



# **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

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## **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

### **Eighty-seventh session**

29 January–16 February 2024

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under  
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms  
of Discrimination against Women**

## **Replies of Tajikistan to the list of issues and questions in relation to its seventh periodic report\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## List of issues and questions in relation to the seventh periodic report of Tajikistan

### A. Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic, recovery efforts and global crises

#### Paragraph 1 of the concluding observations

##### COVID-19

1. The Government approved Tajikistan's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan on 19 March 2020. A counter-epidemic command, chaired by the Prime Minister, was established to deal with measures to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic and combat its consequences. Furthermore, in accordance with the Plan, working groups were established within the ministries and departments of Tajikistan.
2. On 19 March 2020, in the face of the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government approved the Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to mitigate the impact of potential risks of a COVID-19 pandemic on the national economy. In June 2020, a decree of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan on preventing the impact of COVID-19 on the socioeconomic spheres of Tajikistan was issued; taking into account ongoing spread of the new infectious disease, it established specific short- and medium-term tasks, and made provision for tax- and credit-related advantages and for financial support for particular sectors and vulnerable population groups.
3. It should be noted that the International Monetary Fund recognized the counter-measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as effective in comparison to shots of some countries.<sup>1</sup>
4. The timely United Nations response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Tajikistan under the Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework (ISEF) contributed significantly to ensuring social protection coverage for vulnerable population groups.
5. Public-private partnership arrangements provided social services to more than 13,300 vulnerable people between 2018 and 2020. More than 149,000 households received COVID-19-related emergency social payments, and more than 64,000 households with children under 3 years old received one-time payments of 500 somoni per family in addition to targeted social payments.<sup>2</sup>
6. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan, with financial and technical support from the World Bank, initiated and implemented the TEC-19 Project in the country. The aims of the Project were to prepare for, and respond effectively to, a COVID-19 pandemic in Tajikistan.
7. The Government allocated most of its resources to fighting COVID-19, and also prioritized other health programmes such as those devoted to maternal and child health. The health of mothers, newborns, children and adolescents remains a priority area of activity for the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.
8. Within the framework of the Project, an independent organization – the non-governmental organization “Zerkalo Centre for Sociological Research” – <http://covid.zerkalo.tj/>, regularly monitored implementation.

<sup>1</sup> <https://medt.tj/ru/news/novosti-ministerstva-ekonomiki/1684-khazina-bajnalmlilii-as-or-tadbir-oi-ziddib-ronii-ukumati-um-urii-to-ikistonro-nati-abakhsh-arzjob-namud>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://medt.tj/images/20-07-2022-3.pdf>.

9. Recognizing the possibility of an increase in domestic violence during the pandemic, the Ministry of Health, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), opened an additional 10 new support centres for victims of violence. Currently, there are 22 city and district assistance centres for victims of violence that provide short-term shelter and prompt health services to women and girls.

10. Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), activities are being implemented under the project for developing capacity for strengthening food security and nutrition to establish intersectoral cooperation by building capacity to effectively ensure and manage harmonization between the agriculture, nutrition, health, education and social protection sectors.

11. Section 17 of the Health Code of the Republic of Tajikistan is dedicated to ensuring health and epidemiological safety. In accordance with Article 110 of the Health Code, health and epidemiological safety is ensured by measures for providing the population with timely warning of the emergence of mass infectious, parasitic and non-infectious diseases, and of the environmental situation and preventive measures.

12. If there is a threat of the introduction and spread of infectious and parasitic diseases, quarantine is imposed at specific border-crossing points by order of the Chief State Medical Officer of Tajikistan.

## **B. Definition of discrimination against women and legislative framework**

### **Paragraph 4 of the concluding observations**

13. Pursuant to Government decision No. 150 of 31 March 2003, a Judicial Training Centre, attached to the Supreme Court, was established with the main function of providing training for candidates for judicial office and trainee judges and providing professional development training for judges.

14. In 2022, the Union of Women Judges of Tajikistan was established with the support of the Programme Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Union is composed of 94 women judges representing the Constitutional, Economic and Supreme Courts.

15. Women judges learned about best practices for improving women's and girls' access to justice, increasing gender sensitivity in cases of violence against women and girls, eliminating gender stereotypes in court proceedings, and protecting children's rights. The plan for the next stage is for the Union of Women Judges to introduce best practices through the establishment of relevant courses in the curriculum of the Judicial Training Centre.

16. Judges and court staff also studied the National Plan of Action for the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for 2019–2022 and the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence in Tajikistan for 2014–2023.

17. The professional development institute of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan has held informational and educational events for staff of legal assistance centres and State lawyers on the subject of equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

18. Within the framework of the National Development Council reporting to the President of Tajikistan, 14 interdepartmental working groups have been established under the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, and 12 "Gender Equality" groups are coordinated by the Committee on Women and the Family.

19. In order to improve the knowledge, skills and competencies of civil servants, including women and girls, a one-year master's degree in public administration for civil servants has been available at the Academy of Public Administration since 2009 with the support of the Hanns Seidel Foundation (Germany). Between 2010 and 2022, 879 civil servants graduated from this master's programme, 251 or 28.6% of them women.
20. Starting in 2019, in order to increase women's professional knowledge and competencies and prepare them for leadership positions, the Academy of Public Administration, with the support of the Hanns Seidel Foundation, has offered two-track training courses for female civil servants of local public authorities under the "Women Leaders" programme. Under this programme, 177 women civil servants were trained between 2019 and 2023.
21. The leadership of the Supreme Court is taking necessary measures to attract highly qualified and experienced women to the judiciary, thereby increasing their number in the judicial system. In particular, 87 women are currently serving in the responsible and honourable position of judge, and 17 of them are presidents and deputy presidents of city and district courts.
22. In 2022, a round table on ensuring gender equality in Parliament was held; it included representatives of the Majlis-i Namoyandagon Majlis-i Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan.
23. In 2022, an allocation of 1,846,052 somoni, or 0.005 per cent of the total, was made from the State budget. In May 2023, a department for State protection of the right to equality and freedom from discrimination was established within the Office of the Ombudsman, and an allocation of 2,728,680 somoni, or 0.007 per cent of the total, was made from the budget. Comparing the 2022 budget to the 2023 budget, funds for the Ombudsman's Office increased by 47.8 per cent.
24. The Office of the Procurator General has not recorded any such cases.

