved several gender equality outcomes that are reflected in Kazakhstan’s current achievements in GEWE.

At this point in time however, the level of activism among women’s rights organizations and NGOs is considered to be low. Previously, NGOs succeeded in advocating for the adoption of two important laws: in 2009 – the ‘Law on Gender Equality’ and the ‘Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence’.

In 2005, the ‘Strategy of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Women and Men’ for 2006 – 2016 was adopted. It was considered by activists to be a well-drafted document consisting of nine chapters / priority areas. Each area was based on a SWOT analysis, and included a clear set of goals and objectives as well as indicators to measure their achievement. When it was finally adopted in 2006, the belief was that gender policy was well understood by the State. The new Concept for Family and Gender Policy (2016) which replaces it, while focusing on women, excludes recommendations for gender mainstreaming across all sectors and is considered less comprehensive than the previous policy.

NGOs cooperate with the National Commission for Women’s Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy. Several line ministries also include NGOs in their working groups. They undertake advocacy work for gender equality, and regularly analyse the extent to which formal commitments are being realized through legislation and policy implementation. While the contributions of women’s NGOs are significant, the government engages with such organizations only in a limited number of spheres such as women’s affairs and social issues. In other spheres, such as economic development, women’s NGOs are not necessarily included as key partners. Local sources

of funding for projects related to gender equality or women's empowerment are not sufficiently developed, and so women's NGOs are still heavily reliant on foreign donors and grants.

There are some young feminist organizations emerging ('Feminista') in the country, but they have not been included in gender policy discussions at State-level. This is disappointing as women's and girls' organizations can be a vital source of hands-on experience and context-specific analysis, expertise and knowledge.

Empowerment issues are actively addressed by NGOs and civil society organizations. These include protection of children's rights, the rights of people living with disabilities, and rights of people living with HIV etc. These interventions highlight the way in which gender inequality intersects with other inequalities such as disability, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation, and are resulting in multiple layers of discrimination.

For example, a priority for women with disabilities is access to education which would allow them the opportunity to work, earn income and be aware of their rights. There are problems of violence against women with disabilities. Their own families may restrict their freedom of movement and communication and take away their pensions. Women with disabilities are frequently victims of forced sterilization. These rights' violations remain largely hidden and unreported.

As well as lobbying, and contributing to policy and legislation debates with the National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy, NGOs are also active service providers. Since 2005, the Government has made calls for tender for social orders through which NGOs bid for State funds to implement projects and provide social services.

NGOs and women's organizations are actively involved in operating local shelters for victims of trafficking, for the homeless and particularly for victims of domestic violence.

To this end, an Association of Crisis Centres has been formed, to consolidate the approach to supporting victims of domestic violence and to coordinate actions nationwide.

A recent trend is the collaboration of NGOs with multinational corporations (e.g. Coca Cola) to implement projects focusing on, for example, female entrepreneurship development. Such initiatives have been useful in highlighting the continuing constraints that women face in the self-employed sector, and the lack of support (particularly regarding affordable credit) from government.

Civil society organizations and NGOs tend to be concentrated in urban areas, particularly in Almaty and Astana. NGOs addressing social and gender issues have begun to engage more in outreach work in the community and to assist the development of NGOs in the rural areas. However, the number of effective NGOs addressing gender issues in rural areas is still small.

NGOs are generally not well financed and do not offer high salaries, and the majority of staff are women. While women have become leaders in the NGO sector, only a few have transferred their leadership skills to political or public spheres. According to CSOs themselves, the attempts of women's NGOs to become a real and influential force in political life are to a large extent ignored by the ruling party and political stakeholders.⁵¹

During the last 5 – 6 years, it has been said that space for independent civil society organizations to operate has diminished considerably. NGOs are now required to be registered in the database of the Ministry of Civil Society, and may be compelled to cease operations if they are not registered.

5. International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Human trafficking in the region remains one of the major problems of human rights' violations such as the right to earn a wage and the right to free movement. In Kazakhstan, the risk of internal trafficking is greater than that for external trafficking.

IOM has been working on the problem of human trafficking in Central Asia since 1998 and was the first organization to raise the issue and direct the attention of Central Asian governments to the illegal exportation of their citizens abroad for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation. Its mandate specifies the importance of promoting humane migration, and it is responsible for combating trafficking in persons. IOM has recently adopted an area-based approach to the five countries of Central Asia with a coordination office in Astana.

Almost 91 percent of cases of human trafficking involve labour exploitation, and approximately 69 percent of victims of human trafficking are men, even though women are also victims of labour exploitation (30.9

⁵¹ International Gender Policy Network. 2010. Increasing Women's Representation in Decision Making through Political Parties: Interviews with Political Parties in Georgia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Prague.

percent).⁵² A substantial number of male victims at the moment of their recruitment were engaged in the construction sector. The major rehabilitation and reintegration needs of male victims of trafficking identified in a 2015 survey⁵³ were medical assistance (53.6 percent of respondents); social benefits / cash allowances (51.6 percent); assistance in employment and training (47.2 percent); arranging income generating activities (46.8 percent) and legal assistance (44 percent of respondents).

A recent study sought to verify whether women migrants presented additional or different vulnerabilities.⁵⁴ Findings showed that vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms varied according to women's marital status. Divorced and abandoned women with dependents became the only family breadwinner, and migrated in order to make up for the lack of financial contributions from male partners.

The IOM Counter-Trafficking Programme in Kazakhstan focuses on prevention, protection and prosecution. The various components are funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, USAID and the US Department of State / Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

6. EU Member States

The majority of Member State and donor-funded projects in the country are now closed due to Kazakhstan's 'graduation' to middle income status. Currently the EU does not have any on-going direct programming on gender equality in the country, and presently there is no coordinated approach by Member States to promoting gender equality. Certain Member States such as those of the Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom frequently speak out on gender issues, but their efforts are not coordinated and the available financial resources to address issues are not significant. Member State Embassies do speak on gender equality issues when asked but as a rule, do not initiate dialogue on this matter.

The Embassy of Finland has gender equality as a principal policy, and implements an open competition with a prize of EUR 150,000 for the best international gender equality project in the region. The prize is granted every two years for any organisation or individual person who submits a clear plan of action to pursue gender equality objectives.

During 2015-2016 the British Embassy funded a project – 'Combating discrimination against women' to promote the national strategy for combating discrimination; reducing vulnerability and the empowerment of girls based on gender equality. Project activities included roundtables where experts developed ideas on increasing public awareness on the importance of ensuring the rights of girls. Recommendations were developed for action and strategies to protect girls and women. Training was conducted for stakeholders at different levels and a national conference was attended by the State Secretary Ms. Gulshara Abdykalykova. Conference recommendations were subsequently included in the new 'Concept for Family and Gender Policy'.

In the case of Germany, federal guidelines related to funding organizations stipulate that gender issues are to be addressed and considered in all interventions. Development assistance from the Netherlands and Germany to Kazakhstan is now mainly provided through multilateral channels and NGOs. The Netherlands now streamlines its policies with the EU's instrument for stability and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).⁵⁵ This instrument has mainly dealt with empowerment issues rather than gender equality.

7. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

In 2015 EBRD launched a 'Women in Business' programme in Kazakhstan, to provide a local currency credit line for women entrepreneurs which is on-lent via 'Bank CenterCredit', one of the EBRD's partner banks in Kazakhstan.⁵⁶

This programme had already been rolled out in other countries in the region and is now being replicated in Kazakhstan. The programme combines credit lines to women owning or running businesses, with advice provided through the EBRD's Small Business Support programme which is supported by donors. The aim of the 3.7 billion KZT financing package is to support female entrepreneurship by helping women-led small and

⁵² IOM, Regional Center for Migration and Refugee Issues, 2010, 'The Scale of Human Trafficking in Central Asia'

⁵³ IOM 2015 'Identification of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Needs of Male Victims of Human Trafficking' SIAR Research & Consulting

⁵⁴ IOM 2016 'Migrant Vulnerabilities and Integration Needs in Central Asia: Root Causes, Social and Economic Impact of Return Migration; Regional Field Assessment in Central Asia'

⁵⁵ Hartog M and Kettle L 'The Netherlands and Central Asia' August 2012 EUCAM Policy Brief

⁵⁶ <http://www.ebrd.com/news/2015/ebd-provides-first-credit-line-under-new-women-in-business-programme-in-kazakhstan.html>

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access finance, know-how and advice.

40 percent of SMEs in Kazakhstan are run by women, but they have less access than men to information and technical support. Women-led SMEs are also less likely to graduate to larger businesses.

Results in Kazakhstan indicate that the impact of the ‘Women in Business’ programme has not been as significant as expected and the uptake of the package has been relatively disappointing. This has been explained by the fact that there is no culture of borrowing amongst women and they are reluctant to take out loans preferring to rely on savings for financing. Kazakh women also need to ask their husband’s permission for taking out a loan. The bank interest rate for loans i.e. between 15 to 20 percent per year is the same as that for other commercial banks and therefore considered unfavourable for most small businesses.

Women-run businesses tend to employ greater numbers of women because they generally operate in female-dominated sectors. The main challenges that women reportedly face are lack of collateral, lack of free time for developing their business skills and lack of time to participate in associations. The business community of women is less developed compared with men’s, and women generally do not network. A key focus of the EBRD mentorship programme has been on networking, implementing forums, and hosting events to allow women to network. Based on women’s own perceptions they are unwilling to grow their business beyond a level which provides them with their ideal family-work balance.

Many beneficiaries of EBRD’s ‘Women in Business’ programme are married women. EBRD has observed that women’s businesses (at medium level) that are supported by their husbands are considered to be the most successful.

8. Line Ministries

The main stakeholders with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality include specific line ministries such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Economy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Justice and the Office of Prosecutor General.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has been pro-active in addressing gender-based violence and developing response strategies. An inspectorate service was established in 1999 with the aim of protecting women from violence. However, there are only 135 inspectors for the country’s total population which is considered inadequate. A recently-elaborated road map entitled ‘Kazakhstan - Free from Violence’ contains proposals to increase the number of inspectors and recommends measures to address identified gaps in legislation to make it more effective. Restraining orders for perpetrators of domestic violence have been introduced.

A major constraint is the absence of a coordinating body to ensure a comprehensive approach to implementing the domestic violence law. Another limitation is the capacity and knowledge of law enforcement officers which is uneven across the regions. There is evidence that sentences and punishments for perpetrators of domestic violence are lighter in rural areas. The issue of response to rape continues to be insufficiently addressed in the country.

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for reviewing legislation and formulating recommendations to ensure compliance with the ‘Concept for Family and Gender Policy’. Another important focus of the Ministry is to cut the number and types of jobs considered too hazardous for women and from which they are prohibited. In addition, the Ministry is to be responsible for establishing special services for victims of domestic violence and develop the related standards. One of the main constraints faced by both the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Labour is the variation in standards of service delivery in the regions. Enforcing new standards and changes in law enforcement, remain difficult to enforce nationwide.

The above-mentioned road map ‘Kazakhstan - Free from Violence’, was developed by the Office of the Prosecutor General and includes a wide range of issues related to addressing domestic violence. The key ministries which were involved in the production of the road map include the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of Sports and Culture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Religion and civil society organizations. It is considered a comprehensive plan which contains measures to ensure effective implementation of the Law on Domestic Violence. It also highlights the main obstacles to effectiveness, and suggests indicators which could be used to measure performance. Problems in combating domestic violence include eliminating social stigma attached to reporting domestic violence and eliminating the victimization of women.

The Law on Domestic Violence entered into force in 2010. There has as yet been no serious analysis of its implementation or impact on vulnerable groups. The main cause of domestic violence is gender inequality and

stereotyping where the male considers himself the figure of household authority. Wife-beating has now become a punishable crime. Psychological counselling for perpetrators is being recommended to prevent future episodes of domestic violence.

With the support of UN Women, a pilot project will be implemented in one of the country's 14 provinces to test the proposed coordinated approach and measures. If they are considered effective, they will be replicated throughout the country. Major constraints include the lack of trained psychologists, and the lack of comprehensive training on domestic violence for staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The Ministry of Health is reported as being somewhat reluctant to acknowledge its potentially crucial role in addressing domestic violence and as yet is disinclined to take responsibility for making referrals to law enforcement agencies in suspected cases of gender-based violence.

Regarding sexual health and reproductive rights, the Ministry of Health is also reportedly unwilling to provide exact figures on how much is spent nationwide on family planning, contraceptives and cervical cancer screening. This makes the exercise of gender-responsive budgeting difficult to undertake. There is also evidence that women's reproductive rights are not always respected by health officials in rural areas.

The Ministry of Education is considered to be largely gender-insensitive, and disinclined to implement nationwide life skills training, human and civil rights training or sex education to adolescents. The number of publicly-funded pre-school places for children is also inadequate compared with the very high demand in the population.

9. Private Sector

The private sector is increasingly adopting gender equality policies in the workplace. International corporations such as Chevron, Deloitte and KPMG have signed commitments to support gender equality and reject discrimination in the workplace. 'AB Restaurants' of Kazakhstan have also followed suit and adopted UN Women's Empowerment Principles to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

These principles are:

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

4.9 Relevant actions taken by key actors

4.9.1 Key statistics on the situation of women and girls, men and boys in Kazakhstan.

The Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy collects statistics from State bodies. The Committee publishes an annual report - 'Women and Men in Kazakhstan', which is a compilation of sex-disaggregated data across a number of fields. Data is available through the official website in Kazakh, Russian, and English⁵⁷ although it focuses mainly on social areas such as education and health. Data however are not fully up-to-date. The latest available statistical compilation of sex-disaggregated statistics covering period of 2009-2013 was published in 2014. The resources and manpower in the Committee for undertaking research are limited, and in practice, collected statistics are not widely used in policy formulation. Criminal and legal statistics (including from Courts) are collected by the Committee of Legal Statistics and Special Accounts of the State Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Information services of the Committee contributes to reporting by type of crime by year, by region and other indicators. However, it does not provide sex-disaggregated crime statistics which would assist in understanding levels of violence against women and men. Statistics on domestic violence cited in the 'Women and Men in

⁵⁷ The Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <http://www.eng.stat.kz/Pages/default.aspx>

Kazakhstan' report is based on data from crisis centres and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS).

Over the last 15 years three Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (in 2005, 2010 and 2015), have been undertaken by the Agency, funded by UNICEF and in collaboration with UNFPA, using methodology designed by the World Health Organization, to monitor the situation of women and children in the country. Survey questions have developed over the years and now include a component on water and sanitation as well as other indicators relevant to the status of women and girls.⁵⁸ The 2015 survey was based on a sample of 16,791 households. Findings from earlier MICS surveys (2005 and 2010) were used to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. It is expected that MICS data from the current survey (2015) will provide the baseline for progress toward the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Comparisons of findings from the current MICS with previous rounds indicate significant improvements in some areas such as increased access to potable water and sanitation; increased literacy levels, and improved mother and child health. At the same time, the MICS survey results reveal emerging challenges related to early child development; reproductive and sexual health of women; women's perception of domestic violence; the level of violence against children and knowledge and awareness levels about HIV/AIDS among young women.

Some key findings from the 2015 MICS report include the following: 14.2 percent of women believe that a husband / partner is allowed to hit or beat his wife / partner in certain situations. 52.7 percent of children aged 1-14 years were subjected to at least one form of psychological or physical punishment by adult members of the household during the previous month before the survey. 47.2 percent of children had been subjected to psychological aggression.

Approximately 2 percent of children under 5 years are underweight for their age, and 8.0 percent of children are stunted. 3 percent of children are wasted for their height, and 9 percent of children are overweight. Only 83 percent of new-born babies are breastfed within one day of birth. Coverage of antenatal care by skilled health personnel is 99.3 percent.