### **C. Women's access to justice**

#### **Paragraph 5 of the concluding observations**

25. In accordance with Presidential decree No. 673 of 29 June 2009 on amendments and additions to Presidential Decree No. 673, the Ombudsman was allocated additional staff. On the basis of that decree, an order of the Ombudsman dated 1 May 2023 established a department for State protection of the right to equality and freedom from discrimination within the Office of the Ombudsman.
26. Between 2022 and the date of the adoption of the Act on equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination and the present moment, there have been no complaints lodged.
27. By Government decision No. 425 of 2 July 2015, a policy framework on the provision of free legal aid in the Republic of Tajikistan was adopted. Its purpose was to create the basis for the development and further improvement of the State system of accessible and qualified free legal aid to the population.
28. In order to implement the framework, a State institution, the Legal Aid Centre, was established under the Ministry of Justice by another Government decision, No. 704 of 28 November 2015.

29. On 4 July 2020, the Legal Aid Act was adopted; it provides for residents of the country to receive primary and secondary legal aid. Residents of 34 cities and districts receive free primary legal assistance from Government lawyers.<sup>3</sup>

30. Although judges of the Republic of Tajikistan examine redress in cases of discrimination, no statistics are kept in that connection.

31. The Statistics Agency under the President of Tajikistan, in cooperation with UNFPA within the framework of the Spotlight Initiative, is implementing a project for harmonization of indicators, including indicators on the relationship between victim and offender, age, type of settlement, ethnicity, etc. The plan is for harmonized statistics to be obtainable from 2024.

32. Pursuant to the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 19 March 2013, local police inspectors examined:

- 3,917 reports and complaints (3,187 regarding men, 728 regarding women, 2 regarding minors) in 2019;
- 4,316 reports and complaints (3,543 regarding men, 773 regarding women, 0 regarding minors) in 2020;
- 4,192 reports and complaints (3,460 regarding men, 729 regarding women, 3 regarding minors) in 2021;
- 4,244 reports and complaints (3,496 regarding men, 742 regarding women, 6 regarding minors) in 2022;
- 1,504 reports and complaints (1,280 regarding men, 224 regarding women) in the first six months of 2023.

33. Pursuant to articles 93 (1) and 93 (2) of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Tajikistan (violation of the requirements of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act and violation of the requirements of a protection order):

<i>Year</i>	<i>Reports on administrative offences (number)</i>	<i>Protection orders issued (number of individuals)</i>	<i>Investigative meetings in implementation of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (number of individuals)</i>
2019	1 607	1 851	4 674
2020	1 956	2 325	4 707
2021	2 169	2 212	4 614
2022	1 931	2 147	7 676

34. According to the Office of the Procurator-General, 115 domestic violence offences committed by family members were reported in 2022.

35. In the period from 2019 to the first half of 2023, the courts of the Republic considered 1,667 criminal cases in which domestic violence was the origin of the crime, with 1,507 sentences handed down against 1,554 individuals (368 of them women). In connection with the total of 1,667 criminal cases considered in these categories of criminal cases, 392 persons were sentenced to imprisonment, and 888 of the victims were women.

36. Furthermore, in order to eradicate domestic violence, the country's courts considered 465 criminal cases at mobile court sessions during that period.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.adlia.tj/index.fwx>.

37. In these categories of cases, 929 special rulings were issued and transmitted to the relevant authorities for action.
38. In addition, during this period, 132 articles on the prevention of violence against women were published in the media by judges and court staff. Similarly, they were involved in 465 segments broadcast through radio and television of the republic.
39. In the period from 2021 to 2022, the country's courts considered 982 criminal cases in which domestic violence was the origin of the crime, with 192 resulting in imprisonment; 464 of the victims were women. During the period in question, the courts considered 5 criminal cases under article 130 (1) of the Criminal Code and convicted 8 persons. Three of those convicted, and ten of the victims, were women.

## **D. National machinery for the advancement of women**

### **Paragraph 2 of the concluding observations**

40. The Committee on Women and the Family under the Government of Tajikistan carries out its activities in accordance with the Government decision on the Committee on Women and the Family under the Government of Tajikistan, providing the basis for the approval of the Statute. The activity of that Committee is also governed by the Instructions on the organization of the activities of the Committee on Women and the Family in the field of gender equality and prevention of domestic violence (Order No. 159 of 8 November 2018).
41. The key sections of the Statute are indicated below:
- The Committee on Women and the Family is the national authorities' central agency for implementing State policy to protect and safeguard the rights and interests of women and the family, creating equal conditions for the realization of their rights and interests and achieving gender equality, expanding the scope of their participation in solving socio-economic problems and in managing the affairs of the State and society, as well as normative and legal regulation, the provision of State services and the management of State property in this sector.
42. It should also be noted that, by virtue of its powers, the Committee on Women and the Family is a subject of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, is the coordinator of the State programme for prevention of domestic violence in Tajikistan for 2014–2023, coordinator of the policy paper on family development, the national strategy for the promotion of women's role in Tajikistan for 2021–2030, and the State programme for the education, selection and placement of capable women and girls in leadership positions for 2023–2030.
43. The agencies of the Committee on Women and the Family include:
- The Charogi Khidoyat State training centre for orphan girls;
  - An interdepartmental working group set up under the Committee to implement the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence in Tajikistan for 2014–2023;
  - With the support of international organizations, a Resource Centre for Gender Equality and Prevention of Domestic Violence has been established under the Committee on Women and the Family; it operates in accordance with the Statutes approved by the Chair of the Committee on Women and the Family. The Centre operates a hotline, 1313, dealing with issues relating to violence against women.
44. An interdepartmental working group to support women's entrepreneurship has been set up under the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management

of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Secretariat of the Investment Council under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan provides support for the secretariat of this working group.

## **E. Women human rights defenders**

### **Paragraph 3 of the concluding observations**

45. No incidents of harassment have been recorded.

46. In accordance with the Public Associations Act, more than 1,800 civil society organizations are currently registered in the country, and 80 of them are active in protecting women's rights and interests.

47. Pursuant to article 24 of the Public Associations Act, civil society organizations have the right to assert and protect their rights and the legitimate interests of their participants and members in State bodies, organizations, public associations and courts. In addition, there are a number of laws that allow complaints to be lodged with, and information to be sought from, law enforcement agencies and courts. Examples include the Act on appeals by individuals and entities and the Act on the right of access to information.

48. At the initiative of UN-Women, a School of Gender Activists was established as part of the Spotlight Initiative. The School includes young girls, women living with HIV and persons with disabilities. A Life Free of Violence Network was created from more than 50 civil society organizations, and a civil society strategy leading to transformative change on ending violence against women and girls was developed, along with a plan of action for that strategy.

49. In addition, in accordance with paragraph 3, part 6 of this Procedure, an audit shall be conducted if there is any suspicion that the activities of the civil society organization are being used for the purposes of money laundering, financing of terrorism and financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

50. As part of their activity, civil society organizations provide for the protection of the rights of members, individuals and entities.

51. There are no restrictions on foreign funding at the legislative level. The Public Associations Act was amended in 2019, in line with the standards of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which are international standards on combating money laundering, financing of terrorism and financing the consideration of weapons of mass destruction. Each civil society organization is obliged:

- To post financial statements detailing income and expenses annually on its website or the website of the registering authority;
- To keep data on domestic and international transactions for at least five years after the end of a business relationship;
- To keep and submit to the registering body information on the identity of persons controlling or managing the activities of the civil society organization, including founders, and members of governing and supervisory bodies.

## **F. Temporary special measures**

### **Paragraph 2 of the concluding observations**

52. In order to attract women to the civil service, a Presidential decree amending and supplementing Presidential decree No. 647 of 10 March 2016 was drafted; it was

adopted on 19 April 2017 as Presidential decree No. 869. The decree indicates the benefits for women hired to fill vacant administrative positions in the civil service. Three additional points are awarded the first time they participate in the competitive examination. As a result, 177 women were hired in the first half of 2023.

53. As at 1 July 2023, 479 women were appointed, following a competitive process, to vacant civil service positions, representing 24.8 per cent of total recruits.

54. Also, during this period, 249 women were recommended for higher positions in the civil service as a result of civil servant performance appraisals.

55. Use is made of special temporary measures such as “soft quotas” in party lists of parliamentary candidates, benefits in civil service admissions, presidential quotas for university applicants and presidential grants for women entrepreneurs.

56. The recognition of temporary special (affirmative) measures at the legislative level is a key demonstration of values. Article 11 of the Act on equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination refers to affirmative action measures, which take the form of temporary special legislative, administrative and practical measures aimed at protecting persons who are at a disadvantage compared to others in order to overcome past disadvantage and ensure the achievement of full equality. Affirmative measures should be applied until legal or de facto equality and social inclusion of disadvantaged persons and/or groups of persons is achieved.

57. Bonuvoni Tojikiston, a political, social and cultural State publication, is produced in Tajik and Russian and operates in accordance with the Press and Other Mass Media Act.

58. This magazine demonstrates the value of temporary special measures and raises awareness of the nature of temporary special measures among government officials and the public.

## **G. Gender stereotypes**

### **Paragraph 5 of the concluding observations**

59. Three working-group subgroups, established by order of the Head of the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 32/10–225, dated 1 November 2017, have continued their work. One operates under the Committee on Women and the Family, under the leadership of the First Deputy Chair of that Committee, to improve regulations and legislation to eliminate gender stereotypes. Drafts have already been prepared to amend a number of laws, including the Regularization of Traditions, Festivals and Ceremonies Act and the Act on State guarantees of equal rights for men and women and equal opportunities in the exercise of such rights. One of the changes proposed is to adopt the wording of the concept of “gender stereotypes” and to authorize all State structures to take effective steps to eliminate them.

60. As part of the Spotlight Initiative, a communications strategy has been developed in cooperation with the Committee on Women and the Family to change gender stereotypes and negative social norms. All ministries and agencies, as well as local executive authorities, will be involved in the implementation of the communications strategy.

61. With the support of development partners, work was carried out with the Islamic Institute of Tajikistan bearing the name of the Great Imam Abuhanifa. As a result: a) the Institute has included in the list of core subjects the subject “Healthy Family”, which focuses on the elimination of violence against women and girls, b) out of 52 Friday prayers, 8 Fridays are allocated for discussion with male worshippers, during



which imam khatibs in all mosques of the country speak about the inadmissibility of violence against women and girls.

62. State television and radio are involved in the issues of changing harmful social practices and eradicating violence against women and girls.

63. The government agency for religious affairs, together with international and civil-society organizations, organized a series of seminars attended by more than 500 imam khatibs of central mosques and imams of local mosques, which helped to strengthen the knowledge and experience of religious leaders in preventing domestic violence.

64. The working group on improving laws and regulations, eliminating gender stereotypes, protecting the rights of women and preventing domestic violence, attached to the Committee on Women and the Family, made a recommendation to the Ministry of Education and Science to review educational curriculums and materials at all levels through the prism of gender equality and non-discrimination, and draft legislation to amend and supplement the Education Act and to amend and supplement the Act on educational texts was developed. One of its aims was to make compulsory a gender review of textbooks.

## **H. Gender-based violence against women**

### **Paragraph 7 of the concluding observations**

65. The national strategy for the promotion of women in Tajikistan for 2021–2030 identifies the key areas of State policy for the promotion of the role of women. The national strategy also has a separate chapter (8) on the prevention of violence against women, which aims to eliminate and prevent violence against women and girls.

66. In 2022, the current State programme to prevent domestic violence in Tajikistan for 2014–2023 was reviewed and, based on the results of the review, the process of developing a new five-year State programme to prevent domestic violence for 2024–2029 was initiated.

67. Within the framework of the Act on prevention of domestic violence, adopted in 2013, law enforcement agencies issue protection orders to victims of violence, conduct individual interviews with aggressors and register dysfunctional families. The statistics are set out above (paragraph 33).

68. The Executive Office of the President has reporting to it three working groups on improving laws and regulations connected with eliminating gender stereotypes, protecting the rights of women and preventing domestic violence. Three subgroups deal with improving laws and regulations for the prevention of domestic violence (reporting to the Office of the Procurator-General).

69. Under Article 145, on the obligation to receive and consider statements and reports on crime, of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Tajikistan and decree No. 40 of 4 April 2017 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, all statements made by citizens are to be accepted immediately, regardless of their nationality, race, sex, language, religion, political beliefs, education, social or property status. All statements and reports on crimes are considered strictly within the framework of the normative legal acts of Tajikistan.

70. The criminalization of domestic violence as a separate offence is currently under review. In order to resolve these issues, the new draft of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, developed by the working group established by Presidential Decree No. AP-1209 of 30 April 2019, Chapter 19 (Criminal offences against the

family and juveniles) contains for the first time an article establishing criminal penalties for domestic violence.