The primary school (adjusted) net attendance ratio for children aged 7-10 years was 99.5. The secondary school (adjusted) net attendance ratio (NAR) for children aged 11-17 years was 98.9 percent.

The percentage of 5-6-year-old children who attend pre-school was 47.8 percent and primary school – 36.1 percent. More than half (55.3 percent) of children aged 36-59 months are attending organised early childhood education.

Urban-rural and regional differentials are notable – pre-school facilities are attended by 62.2 percent of children from urban areas compared to 48.9 percent from rural areas.

The majority (97.3 percent) of the population now has access to improved drinking water sources: ranging from 99.7 percent in urban areas to 94.6 percent in rural areas.

4.10 Important country-relevant issues

As part of the Gender Study for Kazakhstan, certain country-relevant issues were also investigated as follows:

4.10.1 Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming as a tool for gender equality is not well understood in Kazakhstan. It has not been institutionalised across sectors or areas of the economy, and is lacking. Even the recently launched 'Concept for Gender and Family Policy in Kazakhstan' does not include a strategy to institutionalize gender mainstreaming.

Following the 1995 United Nations (UN) Beijing Conference, gender mainstreaming was identified as the most important mechanism to reach the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It requires changes in institutional working methods, and shared responsibility for promoting gender equality. The UN defines gender mainstreaming as 'a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender

⁵⁸ The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2010-2011) report is posted at UNICEF. http://www.childinfo.org/files/Kazakhstan_MICS4_Final_Report_Eng.pdf

equality’.

Mainstreaming of GEWE is also EU policy and has become a mandatory requirement laid down by law in the Development Cooperation Instrument Regulation, which defines GEWE as a cross-cutting issue to be integrated into all development activities. Gender inequalities can only be effectively tackled when policies in all areas (e.g. economy, health, education, environment, infrastructure, trade, science and research, agriculture, peace and security etc.) are designed in such a way as to address specific concerns, needs and constraints of both women and men while building on their respective capacities and contributions. Mainstreaming is to begin with an analysis of the gender concerns of each sector; policy documents for the sector, and the specific legislation governing each sector.

4.10.2 Gender budgeting

There are currently very few scattered gender budgeting initiatives piloted at local level by NGOs and international organisations. The ‘Concept for Gender and Family Policy’ however, has included gender budgeting as a priority area to be rolled out across all sectors.

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) seeks to understand and compensate for the disparate impacts of government spending on people of different genders through an analysis of existing financial budgeting.

By taking a holistic approach, GRB can lead to greater gender equity in public policy and thereby significantly impact women’s lives where government gender policies fall short.

In previous years, the National Commission on Women and Family Demographic Policy initiated a project in 2007 with technical assistance from UNIFEM (now UN Women). The Project, ‘Social (gender) Budgets in Kazakhstan’, aimed at building the capacity of the National Commission, civil servants, Members of Parliament and women’s NGOs in the application of gender analysis at all stages and in all aspects of the budgeting process. Gender analyses were undertaken for two national budgets and state programmes (On Education and On Small and Medium Entrepreneurship) and a gender budgeting guide for civil servants was developed.

Kazakh legislation clearly states what kind of budget information should be made public, and provides penalties for violating the people’s right to information. However, this legislation often does not work in practice. Public officials sometimes hide cases of misappropriation and embezzlement or resist cooperating with civil society.

Only a limited number of Kazakh NGOs are involved in the budget process because of lack of budget knowledge; inexperience in dealing with the appropriate officials and difficulties in obtaining professional legal assistance when authorities refuse to provide the required information.

It is also pertinent to note that Parliament itself lacks adequate capacity to analyse government budgets. Problems cited by Members of Parliament include their lack of budget knowledge to analyse the President’s draft budget, their inability to hire external experts to help them do this job, and the limited time they have to review the draft budget, negotiate amendments with the Government, and approve the budget.

In 2017, UN Women will be taking a lead in integrating gender budgeting in the agricultural sector in association with the Ministry of National Economy.

4.10.3 Levels of violence

Kazakhstan has a very high rate of juvenile suicides.⁵⁹ In the two decades 1990-1999 and 2000-2009, it had the highest rate in the world for boys aged 10-14 years (8.53 per 100,000), and the rate for girls was the fourth highest in the world at 2.86 per 100,000. Although the incidence of suicides amongst boys is higher, in the last two years the number of girl suicides in Kazakhstan is increasing. There is no systematic information about the causes of child suicide in Kazakhstan.⁶⁰ The factors related to suicidal behaviours vary. Often, they are related to the multiple forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation children experience in their lives, further complicated by stigmatisation and discrimination. A recent analysis of violence in schools in Kazakhstan revealed that children engaging in self-harming and suicidal behaviours were significantly more likely to witness and be the victims of school violence and discrimination by their peers, and they were also more

⁵⁹ Kairi Kõlves and Diego De Leo (2014) ‘Suicide rates in children aged 10-14 years worldwide: changes in the past two decades’ Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, National Centre of Excellence in Suicide Prevention, World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. Published in *The British Journal of Psychiatry*

⁶⁰ Haarr RN. (2013) ‘Assessment of Violence Against Children in Schools in Kazakhstan.’ Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan and UNICEF Office in Kazakhstan

frequently perpetrators of school violence. In addition, they experienced discrimination from school directors and teachers more frequently. Children engaging in self-harming and suicidal behaviours were also exposed to other factors such as family domestic violence and running away from home.⁶¹

Child suicide particularly among girls in rural areas is related to traditional norms of marriage; lack of acceptance of sexual reproductive rights, and pregnancy outside marriage. The prevalence of suicide in children is likely to be underestimated owing to underreporting and/or misclassification of suicide deaths as accidental or undetermined. International research suggests that suicide may be more underreported among children than in adolescents and adults.⁶² This might be due to social stigma and shame around suicide, coroners' reluctance to determine a verdict of suicide in a child or the misconception that children are precluded from engaging in suicidal acts owing to their cognitive immaturity.

Violence levels, including sexual violence are high in closed institutions such as children's homes and prisons. The phenomenon is hidden, particularly amongst male victims as they are usually unwilling to report incidents and prosecute perpetrators.

The Law on Domestic Violence has a number of shortcomings. Key ministries and civil society organizations are not included as bodies responsible for implementing the Law, and no coordinating body has been established with responsibility for the Law's enforcement. The 'National Action Plan on Implementation of the Law' was not adopted, and there are no resources allocated from the national budget for its implementation. The prosecution of perpetrators is also inadequate. Beatings, injuries and rape are considered cases for private prosecution, opened upon reports filed by victims. Discussions are on-going concerning even decriminalising these articles / clauses.

The current emphasis in Kazakhstan is to focus on perpetrators of domestic violence and to introduce psychological programmes for their rehabilitation. Legislation is focused on prevention and there are no indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the preventive measures undertaken by the State. State response to support and rehabilitate victims does not take into account the realities of victims, such as their lack of identity documents, as these can be easily and deliberately destroyed or taken from the victim - nor an assessment of her family situation. Working with the entire family instead of focusing only on the victim would be a more effective approach.

Kazakhstan is a country of destination for migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and also experiences high internal migration. 47 percent of human trafficking identified by the IOM is internal trafficking. In recent times, trafficking for labour exploitation has overtaken trafficking for sexual services and the majority of victims are now men. Working with male victims of trafficking requires a different approach, as men are usually unwilling to admit that they are victims. Psychological rehabilitation is therefore of critical importance to assist them in their situation.

The legal framework of Kazakhstan does not include a definition of sexual harassment and it was not included in the equal rights law when it was enacted.⁶³ Women have reported that at least once in their lives they have experienced episodes of sexual harassment, including in the workplace. Women rarely raise the issue through formal channels, and the subject is perceived as taboo. Workplace policies and regulations on sexual harassment do not exist, which means that women have little recourse, and fear losing their jobs.