71. On 4 July 2020, the Legal Aid Act was adopted; it provides for residents of the country to receive primary and secondary legal aid. As part of the pilot, residents, including victims of violence, of 34 cities and districts are receiving free primary legal aid from government lawyers.

72. Within the framework of the Spotlight initiative, in order to provide timely free legal and psychological assistance to women in accordance with the Matrix of Measures of the medium-term development programme of Tajikistan for 2021–2025 and the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence in Tajikistan for 2014–2023, a Resource Centre for Gender Equality and Prevention of Domestic Violence and a free hotline, 1313, were opened to provide legal and psychological advice to victims of domestic violence. Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

73. There are government agencies and civil society organizations operating around the country:

- The Committee on Women and the Family;
- 17 domestic violence prevention inspectors, operating within the structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- 110 resource and advisory centres attached to local government executive bodies;
- 22 support locations for medical and social rehabilitation of women within institutions of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare,
- The national social service centre for victims of human trafficking and domestic violence operating under the Ministry of Health and Social Development;
- 34 state legal bureaus of the Legal Aid Centre of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- Crisis centres, including shelters at civil society organizations, that provide assistance to victims of violence;
- The Office of the Ombudsman for human rights;
- The Women's Awareness Centre attached to the Office of the Mayor of Dushanbe;
- Aggressor counselling offices in 3 cities.

74. Action plans have been drawn up for all the above-mentioned employees of ministries and agencies to conduct awareness-raising activities, seminars and training sessions.

75. The registration of appeals related to issues of violence is carried out by various state bodies, including: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Office of the Procurator General, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, and the Committee on Women and the Family.

76. The interagency working group attached to the Statistics Agency reporting to the President of Tajikistan, in cooperation with UNFPA and within the framework of the Spotlight Initiative, is implementing a project for harmonization of indicators, including indicators on the relationship between victim and offender, age, type of settlement, ethnicity, etc. The plan is for harmonized statistics to be obtainable from 2024.

77. However, it is worth noting the following data relating to the hotline of the Committee on Women and the Family Resource Centre: in the first half of 2023, 1,204 people – 1,075 women and 129 men – contacted the Centre with complaints of domestic violence. Of those complaints, 908 related to psychological violence, 424 to economic violence, 117 to physical violence and 3 to sexual violence.

78. Article 12 of the Constitutional Act on the Procuratorial Agencies of the Republic of Tajikistan provides that the procuratorial bodies must, in accordance with the procedure established by law, consider applications, complaints and other communications from citizens and legal entities concerning offences, and take measures to remedy them. Decisions taken by the prosecutor do not prevent a person from seeking defence of his or her rights in court. If a person, due to physical, mental or other disabilities, is unable to defend his or her rights, the prosecutor is obliged to take the necessary measures for that to take place.

79. In the first six months of 2023, the Ministry of Internal Affairs Department for Combating Organized Crime received 5 reports of crimes attacking the sexual freedom or sexual inviolability of women.

80. Five persons who committed crimes against sexual freedom or sexual inviolability of women were identified in the course of operational and investigative measures, and all were resulted in criminal liability in the form of custodial sentences for the period provided for in the articles of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan.

81. After the preliminary investigation, the evidence was sent to the competent authorities of Tajikistan, and five criminal cases were opened based on those facts: one criminal case under article 138 (rape) of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan, three criminal cases under article 139 (sexual assault) of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan, and one criminal case under article 140 (coercion to perform sexual acts) of the Criminal Code.

82. The number of administrative reports drawn up under articles 93(1) and 93(2) of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Tajikistan was 1,912 (compared to 920 in 2022), and the number drawn up under other articles was 272 (compared to 23 in 2022); protection orders were issued against 2,147 people (compared to 684 in 2022). Also, 113 meetings were held in order to implement this legislation.

83. The results of the review of the State programme for prevention of domestic violence for 2014–2023 show increases in the number of reports to the police authorities regarding domestic violence and the number of individual interviews by police inspectors. For example, from 2018 to 2021, the number of reports to the police regarding domestic violence increased by a factor of 1.3, the number of individual interviews increased by a factor of 1.6, and the issuance of protection orders increased by a factor of 2.3. Thus, the awareness-raising activities regarding the rights of victims of violence, regarding the obligation of the police authorities to provide an immediate response to such instances, and regarding other preventive measures, have had a positive effect, with women gaining confidence in protection and making reports to law enforcement agencies more often.

## **I. Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

### **Paragraph 8 of the concluding observations**

84. A referral mechanism has been developed to identify and assist victims of human trafficking in Tajikistan. Several instruments regulating the identification of victims of trafficking in persons have been adopted, namely:

- Act counteracting trafficking in persons and providing support to victims of trafficking in persons;

- Procedures for the implementation of a set of measures within the framework of the referral mechanism for victims of trafficking in persons;
- The national action plan to combat trafficking in persons in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2022–2024.

85. A national commission has been established to coordinate the Government's efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

86. The Office of the Procurator-General, in accordance with the Act countering trafficking in persons and providing support to victims of trafficking, is one of the State entities directly involved in combating trafficking in persons and, pursuant to article 15 of the Act, coordinates the activities of the bodies involved in combating trafficking in persons.

87. In 2022 and the first half of 2023, 90 victims (26 female victims of sex trafficking and 64 male victims of forced labour) were identified. A referral was made to an international organization to provide protection services for 16 victims (11 female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and 5 male victims of forced labour).

88. During the period under review, law enforcement agencies neither initiated nor investigated proceedings against officials or civil servants for crimes related to trafficking in persons.

89. Over the past five years, a total of 95 crimes related to human trafficking have been committed and 101 persons have been prosecuted for those crimes. Of the total number of criminal cases initiated, 64 cases involving 96 persons have been sent to court for consideration.

90. The services provided to victims of human trafficking from 2017 to 2022 included psychological, medical, legal and social assistance, food, adult education courses, shelter placement, and legal assistance in criminal investigations and prosecution of traffickers. More than 350 victims of human trafficking were assisted by service provider organizations. Collectively, 548 services were provided to victims of trafficking based on their primary needs and requirements.

91. Under article 26 of the Act on combating human trafficking and providing assistance to victims, a State Fund for assistance to victims of human trafficking has been established to effectively finance measures for the protection, social adaptation and social rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking.

92. Accordingly, in 2022, an allocation of 824400 somoni (\$81,000) was made to improve the provision of social services to victims of trafficking and an allocation of 2.1 million somoni (\$207,000) was made to a government agency providing services to girl victims of trafficking during that period.

93. Following verification of reports from victims and their relatives, as well as reports and information, the law enforcement agencies of Tajikistan recorded 14 human-trafficking crimes in 2019, 12 in 2020, 11 in 2021, 24 in 2022 and 34 crimes in the first 6 months of 2023.

94. During the reporting period, a total of 170 victims were identified and, of those victims, 48 were referred to the relevant international organization for protection services.

95. The national referral mechanism's victim assistance measures continue to be used; they include formal written procedures describing screening to identify and refer victims.

96. Human trafficking offences investigated during this period showed that sex traffickers exploit women and children from Tajikistan most often in Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Russia, but also in Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, and within Tajikistan. The main recruitment methods used by traffickers are job offers from friends, neighbours, or illegal employment agencies.

97. Procuratorial oversight has been strengthened to ensure that cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee on National Security, the Drug Control Agency, the Customs Service and other entities involved in combating such crimes is properly implemented in order to identify victims of trafficking in persons and prevent the commission of such crimes, and that relevant information is collected and submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the basis of mutually beneficial cooperation.

98. In the period 2021–2022, no complaints of abuse by internal affairs officers or their complicity in corruption against women engaged in prostitution were filed with the Supreme Court of Tajikistan.

99. Involvement in prostitution and the associated penalties are regulated by the Criminal Code in articles 166 (Involvement of a minor in committing antisocial acts), 238 (Recruitment for prostitution) and 239 (Establishing or maintaining premises for prostitution, procurement or pimping).

## **J. Participation in public and political life**

### **Paragraph 5 of the concluding observations**

100. Among the results of the State programme for the education, selection and placement of capable women and girls in leadership positions covering the period 2017–2022, in accordance with the resolution of the Government of Tajikistan on that subject, is the share of women in leadership positions, accounting for 24.1 per cent, according to the data for 2022. There has been an increase in the number of women in leadership positions in all branches of government.

- Government – the head of the Executive Office of the President is a woman;
- Judiciary – there are 87 women serving as judges; of the 64 trainee judges appointed in 2022, 22 are women.
- Executive authorities – 2 ministries (Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment, Ministry of Culture) out of 14 are headed by women, and 22 deputy ministers and deputy department heads are women. In 2021, the first female ambassador was appointed; she currently represents Tajikistan in the United Kingdom. Between 2020 and 2023, the number of women in the Foreign Service increased from 66 to 78. Representation of women in local government – 5 leaders of cities and districts, 62 deputy leaders of cities and districts.
- Legislative authorities – the deputy speaker of the Majlis-i Namoyandagon Majlis-i Oli is a woman; overall, in the Majlis-i Namoyandagon Majlis-i Oli (lower house) 23.8 per cent of members are women, and in the Majlis-i Milli (upper house), 25.8 per cent of members are women.

101. The campaign includes personal meetings with all stakeholders, as well as informational and educational training sessions with representatives of all ministries and agencies. In addition, the media, both public and private (through various projects), have been involved in order to highlight the importance of women's participation in decision-making.

102. There has been no monitoring by the relevant authority on this issue.

103. According to the legislation of Tajikistan, the activities of civil society organizations are based on the principles of voluntarism, equality, self-governance and legality. Civil society organizations are free to determine their internal structure, goals, forms and methods of their activities.

104. Interference of State authorities and their officials in the activities of civil society organizations is prohibited, as is the interference of civil society organizations in the activities of State authorities and their officials.

105. Article 143 of the Criminal Code establishes liability for the deliberate direct or indirect violation or restriction of rights and freedoms or the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, language, social origin, personal, property or occupational status, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, or membership of political parties or public associations, where such violations or restrictions damage the rights and legal interests of citizens. That liability takes the form of a fine of between 200 and 500 units of calculation or of up to two years' imprisonment. The same acts committed by a person

- with the use or threat of use of violence;
- by a person exploiting their official position;
- are punished by imprisonment of 2 to 5 years, with or without forfeiture of the right to hold certain posts or engage in certain activities for up to 3 years.

106. Furthermore, pursuant to article 158 of the Criminal Code, obstruction of the lawful activities of political parties and civil society organizations, and likewise interference in their lawful activities, resulting in a significant violation of their rights and legitimate interests, is punishable by a fine of between 200 and 500 units of calculation, up to three years' imprisonment, or detention for up to four months.

107. Civil society organizations currently conduct their activities within the framework of legal norms, and no harassment or restriction of their activities by State bodies or by individuals has been detected.

108. The third national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security, covering the period 2024–2028, is being developed.

## **K. Nationality**

### **Paragraph 4 of the concluding observations**

109. An amnesty law to regularize the legal status of stateless persons and foreign nationals residing illegally in Tajikistan was adopted on 18 December 2019. This law provides the legal and organizational basis for the State to conduct a one-time amnesty in to regularize the legal status of foreign nationals and stateless persons of the States of the former USSR.

110. The State guarantees protection of the rights and freedoms of foreign nationals and stateless persons who have regularized their legal status in Tajikistan in accordance with this law.

111. Pursuant to order No. 883 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs dated 14 July 2023 and to order No. 32/10–23925 of the Head of the Executive Office of the President of Tajikistan dated 11 July 2023, the memorandum of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was discussed and the following information was provided on issues related to the seventh national periodic report of Tajikistan to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under the chapter entitled “Nationality”.

112. In order to regularize the legal status of persons without identity documents, along with the status of their wives and children, Act No. 1652 of the Republic of Tajikistan, of 18 December 2019, regarding an amnesty to regularize the legal status of stateless persons and foreign nationals residing illegally in Tajikistan, was implemented for a period of three years.

113. As a result of a campaign of outreach activities, 1,541 foreign nationals and stateless persons subject to this law were identified, and their applications registered, between January 2020 and the end of 2022.

114. Of that total, 674 were foreign nationals and 867 were stateless persons. As a result of the review of applications, residence permits were issued to 1,421 persons, including 952 stateless persons (635 women and 317 men) and 469 foreign nationals (269 women and 214 men).

115. In the last five years (2019–2023), 205 stateless persons (172 women, 23 men) have applied to the Passport and Registration Service for citizenship; 70 of those applications are pending.