4.10.4 Discrimination

Early marriage of girls is a blatantly unconcealed occurrence in Kazakhstan, and is practised even by male public officials holding office. The impact on girls is devastating. They do not complete their education and therefore have no qualifications. In the labour market, they are only able to compete for the lowest paid and lowest qualified jobs. In the end, they are frequently without a source of income and are reduced to working in the household providing care for children and the elderly. They commonly end up as single mothers without stable incomes, and have to survive on child benefits.

Episodes of bride-kidnapping are extremely prevalent in Kazakhstan within ethnic groups such as Kyrgyz, Kurds, Turks, and Azeri. Young girls are not protected from this even by their own families. From interviews

⁶¹ Haarr RN. A Rapid Assessment of Children's Vulnerabilities to Risky Behaviors, Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking. United Nations Children's Fund, 2012

⁶² Pritchard C, Hansen L. (2005) 'Adolescent and youth suicide in England and Wales: an international comparison.' *International Journal of Adolescent Medical Health* 2005; 17: 239–53.

⁶³ The Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Men and Women

with adult women who had been victims of bride-kidnapping they believed that this practice was detrimental to their lives, turned them into dependents and did not allow them to complete their education. Despite the prevalence of bride-kidnapping, there is a lack of sufficient statistical data on the incidence, frequency and geographical coverage of cases.

Although polygamy is prohibited by law in Kazakhstan, the custom of taking a second wife remains a widespread practice throughout the country, although there are no government statistics on the occurrence. There is evidence that even public officials practice polygamy. The issue of reducing the marriageable age of girls, and decriminalising polygamy, are repeatedly raised for discussion in sessions of the lower house of Parliament. There are serious concerns in this respect, related to adequate and effective enforcement of ethical standards of public servants, which seems to be absent.

Polygamy takes place among high-earning men that are capable of supporting several families. Having a second wife (*tokal*) is a way of proving one's prestige among the elite. Women agree to become second wives in order to be supported financially and materially, however, such complex relationships also frequently result in trauma for all the family's children.⁶⁴ On average, there are ten cases of polygamy disputes in every region of the country per year, although it is rare for first wives to successfully sue their husbands for support and the division of property, because it is mostly men who own family assets. It is left to their discretion as to whether to share them with an ex-wife. Because of low alimony rates (average monthly payment is approximately 84 USD) a first wife is greatly disadvantaged financially if she seeks a divorce.⁶⁵

There is no definition under Kazakh law of an unofficial wife (i.e. in an unregistered marriage) and she therefore has even less protection. She is not entitled to any family property, and can at best claim payments to support the delivery of a child, if a court is able to prove paternity. Children with proven paternity are entitled to maintenance regardless of their status and have the same rights to obtain support. The unregistered wife frequently faces loss of meaning of life and continuous competition, and suicide attempts are common.⁶⁶

As mentioned earlier, LGBT individuals particularly gay men, were reportedly considered to be the most discriminated against and oppressed group in society.⁶⁷

Kazakhstan has reportedly failed to protect all LGBT people from violence, discrimination,⁶⁸ and unlawful detention by police on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

LGBT individuals have also been refused assistance from medical specialists because of their sexual orientation.⁶⁹

4.10.5 Women's employment

There is significant underemployment and unemployment among women in Kazakhstan. It is estimated that there are two million women categorized as 'self-employed'. In fact, these are either women who are informally employed or are employed in the informal sector, and are denied and lack all social guarantees, such as maternity benefit, sickness benefit, and pensions.

There is also vertical and horizontal discrimination of women in the labour market of Kazakhstan. Despite the higher education levels of women compared to men in Kazakhstan, the majority of the female labour force is predominantly concentrated in three traditional sectors such as education, health and services.

66 percent of women in Kazakhstan are active in the labour force. This achievement may also reflect the critical situation of single parent families that are widespread in Kazakhstan. Studies have revealed that 20 percent of all children in Kazakhstan are raised by single parent families, predominantly mothers.

40 percent of SMEs in Kazakhstan are run by women (CEO or owner). However, caution is needed in assuming that this is a result of the economic empowerment of women. As mentioned by EBRD, the most successful women-operated businesses are actually those which are assisted and supported by their husbands.

⁶⁴ Institute for War and Peace Reporting 08 March 2017

⁶⁵ Institute for War and Peace Reporting 08 March 2017

⁶⁶ Institute for War and Peace Reporting 08 March 2017

⁶⁷ United States Department of State (2014) '2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Kazakhstan' 27 February 2014 USA

⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch (2015) "That's When I Realized I Was Nobody" A Climate of Fear for LGBT People in Kazakhstan' ISBN 978-1-6231-32637. USA.

⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch (2015) "That's When I Realized I Was Nobody" A Climate of Fear for LGBT People in Kazakhstan' ISBN 978-1-6231-32637. USA.

Existing state programmes supporting economic empowerment of women in Kazakhstan are accessible exclusively for businesses which are already well-established and profitable. Women from socially vulnerable groups particularly in rural areas are unable to access these types of programmes as their businesses are frequently micro-enterprises and informal (i.e. undocumented).

The main constraints faced by rural women are access to finance (lack of collateral) and access to markets. Small (micro) grants to develop businesses, and provide capacity building on business planning would be effective and appropriate solutions. There are examples of successful low-cost green solutions which provide effective support to rural women's businesses, such as those currently funded by the EU (implemented by UNDP).

4.10.6 Status and needs of women in rural areas

A significant socially vulnerable group in Kazakhstan is rural women – especially those who have been obliged to marry early, or have low levels of education. Rural households in general, suffer from high unemployment rates and low incomes, because seasonal work for many households is the only means of earning a living. The root cause of violence against children in rural areas is frequently household poverty and lack of opportunities for women.

Rural areas, particularly remote areas continue to have less access to piped water than urban areas. A critical issue facing rural regions is the high level of pollution in both surface and groundwater. Deficiencies in basic services and the burden of household work on rural women are considerable obstacles. A significant amount of time is spent transporting and treating water needed for household chores (for cleaning, laundry, bathing, cooking, drinking, watering livestock) and collecting fuel (wood or dried animal dung) to use for home heating.

According to a survey conducted in Aktiubinsk Oblast, rural women—who live in larger settlements and are employed and able to buy some goods from shops—spend approximately 50–60 percent of their time on household chores.⁷⁰ By contrast, women in small and more remote villages with high female unemployment and limited supplies of gas and water, report that they spend 90–100 percent of their time on household chores, mainly collecting water.

Although the majority (i.e. 54.7 percent) of Kazakhstan's total population lives in urban areas⁷¹ an official government report also noted that the rural population has increased more than three times in recent years, a change that is attributed to the 'State Program on Developing Rural Areas of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2004–2010.'⁷² Under this programme, individuals with educational qualifications are provided with housing and financial incentives to take up specialist jobs in rural areas.

Gender stereotypes vary by region. People in rural areas in southern Kazakhstan, are considered to be conservative and have more traditional views on the roles of women and men. Early marriage is common. Restrictive attitudes inhibit women's participation in business, and even educated women do not actively seek employment outside the home, but are expected to take care of their families.

Capacity-building results from an on-going EU-funded project – 'Supporting Kazakhstan's Transition to a Green Economy model' (Grant programme) illustrate effective interventions for rural women which could be replicated. Arnasay village, situated 40 km from Astana, positions itself as the first green village in Kazakhstan and has established a 'green' learning centre where technical training in techniques such as drip irrigation is organized by a rural NGO 'Akbot'. Rural housewives have been trained in these techniques and have initiated small-scale greenhouse vegetable production activities.

In order to overcome cultural resistance to encouraging women to initiate income-generating activities, a community approach was adopted where elder women in the village were approached to discuss problems of unemployment and lack of household income, and to convince them of the benefits of training women who were confined to their homes and unemployed.

The 'Concept for Family and Gender Policy' now includes a focus on economic issues and particularly the needs of rural women for employment opportunities.

⁷⁰ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Feminist League of Kazakhstan. 2010. 'Monitoring Respect for Women's Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan'. Astana.

⁷¹ Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2012. 'On the Demographic Situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan for January 2012'. Astana

⁷² Government of Kazakhstan. Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Kazakhstan. Combined third and fourth periodic report. Astana.

At present, however, rural women in Kazakhstan are excluded from most social and economic empowerment programmes and their problems and priorities are inadequately addressed. Their priority needs include employment, income-generation, and agency.

4.10.7 Role and responsibilities of women in society

Women's agency in Kazakhstan with regard to political participation is inadequate. Kazakhstan's legislation and policies do not provide for a quota system to ensure the equality of women in political participation. The Gender Equality Strategy for the period of 2006-2016 aimed at reaching 30 percent representation of women in management positions of public bodies. In the recent Senate elections held on 28 June 2017, women won only 5 out of the 47 Senate seats, representing only 10.6 percent of the total number of newly-elected senators.⁷³ In the Lower House elections held on 20 March 2016, women won 29 out of 107 seats, representing only 27.1 percent of the total number of elected Members of Parliament. There is one female minister in the Kazakh government, Ms. Tamara Duissenova, the Minister of Labour and Social Protection. Despite this gender imbalance, there are more women than men employed in the civil service (55 percent) although only 20.7 percent of women occupy managerial positions in local executive bodies, and women represent only 10 percent of politically-appointed civil servants.⁷⁴ Thus, planned representation levels were not reached and measures such as establishing a pool of skilled women to be available for political promotion according to the Plan of Action on Promotion of Women to the Decision-Making level, were not effective.

The political participation of women is embedded in the patriarchal state structure, where women support political decisions of the male-dominated political elite. In exchange for their loyalty and support of the current regime, they receive promotions. Promotions to women are not generally awarded on merit. In the majority of interviews held, Kazakhstan's gender equality policy and national machinery on gender equality has been described as "merely a façade" because of the substantial disconnect between the legal and policy framework, and the realities of women's lives in Kazakhstan. Studies and analysis of different gender issues have not been addressed or integrated into any of the levels of Kazakhstan's education and school system. This awareness and knowledge gap undermines all current efforts for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in Kazakhstan.

The social and economic programmes of Kazakhstan are not in line with a right-based approach to programming. This means they do not take into account the wants and demands of vulnerable groups and the realities of their lives. Nor are they based on an analysis of needs.

The agenda for gender equality in public and private spheres in Kazakhstan, would appear not to have been taken forward since Soviet times. Formally, gender equality has been introduced into public policy in the post-independence period. There are some achievements (such as increased political participation of women) to meet international requirements and standards. But in reality, the gender equality agenda has not addressed the private sphere in order to break the existing patriarchal system in society and in the State where men hold authority over women and children.

4.11 Shortcomings and main challenges to be addressed

4.11.1 Information gaps

Statistics and data related to child survival are currently not gender-disaggregated. This relates to data on child protection (i.e. incidence of violence, institutionalisation, disability, crimes, offending rates, number of children in detention, trafficking); and participation of youths and children in education.

Statistics on the prevalence of early marriage are also not available and the extent of the phenomenon remains largely unknown. Data on girls' marital status and age at first marriage is also incomplete. No national-level study or survey has yet been implemented either on early marriage or bride kidnapping, although it is believed that bride-kidnapping occurs regularly and that during the first three months of 2017, there were approximately 129 registered incidences.

Currently, most survey / research questions on gender-related matters are externally-driven by international agencies such as UNFPA or other actors, to investigate issues more deeply and in order to jointly formulate

⁷³ <http://www.government.kz/en/go-ministerstva.html>

⁷⁴ <http://www.akorda.kz/ru/osnovnie-napravleniya-nacionalnoi-komissii-uchastie-zhenshin/zhenshini-i-politika>

responses with State bodies. However, the sharing of gender-sensitive information among different government agencies is not customary or well-coordinated.

4.11.2 Socially vulnerable groups in Kazakhstan

Based on findings from assessments during the in-country gender study, a number of socially vulnerable groups were clearly identified. These are people experiencing discrimination which is hampering full and equal enjoyment of their human rights, freedoms, and access to benefits from the country's development efforts. They are:

- Women living in rural areas
- Women and men who are undocumented
- Women and men and living with HIV
- Women and men in closed institutions (prisons, children's homes)
- Women and men living with disabilities
- Male and female migrant workers who are undocumented
- Male and female victims of trafficking
- LGBTI community.

4.12 Key barriers to achieving gender equality in Kazakhstan

The key barriers to achieving gender equality include lack of institutional capacity in the line ministries; in Government, and in the National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy, to operationalise gender equality policy.

Existing gender equality legislation is poorly enforced nationwide. There are also legislative gaps in policy documents. All of the major strategy documents which are supposed to guide the country towards 2050 such as 'Kazakhstan 2030', 'Kazakhstan 2050' and '100 Steps', are completely gender-blind and do not address gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality.

Social norms are another barrier to achieving gender equality in rural areas, and such norms are the origin of negative phenomena such bride-kidnapping and early marriage for girls.

Patriarchal norms remain dominant in the country. An assessment of the situation in Kazakhstan undertaken in 2010 and which remains relevant today found that "those working in government who are familiar with the term [gender] understand it as only addressing women's issues, or ensuring equal participation of men and women in government committees or boards."⁷⁵ When women's disadvantaged position in society is acknowledged, it is often understood as the product of inherent differences between the sexes and not as arising from socially constructed inequalities.

Due in part also to conceptual misunderstanding, gender equality in Kazakhstan is equated with assisting women in relatively narrow spheres, and improving the status of women is interpreted as implementing State commitments to provide social protection to women as mothers, with less attention given to counteracting discriminatory practices and ensuring equal opportunities for both women and men.⁷⁶

There is no evidence that existing gender disparities in Kazakhstan or women's vulnerabilities are given any particular consideration, nor do programmes include indicators to monitor specific benefits to, or impacts on, the lives of women and men as distinct groups. The lack of gender-specific goals means that progress cannot be gauged.

In reality there is a glaring disconnect between existing legal guarantees of gender equality, and actual reality and practice.

⁷⁵ S. Somach and D. Rubin. 2010. Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development. p. 18.

⁷⁶ The Feminist League of Kazakhstan. 2010. Monitoring of the Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee. Astana.

5 Specific issues and response strategies

The perception by a number of actors in Kazakhstan with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality, was that the EU is so far not actively promoting the GEWE agenda through its programmes or political dialogue.

5.1 Non-financial instruments: political and policy dialogue

The most relevant document for the EU's bilateral political dialogue with Kazakhstan is the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.⁷⁷ In all areas of its external action, the EU without exception is to promote a human rights-based approach to assist the country in implementing its international human rights obligations. In July 2015, a new action plan was introduced for the period 2015 to 2019 with an increased focus on economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights as key external human rights priorities for the EU. Another major development is the upgraded focus on combating discrimination. The Framework contains a commitment for the EU to 'fight discrimination in all its forms through combating discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity, age, gender or sexual orientation'.

The analysis, expertise and knowledge provided by women's organizations and other stakeholders such as UN organizations and UN Women is another useful basis for informing the EU's political dialogue with Kazakhstan. The EU has a specific cooperation agreement with UN Women which reaffirms the partnership between the two organizations to support gender equality and women's empowerment around the world and ensures close collaboration.⁷⁸

Despite the fact that the EU is not seen as actively promoting GEWE, it is nevertheless perceived as having political leverage and being influential with the Government. At no financial cost, there is space to conduct effective policy dialogue on gender issues. The EU is listened to, and is well placed to leverage its political weight regarding promoting gender equality.

The results of political dialogue should also be continued into the policy dialogue with Member States to ensure that respective external policies and programmes are implemented in accordance with Member States' agreed gender equality commitments, whether through gender mainstreaming or gender-specific actions.