116. In order to determine the extent of statelessness in the country, the Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees launched a national pilot project in 2014, as part of the overall ten-year campaign to eradicate statelessness, to provide assistance for persons at risk of statelessness and for stateless persons who have had problems obtaining identity documents.

117. Between 2014 and the present day, suboffices providing the infrastructure for the Ministry of Internal Affairs together with partners in Tajikistan of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and civil society organizations working in the cities and districts of Tajikistan, in Sughd and Khatlon provinces and in the Rasht Valley, up to 35,166 people (29,633 women, 5,533 men) who had been under threat of statelessness (they lacked a passport of the Republic of Tajikistan issued on the basis of a birth certificate or passport of a former citizen of the Soviet Union, or were undocumented) were helped to obtain a passport of the Republic of Tajikistan.

118. Analysis shows that 84 per cent of those who had received passports were women living in remote rural areas.

119. Since the adoption of Act No. 1652 of the Republic of Tajikistan, of 18 December 2019, regarding an amnesty to regularize the legal status of stateless persons and foreign nationals residing illegally in Tajikistan, which was in force until 25 December 2022, the main share of stateless persons who received residence permits was made up of women.

120. The amnesty law has expired, but on the basis of Article 40 regarding rules governing foreign citizens and stateless persons entering, staying in, departing from and transiting through the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan, in accordance with Government Decree No. 207 of 31 March 2020, stateless persons born in the territory of the former Soviet Union and residing in Tajikistan with invalid documents have the right to apply for permanent residence in Tajikistan and obtain a residence permit. Stateless women who have not submitted documents in accordance with the amnesty law may obtain a residence permit in accordance with the law and subsequently apply for Tajik citizenship under a simplified procedure.

121. Despite the fact that Tajikistan is not a party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Government is taking measures to implement some provisions of these conventions, such as obtaining residence permits for stateless persons and the right to obtain a travel document to leave the country.

122. Since the adoption of Act No. 1652 of the Republic of Tajikistan, of 18 December 2019, regarding an amnesty to regularize the legal status of stateless persons and foreign nationals residing illegally in Tajikistan, more than 200 people who received a residence permit have already received a series A certificate (travel document) and have gone home to their relatives. There are plans for the establishment of a working group, within the framework of the national plan of action covering the period 2023–2026 to implement the recommendations of the States members of the Human Rights Council, under the third cycle of the universal periodic review, to consider Tajikistan’s accession to the above-mentioned conventions.

## **L. Education**

### **Paragraph 5 of the concluding observations**

123. In order to attract girls, public and private secondary vocational schools are being established. Their number has reached 84, including 57 State and 27 non-State institutions.

124. According to statistical data of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, the number of girls in secondary vocational education institutions by year is:

- 2019 – 54,621 students;
- 2020 – 58,204 students;
- 2021 – 61,904 students;
- 2022 – 65,776 students;
- 2023 – 64,307 students.

125. Since the establishment of the presidential quota for the 2019–2020 academic years, 23,285 boys and girls (including more than 13,000 girls) from remote mountain towns and districts of the country have enrolled in higher education institutions under that quota.

126. From 2021–2022, more than 1,280 students (622 boys and 658 girls) have been enrolled under this quota. In 2022–2023, there are 1,285 students (624 boys and 661 girls) enrolled in vocational higher education institutions. Over the last 5 years, there has been an 8-per-cent increase in the proportion of girls in the senior grades in high school (10–11).

127. In recent years, the Ministry of Education and Science, in addition to providing a favourable environment in educational institutions, has paid special attention to the education of adults not attending school. For this purpose, decision No. 18/27 of the Council of the Ministry of Education and Science of 28 August 2014 established the State’s extramural general secondary education establishment for young adults and adults, under the Ministry of Education and Science; it has national status and is part of the structure of the Ministry. The establishment provides extramural training for students aged 18 years and older at the secondary and tertiary levels of education, on a contractual basis.

128. More than 600 students are enrolled in secondary and tertiary level education each year. Most of the establishment’s students are women and girls who have dropped out of school for various reasons. In the academic year 2021–2022, the establishment had 690 students, including 489 women and girls from distant cities and districts. After passing the matriculation certificate, 284 persons received a certificate of general basic education, and 346 persons who had completed 12 grades



received a certificate of general secondary education. Of the total number of graduates in 2022, 427 are girls.

129. In the current year, 774 students, 400 of them girls, have been admitted to the establishment.

130. Students with disabilities of the first and second categories are admitted as free students and are exempt from tuition fees. Students from low-income families can also attend by paying 50 per cent of the contract amount.

131. Furthermore, in order to cover rural women and girls who have missed education for various reasons, the establishment was set up in accordance with the Regulations on acquiring General Secondary Education without physical presence, issued in 2013 by a decision of the Council of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, and in accordance with the Regulations on the State extramural general secondary education establishment for young adults and adults, issued in 2017. In the last 5 years, the establishment has trained 2,260 women and girls from all corners of the country.

132. Dropping out of school because of early marriage or because of pregnancy is rare in secondary vocational education institutions, and in order to prevent this problem, the management of educational institutions includes the issue in the work plan of educational institutions and negotiates with parent committees to prevent early marriage of students.

133. Higher vocational education institutions regularly organize various educational activities and activities related to law and culture aimed at improving the social, economic and spiritual status of women and girls, promoting gender equality and preventing and combating domestic violence.

134. In order to strengthen the study of exact and natural sciences and mathematics, and the development of technical thinking among the younger generation and youth, the years 2020–2040 have been proclaimed in Tajikistan as the “two decades of learning and development of exact and natural sciences and mathematics in connection with science and education”. In 2020, a 2020–2025 Action Plan was approved to implement the proclamation of 2020–2040 as two decades of learning and development of exact and natural sciences and mathematics in connection with science and education. In 2021, the Strategy for learning and development of exact and natural sciences and mathematics in connection with science and education for the period up to 2030 was adopted.

135. According to statistics for the country’s higher education institutions, in the 2021–2022 academic years women have accounted for 32 per cent of students in science, for 26 per cent in computer science, for 26 per cent in management and for 22 per cent in economics and production engineering.

136. Currently, nearly 3,000 girls are enrolled in the technical and technological faculties of the country’s higher education institutions. The USAID Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development project, in partnership with Alif Academy, launched a course on computer fundamentals and programming for girls in 2020. Girls from Dushanbe, Khujand, Tursunzade, Panjakent and Isfara have participated in the course. A total of 104 girls completed the course, and some of them chose to specialize in information technology in the future.