When combined, these three methods - political and policy dialogue, gender mainstreaming and specific actions are an effective three-pronged approach to increasing gender equality. The components are complementary and are essential for ensuring GEWE impact on the ground.

Opportunity for joint action

A major role of the EUD and Member States in Kazakhstan is one of advocacy and a common voice is needed. The EU Delegation could convene a meeting with Member States and UN Women, UNICEF and other UN agencies for a joint brainstorming meeting to discuss GEWE priorities in Kazakhstan.

Each (even small) initiative should contribute to general coherent programmes of other active donors. Agreement could be reached between parties on different joint action paths over a range of time-frames such as over the coming one, two or three years. This will ensure that the EU is present at key junctures of Kazakhstan's development and extend political influence.

The EU could become more actively involved in the development of national strategies to mainstream gender and advocate through the established formal dialogue, for the strengthening by the government of the National Commission to make it effective, by having its own dedicated budget and having extended powers to execute, implement and monitor action programmes.

5.2 Coordination between EU institutions and EU Member States

Agreement should be reached on the choice of measures from the GAP II that will be selected and implemented by the EUD and Member States.

Effective implementation of the EU GAP II objectives in Kazakhstan requires much stronger communication

⁷⁷ Council of the European Union (2012). EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. Luxembourg

⁷⁸ The previous 2012 agreement was recommitted in June 2016

between all the different EU actors⁷⁹ at partner country level, in order to share analysis, strategic thinking and lessons from practice. Placing discussion of on-going GAP II measures as a rolling agenda item at regular EUD and Member State coordination meetings would maintain the focus and attention on progress being made on the three thematic priorities. The aim is for all actors of the EU's external relations to foster and support gender equality actions in the country.

There are other opportunities for improving coordination between EU institutions and Member States: GAP II could also be a rolling agenda item at regular meetings of EU Heads of Mission to exchange information in EU Member State Councillor meetings at least on a yearly basis.

5.3 Assessment and recommendations of where EUD can add value for achieving country objectives on gender equality (as part of national development)

The political leverage and advocacy opportunities for taking forward gender equality as part of national development is also provided by the Sustainable Development Goals.

Kazakhstan joined the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which set out targets for equal rights and opportunities for both women and men. The strategic approach aims to tie in the country's existing programmes to international sustainable development, and commits the government to improving legislation by November 2018 in the field of family and gender policy.

Twelve of the 17 SDGs have gender targets to be achieved by 2030.

Removing obstacles for female employment and career growth is one of the goals. Despite full guaranteed gender equality there are hundreds of jobs which remain prohibited for women in Kazakhstan because they are considered unsafe or dangerous for women, especially in the highly-paid oil and gas sectors and heavy industries.

Under Goal 5, there is a target on eliminating violence against women, while Goal 16 has a target to promote the rule of law and equal access to justice.

Through the established formal dialogue with Kazakhstan, the EU could lead the way in recommending that Kazakhstan collect, analyse and use data especially regional data, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other social differences. This would also align well with the emphasis on data within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see SDGs in annex).

5.4 Selected objectives from GAP II for Kazakhstan

Based on the analysis of the gender situation in Kazakhstan, GAP II objectives have been selected for adoption by the EU, which are considered relevant, and for which the EUD can add value for achieving country objectives on gender equality, as part of national development.

The three thematic areas address central dimensions of women's and girls' empowerment and gender equality. This accepts the diversity of EU actors and leaves scope for different actors to concentrate development assistance in the area or areas most pressing in each context. It also allows Member States to continue support to areas already prioritised in their aid strategies while contributing to the overall EU effort.

The framework states that all EU actors will continue to use the full range of the EU's means of implementation to promote gender equality, namely, political dialogue, targeted activities and mainstreaming.

The thematic objectives outlined in Annex 1 of the framework, 'Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020' are all specific initiatives for women and girls (and some also for men and boys). They are much needed and important, but to be effective and sustainable they require changes in the broader social, economic, political and environmental context. It is here in the 'mainstream' that EU external action can make a real contribution – if / when it is gender-aware and responsive.

B. Thematic Priority: Physical and Psychological Integrity

⁷⁹ 'EU Actors' refers to Commission services, the EEAS and EU Member States

Ensuring the physical and psychological integrity of girls and women is a priority for the EU. Preventing and combating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a precondition for equitable and inclusive sustainable development, as well as an important value and objective in itself.

The recommended relevant objectives for Kazakhstan are

- Objective 7: Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere
- Objective 8: Trafficking of girls and women for all forms of exploitation eliminated.
- Objective 10: Equal access to quality preventive, curative and rehabilitative physical and mental health care services for girls and women
- Objective 11: Promoted, protected and fulfilled right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

Objective 7 is considered the priority for Kazakhstan: Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere.

C. Thematic Priority: Economic and Social Empowerment

Ensuring that girls and women are empowered, that their economic and social rights are fulfilled and that an enabling environment for their fair and active participation in the economy exists are key priorities for the EU. Such an objective will contribute to faster growing economies, whilst preventing human exploitation.

The recommended relevant objectives for Kazakhstan are:

- Objective 13: Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination.
- Objective 14: Access to decent work for women of all ages.
- Objective 15: Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship.

Objective 15 is considered the priority for Kazakhstan: and is understood as providing women with equal access as for men to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship.

D. Thematic Priority: Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation

Ensuring that girls and women, boys and men, have a voice at all levels of society, are able to effectively participate and have a say over decisions that affect their lives is central to the EU's approach. Not only is it right that girls and women participate equally, their participation contributes to more inclusive, balanced and representative societies.

The recommended relevant objectives for Kazakhstan are:

- Objective 17: Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels.
- Objective 18: Women's organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by law.
- Objective 19: Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes.

Objective 19 is considered the priority for Kazakhstan: Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes.

5.5 Proposed adaptation of programmes in Kazakhstan

Reporting approach to measuring EU contribution to GAP II objectives

The monitoring and accountability framework against which progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in EU-funded programmes in Kazakhstan is to be measured, is provided by the Joint Staff Working Document (SWD) 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020.'

EU contribution is defined as direct outcomes and development outputs of EU projects / programmes that can

be linked to the achievement of specific gender objectives contained in the SWD.⁸⁰

EU actors will be able to report on EU contribution to achieving gender objectives through thematic and geographical programmes and projects, and how progress has been measured. An assessment of the amount of resources dedicated to supporting gender objectives will also be possible.

Project interventions address gender objectives either through targeted gender actions or through mainstreaming gender equality in other activities at the relevant intervention level.

In the projects listed below, indicators at project outcome and output levels have been adapted as proposals in order to make them gender-sensitive. Age- and gender-disaggregated data should be used when reporting on project achievements. It has not been possible to fully check however whether the implementation of the reformulated activities by the respective project is feasible within the contractual scope and budget of these actions.

Background

An analysis of two on-going EU-funded projects ('Supporting Kazakhstan's Transition to a Green Economy model' and 'Support to Judicial Reform in Kazakhstan: Enhancing Criminal Justice through support to reform of the penal process and of the procedure for enforcing judicial acts') found that gender was not being mainstreamed as a priority, and the expected results did not include gender-specific or gender-sensitive indicators.

Some women-focused initiatives have been introduced into project activities, such as delivering technical training to rural women in drip irrigation (Green Economy model project) but these are ad-hoc and not systematic.

In the project description of 'Support to Judicial Reform', gender mainstreaming was recommended as an integrated approach to activities, although no details were given, and mainstreaming was not subsequently addressed. A detailed gender analysis of the sector should have been undertaken to identify the gender concerns related to the sector. Based on findings, gender concerns and issues should have been included into projects goals and activities.