137. The country has 128 public sports institutions and more than 2,500 private sports clubs, coordinated by the Committee on Youth and Sports, at which men and women actively engage in sport.

138. In 2022 and the first half of 2023, 6,862 female athletes actively participated in various sports competitions that took place in the country.

139. The national government actively supports women's participation in professional sports. Women's national teams and individual athletes represent the country in international competitions. Thus, in 2023 alone, more than 70 medals from international competitions were won by Tajik female athletes.

140. The National Taekwondo and Kickboxing Federation and the Badminton Federation of Tajikistan, which actively promote the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination among athletes, have been engaged to popularize women's participation in sports with the support of development partners, in particular UNFPA and UN-Women. As a result, girl athletes are becoming world champions in professional sports. To encourage athletes, the Mayor of Dushanbe has established the "Personal Housing" prize for victories at Olympic championships.

141. In 2021, more than 43,810 people of various professions from ministries, committees, departments and institutions, as well as a wide range of youth, athletes and local residents, of whom 16,310 were women, actively participated in the National Run in the national capital alone. In 2022, 45,230,000 people, 17,524 of them women, participated in the nationwide race.

142. In 2022, a cycling marathon was held in Dushanbe with 1,320 participants, 150 of them women. In 2023, the same competition had 1,560 participants, 200 of them women. In 2023, Dushanbe hosted national running and cycling competitions in honor of Tajik Youth Day. A total of 53,700 people, more than 17800 of them women, took part in the National Run.

## **M. Employment**

### **Paragraph 6 of the concluding observations**

143. In accordance with the requirements of Government decision No. 675, of 30 December 2011, amending and supplementing Government decision No. 181, of 2 April 2009, approving the rules for establishing a quota for employment of certain population groups in enterprises, organizations and institutions of whatever form of ownership or management (if employing no less than 20 people), the quota is set at 6 per cent of the total number of employees.

144. These rules have been developed on the basis of Article 9 "additional employment guarantees for certain population groups" of the Act on the promotion of employment, and they determine the procedure for establishing a quota for employment of certain sections of the population.

145. A sectoral analysis of this process indicates that the holders of such jobs break down as follows: 124 are disabled; 8 are orphaned minors; 498 have been discharged from the military; 178 have been released from criminal detention institutions and compulsory treatment institutions; 1,100 are single parents and persons bringing up minor children and disabled persons; 997 are parents with more than 5 minor children; 78 are persons under 18 years of age whose parents or other persons holding custody over the family have died; 233 are individuals eligible for age-related payments who have to years left before retirement; 1,544 are people under 18 and youth directed to work by a State employment agency following completion of their studies as an educational establishment.

146. A wage survey conducted in sectors with a high concentration of women provided the basis for determining the measures set out in the Government decision No. 630, of 14 October 2014, establishing the procedure and conditions for the payment of benefits for temporary incapacity for work, and for pregnancy, birth and family allowances.

147. Breaks taken to feed a child can be taken not only by women, but also by a father or other legal representative raising a child under the age of one and a half without a mother.

148. In connection with the implementation of the recommendations of the European Union regarding the inclusion of Tajikistan in the GSP Plus system, for the abolition or revision of the list of work which is prohibited for women, the Ministry has prepared a draft decision of the Government of Tajikistan listing the areas of work in which the use of women's labour is prohibited and the maximum number of manual handling loads allowed for women, and revision of the order, which is at the stage of agreement by the relevant ministries and departments.

149. The 336 occupations prohibited to women have been reduced to about 194 as a result of the recognition of automation of production processes and improvement of working conditions, and also in order to give women access to relevant occupations and increase profitability, as well as meeting the requirements of international standards.

150. Women now face fewer legal constraints than in 2010, according to the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law (WBL) index, which has improved over the past few years. Tajikistan improved its WBL rating through the introduction in July 2016 of a new Labour Code which allows women to work at night on an equal basis with men, and through the adoption on 19 March 2013 of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act. According to the 2020 WBL index, women in Tajikistan today face fewer legal restrictions than do women in the rest of Central Asia.

151. In connection with working conditions for women and men, as well as State childcare institutions, article 102 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan provides that every employee has the right to annual paid leave. Pursuant to article 224 (6) of the Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, which determines the length of prior service necessary for such annual paid leave, time spent on parental leave is disregarded.

152. If an employee wishes to resume work before the end of unpaid leave to care for a child under three years of age, that employee must notify the employer one month in advance.

153. In accordance with the provisions of article 225 (1) of the Labour Code, an employer may not refuse to hire a woman on the grounds of pregnancy or having children, or establish a reduction in wages. That applies also to women with children under three years of age, to single mothers raising children, and to single mothers who have a child under the age of fourteen (or a disabled child under the age of sixty).

154. The Labour Code of the Republic of Tajikistan establishes quotas to provide work for those in need of social protection. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of article 225 (2) of the Labour Code, employers are obliged to hire women employed against the quota established.

155. In accordance with articles 68 and 219 of the Labour Code, women whose family circumstances so require and women with a child under 14 years of age work less than a full working day with no reduction in pay.

156. In accordance with the national development strategy for the period to 2030, preschool education is to cover a target level of 50 per cent of children. Currently, national coverage is about 15 per cent.

157. With regard to support and encouragement to stimulate the transition of women entrepreneurs from the informal to the formal sector, it should be noted that a great deal of attention has been paid to studying the labour market, employment and unemployment issues, especially among women and youth. On this basis, the

Government of Tajikistan has, during the period in question, consistently implemented socially-oriented medium-term State programmes to promote employment.

158. Government decision No. 135, of 28 March 2023, regarding the 2023–2027 State programme to promote employment contains a separate chapter on promoting the employment of women.

159. In the first half of 2023, 36,935 women applied to labour and employment agencies; 27,684 were registered as job seekers and 14,897 were given official status as unemployed.

160. During this period, 18,816 unemployed women, which is 48.5 per cent of the total number of unemployed (38,726), were provided with permanent jobs with the help of labour and employment agencies.

161. To support women's and young people's entrepreneurial activities, financial assistance was also paid to 775 women in the amount of 2,844,337 somoni and to 508 young people in the amount of 1,869,704 somoni.

162. The draft State programme for women's entrepreneurship is currently under consideration by the Government of Tajikistan.