Currently there is no system of gender mainstreaming in law enforcement, although a recent order of the General Prosecutor recommended that cases of domestic violence should preferably be prosecuted by women rather than men. Key features of a gender mainstreamed law enforcement system include:

- promoting gender balance among participants of task forces, advisory councils, and working groups;
- facilitating dialogue by offering a safe place for relevant actors to highlight issues that have a disproportionately negative effect on women—such as exclusion from certain jobs and professions, discrimination, and sexual harassment in the workplace—and possible ways of addressing them;
- ensuring that revised policies include actions on recruitment, retention and promotion of female personnel;
- ensuring gender balance among participants in training sessions—including technical training, training in leadership, problem solving, and strategic planning.
- A lack of appropriate equipment or facilities may serve as a barrier to women's participation in criminal justice institutions. Therefore, when procuring anything that might be gender-sensitive, such as uniforms, it is important to consider appropriate allocations of the procurement for women and men.
- Similarly, proper and separate toilet facilities should be available;
- there should be gender balance amongst trainers for capacity building events;
- data about the participation of both genders in criminal justice professions and the criminal justice system is necessary, in order to make informed programming recommendations and decisions that support the effective integration of women.
- inclusion of gender-specific modules for capacity building trainings during criminal justice reform;
- training in response to gender-related crimes such as rape, domestic violence, child abuse, anti-gay violence, other gender-based violence, assistance to victims, investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

⁸⁰ European Commission JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020' Annex 1 Page 18.

5.5.1 Supporting Kazakhstan’s Transition to a Green Economy model: Project Number: DCI – ASIE/2014/355-664 April 2015 - November 2018

The overall objective of the Project is to contribute to the long-term environmentally sustainable and economic development of Kazakhstan through supporting the country’s transition to a Green Economy model. The specific objectives of the Project are the following: (i) To contribute to sustainable water management policies and practices; (ii) To promote a modernized environmental governance system aimed at generating incentives for the transition to a Green Economy model with focus on water resources and climate change; (iii) To promote the GE transition at local level with focus on water resources and climate change.

The strategic orientation of the Project is: a) To provide policy analysis and advice to key policy makers, in particular the Committee for the Water Resource Management under the Ministry of Agriculture; b) To contribute to awareness raising and systematic structured capacity building of policy makers / implementers as well as civil society, media and private sector; c) To support quick-win high visibility and replicable Green Economy actions on local level with focus on water resources and climate change.

EU GAP II Thematic Objective

The specific thematic objective from GAP II relevant to this project is: 15. Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship (‘land’ refers to natural productive resources which includes water, trees and land itself) (C. Thematic Priority: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment).

This will be addressed through mainstreaming gender equality at project outcome and output level.

5.5.2 Support to Judicial Reform in Kazakhstan: Enhancing Criminal Justice through support to reform of the penal process and of the procedure for enforcing judicial acts: Contract Number: 365-756: Start / End Date: 2015 – 2018

The objective is to strengthen the rule of law and the reform of the judiciary in Kazakhstan through supporting implementation of the national policy of humanization of the justice system. The specific objective is to enhance the protection of individual rights, in particular in the wider criminal justice system, and to foster its approximation towards European and internationally agreed standards, as such to provide support to the reform of the penal process and of the procedure for enforcing judicial acts.

EU GAP II Thematic Objective

The specific thematic objective from GAP II relevant to this project is: 7 Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere. (B. Thematic Priority: Physical and Psychological Integrity).

The implementing partner (NICO) of the European Union Criminal Justice Project (EUCJ) has stated that it is making substantial progress on supporting the improvement of the criminal justice system in Kazakhstan.⁸¹ It holds gender equality as a fundamental value to its work and to the overall long term objectives for a sound basis for rule of law.⁸² According to NICO, the EUCJ is dedicated to assisting Kazakhstan on its journey towards fairness and justice for all of its people and the advancement of gender equality is central to this goal.⁸³

Gender mainstreaming is EU policy, and is a mandatory requirement laid down by law in the Development Cooperation Instrument Regulation, which defines gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) as a cross-cutting issue, to be integrated into all development activities. (Section 3.10.1 above). A variation to contract terms and scope of work is a useful solution for the implementing partner and EU Delegation, to overcome perceived constraints in the existing terms of the Project.

⁸¹ NICO comments (2017)

⁸² NICO comments (2017)

⁸³ NICO comments (2017)

5.5.3 Strengthening the capacity of Kazakhstani civil society and media to promote the enjoyment, without discrimination, of freedom of expression: Contract Number 348-373. Start / End date: 01.01.2015 – 30.06.2017.

The objective of the project is to promote the right to freedom of expression, and the accessory right to equality in respect to freedom of expression. The specific objective is to increase the capacity of civil society and the media in Kazakhstan to promote freedom of expression and non-discrimination.

EU GAP II Thematic Objective

The specific thematic objective from GAP II relevant to this project is: Objective 19. Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, and

Objective 18. Women's organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by law; and (Thematic Priority: Political and civil rights – Voice and Participation).

The project has an element of a gender-specific / targeted action, as one of the target groups of the Project is LGBTI. However, the project does not further explicitly address LGBTI issues at the outcome and output levels.

Approach to the recognition of LGBTI in Kazakhstan

The human rights-based approach focuses on those who are most marginalized, excluded or discriminated against. An analysis of gender norms is involved, including an analysis of different forms of discrimination and power imbalances, in order to ensure that interventions reach the most marginalized segments of the population.

Elements of good practices under a human rights-based approach

- Programmes identify the realization of human rights as ultimate goals of development
- People are recognized as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services.
- Participation is both a means and a goal.
- Strategies are empowering, not disempowering.
- Both outcomes and processes are monitored and evaluated.
- Programmes focus on marginalized and excluded groups.
- The development process is locally owned.
- Programmes aim to reduce disparities and empower those left behind.
- Situation analysis is used to identify immediate, underlying and root causes of development problems.
- Analysis includes all stakeholders, including the capacities of the state as the main duty-bearer and the role of other non-state actors.
- Human Rights standards guide the formulation of measurable goals, targets and indicators in programming.
- National accountability systems need to be strengthened with a view to ensure independent review of government performance and access to remedies for aggrieved individuals.
- Strategic partnerships are developed and sustained.

5.6 New actions identified for Kazakhstan

Following an analysis of the gender situation, and discussion with stakeholders and actors, a number of gender equality actions have been identified which are considered significant and of high priority. These are as follows:

- Gender education: (addressing Objective 19: Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes) Existing stereotypes in Kazakhstan need to be transformed to ensure that the new generation is brought up to be gender-sensitive. In previous years, manuals on gender education were developed by NGOs and international organizations, and were piloted in selected

academic institutions. They were never subsequently incorporated into curricula on any permanent basis by the Ministry of Education. In several universities courses on gender have been introduced on an elective basis but are non-mandatory. Piecemeal efforts to deliver gender education have not been effective. The consequences are that there is a lack of gender expertise in the country for undertaking gender analysis of legislation, and the country does not have a pool of experts with capacity to mainstream gender into educational curricula. The future protection of women's rights is at risk because of the lack of awareness of gender equality legislation which is not being properly enforced.

- In order to support the goal of educating the new generation on gender awareness, the EU Delegation should consider allocating funds to support the participation of CSOs / NGOs in a government consultative body set up to develop curricular gender courses together with the Ministry of Education, to be rolled out by the government.
- Gender education should begin at pre-school level, and there should be an appropriate gender education course rolled out for every level of schooling and higher education.
- (i) Support the collection, analysis and dissemination of VAWG data, including through offices of the Committee on Statistics; and (ii) encourage broad-based education for behavioural change regarding gender-based violence, engaging men and boys and communities (addressing Objective 7: Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and private sphere.
- Support female entrepreneurship as well as care facilities that assist families (addressing Objective 15: Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship)
- Gender mainstreaming across all sectors of national development and State institutions should be promoted and supported by the EU as a major gender equality strategy.
- In the established formal dialogue with Kazakhstan, the EU should advocate for the adoption of a rights-based approach in all social and economic development programmes of the country to ensure full access of all socially vulnerable groups in Kazakhstan.

5.7 Identified priorities for in-country calls under EIDHR instrument in Kazakhstan

The EIDHR is designed to help civil society to become an effective force for political reform and defence of human rights. Its key strength is the ability to operate without the need for host government consent. The 2014-2020 EIDHR is now more strategic in its focus, and its specific objectives are defined with respect to the protection of human rights and support of democratic processes, including in particular:

- stronger wording on the role of civil society, including a specific reference to the cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions;
- stronger emphasis on vulnerable groups (national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex persons (LGBTI), indigenous peoples);
- stronger emphasis on economic and social rights.

Findings from the Kazakhstan Gender Study indicate that there are specific initiatives that would contribute to improving GEWE in the country and should be addressed.

The recommended priority initiatives that could be included in Kazakhstan Under the EIDHR / NSA-LA instruments are:

- supporting and implementing new approaches to address domestic violence such as rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators, monitoring of restraining orders and prevention of repeated episodes of violence
- addressing trafficking in human beings such as male victims of forced labour in Kazakhstan
- extending support to the undocumented and reduction of number of undocumented persons. The government employs a strict system of registration of its citizens by place of residence, and the absence of such registration prevents persons from obtaining identity documents and consequently from recognition of their legal personality. In Southern Kazakhstan Province, there are a significant

number of people who are de-facto stateless. This may be because children are born at home and the birth (of girl or boy) is not registered. A child may go to school, but no certificate of attainment of secondary education can be issued without identity documentation. This limits their opportunities for obtaining paid employment. When an undocumented woman marries, her marriage is not registered and her children will not receive birth certificates either. The undocumented are vulnerable to human rights violations, and face difficulties in issues related to family rights, divorce, alimony and property rights. In cases of domestic violence, an undocumented female victim is only able to access legal support and assistance if she first presents her legal identification document.

- improving access to services of socially vulnerable groups in line with a rights-based approach in implementing social services.

6 Annexes

Annex 1: People / Entities Met

Name	Designation
Mr. Jean-Louis Lavroff	Head of Cooperation EU Delegation to Kazakhstan
Ms. Snejana Popova	Gender Focal Point EU Delegation to Kazakhstan
Ms. Elena Levchenko	Project Manager EU Delegation to Kazakhstan
Ms. Tatiana Aderikhina	UNICEF National Officer, Child Development and Protection
Ms. Assiya Khairullina	Chairperson, Board of the League of Art Initiative; Member of National Commission on Women's Affairs, Social and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan
Ms. Margarita Uskembayeava	President, Institute of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities of Kazakhstan; Member of Expert Council of National Commission on Women's Affairs, Social and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan
Ms. Svetlana Bogatyreva	Project Director, Fund of Female Leadership, Almaty
Ms. Lyazzat Kaltaeva	President, Association of Women with Disabilities "Shirak"; Member of National Commission on Women's Affairs, Social and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan
Ms. Zahira Begalieva	Deputy Director, Association of Women with Disabilities "Shirak"
Ms. Elaine Conkievich	Director, UN Women, Multi-Country Office for Central Asia (Kazakhstan)
Mr. Raimbek Sissemailiyev	Assistant Representative, UNFPA Kazakhstan Country Office
Ms. Gauhar Moldokulova	Programme Officer, UNFPA Kazakhstan Country Office
Ms. Yevgeniya Kozyreva	Head, The Feminist League
Ms. Lyubov Chubukova	Association of NGOs 'Kazakhstan Union of People living with HIV'; and 'Central Asia Association of People living with HIV'
Ms. Zulfiya Baisakova	Chair of Board "Union of Crisis Centers" in Kazakhstan
Ms. Tamara Rishe	Shelter and Crisis Center "Teen Challenge"
Mr. Ernar Nurbekov	Director, NGO "Line of Life"
Ms. Zamza Kodar and her team (6 people)	Director, Social and Gender Studies Institute, Almaty
Ms. Khadicha Abysheva	NGO Sana Sezim, Shymkent
Ms. Aiman Umarova	Defence Lawyer on VAW cases, Almaty
Mr. Philip Martin (telephone interview)	Principal Gender Adviser, EBRD
Ms. Alma Kassymova	National Programme Manager, EBRD Small Business Support Team Kazakhstan
Mr. Yevgeny Son	EBRD SME Finance & Development Group
Ms. Gulzhamal Issayeva	Project Manager: EU project: 'Support to Kazakhstan's transition to Green Economy implemented by UNDP'
Mr. Amir Yelchibekov	BOMCA 9 National Coordinator
Mr. Murat Narkulov	UNDP Gender Focal Point
Ms. Rashida Naubeta	Manager of the UNDP Women's Empowerment Project
Mr. Dejan Keserovic	Coordinator for Central Asia, IOM Chief of Mission in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
Ms. Zauresh Batalova	Fund of Parliamentarism of Kazakhstan
Ms. Lyazzat Kamze	Fund of Parliamentarism of Kazakhstan
Ms. Saltanat Parkhatovna Tursynbekova	Senior Aide-at-large to the Prosecutor General
Ms. Omarova Svetlana Bekbaltashevana	Head of Division, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
Ms. Tabergenova Aigul Olzhabayevna	Director of the Department for Social Services, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
Bekisheva, Roza Mukhamedyarovna	Senior Inspector-at-large, Administrative Police Committee, Ministry of the Interior
Mr. Xavier Barre (Skype call)	Attorney, Team Leader, EU - Central Asia Rule of Law Platform
Ms. Tatiana Nemtsan	Director, NGO Ak-bota

Ms. Saltanat Rakhimbekova	Chair of the Board, Association of Legal Entities 'Coalition for Green Economy' and G-Global Development'
Ms. Saule Mektepbayeva	Project Manager 'Support to Judicial Reform in Kazakhstan'
Ms. Irina Unjakova	Parliamentary Deputy and Member of National Commission on Women's Affairs, Social and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan
Mr. Johnny Kramer	Permanent Deputy of Ambassador, German Embassy Astana
Mr. Traian Laurentiu Hristea	Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to the Republic of Kazakhstan
Ms. Karolien Michiels	Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium
Mr. Stefan Hejnowicz	II Secretary, Political Section, Embassy of the Republic of Poland
Mr. Jan Huisman	Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Netherlands
Mr. Toivo Martikainen	Second Secretary, Embassy of Finland
Mr. Ivan Genov	Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria
Ms. Sarah Zielonka	Political, Cultural & Press Department, Embassy of Germany
Ms. Zora Gonczarow	Finance and Contracts Manager, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan
Ms. Gulmira Khairullina	Assistant, Political, Press & Information Section, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan
Mr. Jordy Helias	Intern, Political, Press & Information Section, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan
Ms. Natalia de la Chica	Intern, Political, Press & Information Section, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan

Annex 2: Interview / focus group guides

Question guide for CSOs / NGOs group interviews and meetings

Areas to be covered:

- Mandate and goals of organization
- Current activities
- Current gender situation
- Discussion and analysis of most important gender / empowerment issues
- Impact of current gender policies
- Gender mainstreaming in activities
- Problems specific to Kazakhstan – violence, discrimination, social norms
- Gaps in available data
- Status and needs of women in rural areas
- Role of EU and donors
- Main conclusions and recommendations

Question guide for international organizations / gender studies organizations / line ministries

Areas to be covered:

- Statistics on the situation of women and girls, men and boys
- Barriers to achieving gender equality
- Mapping of actors with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality in Kazakhstan
- Information gaps
- Gender mainstreaming
- Gender budgeting
- Status and needs of women in rural areas / role and responsibilities of women in society
- Domestic violence
- Discrimination
- Role of EU and donors
- Main conclusions and recommendations

Annex 3: Documentation

Kazakhstan

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- EEAS 'Support to Judicial Reform in Kazakhstan: Enhancing Criminal Justice Through Support to Reform of the Penal Process and of the Procedure for Enforcing Judicial Acts' (Fiche) N17 – 365 – 756
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Annex 4: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), known as: 'Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', is a set of 17 Global Goals covering a broad range of sustainable development issues.

The SDGs in detail are:

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation
- Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change forum)
- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.