163. A strategy for learning and development of exact and natural sciences and mathematics in connection with science and education for the period up to 2030 has been adopted. Currently, nearly 3,000 girls are enrolled in the technical and technological faculties of the country's higher education institutions.

164. With the support of development partners, programmes aimed at attracting girls to information and communication technology professions are being implemented.

## **N. Health**

### **Paragraph 5 of the concluding observations**

165. Reducing maternal and infant mortality by 2030 is a global health priority and is highlighted in the Tajikistan health strategy for the period up to 2030. One of the directions of the strategy is to improve access and quality of services for mothers, children and adolescents, and to reduce infant, child and maternal mortality.

166. Official statistics indicate that the country has made significant progress in improving maternal and child health indicators. The maternal mortality rate had decreased from 97.7 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 24.1 per 100,000 live births in 2019. The global maternal mortality rate decreased by 2.8 per cent between 2005 and 2017, while Tajikistan's maternal mortality rate decreased by 4.2%.

167. According to 2022 data from the Statistics Agency, there are 8 obstetricians per 10,000 women of childbearing age 15–49.

168. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection has established a budget line for the purchase of contraceptives, and to date the Ministry's contribution to such purchases is about 20 per cent of the required financial resources, with an annual increase of 5 per cent. This step can be taken as a major achievement towards the sustainability of national family planning programmes.

169. Statistical evaluations place the number of people living with HIV at 15,100; the number of people living with HIV at the end of the first half of 2023 (11,311) is 74.9 per cent of the estimated number of people living with HIV in the country. Of the total:

- 1,554 people (9.9 per cent) were aged under 19;

- 12,748 (81.6 per cent) people were aged 19–49;
- 1,314 people (8.4 per cent) were aged 50 years or older.

170. The total number of people recorded as living with HIV in Tajikistan was 15,616. Of those:

- 23.0 per cent are in the city of Dushanbe – a total of 3,583, of which 2,361 (65.9 per cent) are men and 1,122 (34.1 per cent) are women);
- 18.7 per cent are in centrally administered cities and districts – a total of 2,922, of which 1,842 (63.0 per cent) are men and 1,080 (37.0 per cent) are women);
- 5.2 per cent are in the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region – a total of 810, of which 592 (73.0 per cent) are men and 218 (27.0 per cent) are women);
- 30.0% are in Khatlon province – a total of 4,694, of which 2,889 (61.5 per cent) are men and 1,805 (38.5 per cent) are women);
- 23.1% are in Sughd province – a total of 3,607, of which 2,260 (62.7 per cent) are men and 1,347 (37.3 per cent) are women).

171. According to official statistics, in the first half of 2023, 587 new HIV cases (adults and children) were detected in the country.

172. Labour migration also negatively affects the provision of quality antiretroviral therapy services for nationals who travel to other countries for work.

173. In general, the decrease was due to a number of measures taken to optimize the treatment process and treatment monitoring, in particular, the transition to WHO recommendations on prescribing treatment to patients as soon as possible after diagnosis of HIV infection, expanded antiretroviral treatment coverage of pregnant women, and the approval and implementation of new national clinical guidance on treatment, care and support for HIV infection in adults, adolescents and children. According to the National Centre for HIV Prevention and Control, antiretroviral therapy coverage for patients in Tajikistan increased from 53.6 per cent in 2016 to 86 per cent in 2020.

174. UN-Women initiated and supported training for forensic and crisis centre representatives on procedures to provide services tailored to the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities during sexual and gender-based violence investigations.

175. On the basis of the National Programme for the Development of Youth Health in Tajikistan for 2006–2010 and the National Strategy for the Protection of Child and Adolescent Health for the period up to 2015, Youth Medical Consultation Units were established in the country, and by order No. 41 of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Tajikistan of 1 February 2010, regulations for medical consultation units were approved.

176. To date under this provision 21 counselling centres have been established at reproductive health centres. The goal of youth-friendly health services is to increase young people's access to information and quality health services, as well as other services that meet the definition and criteria of "youth-friendly" developed and adopted by the United Nations. Youth Medical Consultation Units provide primary specialized therapeutic, diagnostic and medical and social care to young people, including at-risk groups, aimed at preserving their sexual, reproductive and mental health by reducing risk behaviours relating to unwanted pregnancy, drug addiction, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

177. In 2021, an interdepartmental working group was established under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection to overcome existing barriers and strengthen the

supportive environment for an effective national response to the HIV epidemic. The implementation plan for the programme includes activities to revise existing legal and regulatory documents on the subject that are impeding an adequate national response to the HIV epidemic in the country, including revision of the provision prohibiting people living with HIV from obtaining medical training, adopting children and other action. In addition, national specialists are working to revise article 125 of the Criminal Code, and a draft decision has been developed by the Plenum of the Supreme Court on the consideration of criminal cases under that article, taking into account existing international practices, the achievement of viral suppression (undetectable = untransmittable), the use of condoms in sexual relations, and other considerations. The plan is to remove these barriers by the end of the current programme.

## **O. Economic empowerment and social benefits**

### **Paragraph 3 of the concluding observations**

178. International financial institutions together with credit and financial institutions of Tajikistan are implementing various programmes to support women entrepreneurs. Thus, according to statistics from the National Bank of Tajikistan for the first six months of 2023, a total of 1,660,740 people received loans; 32.4 per cent of them were women.

179. In order to support and develop small and medium-sized enterprises and build up financial resources, soft loans were allocated in 2021 through a grant from the Asian Development Bank to small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the field of services, trade, and handicrafts. The State unitary enterprise “Sanoatsodirotbank” has been allocated 50.0 million somoni in the form of soft loans, 30 per cent of which should be used to support women’s entrepreneurship.

180. Sanoatsodirotbank had allocated more than 2.2 million somoni for loans to women entrepreneurs as at 1 July 2023.

181. The Committee on Women and the Family, in collaboration with development partner UNFPA, developed a guide for Committee staff to conduct community outreach on equitable sharing of household responsibilities among family members.

182. Training sessions were conducted for the staff of departments, divisions and sectors of the Committee regarding equitable sharing of household responsibilities among family members; the guide was printed and distributed among the participants.

183. A video on equitable sharing of household responsibilities was developed and broadcast on television and social media.

184. According to data from the consolidated State population register, the total number of traders in the country as at 1 July 2023 was 345,364, including 89,273 women (26 per cent). Of the total number of traders, there are 47,111 individual entrepreneurs operating under a patent (including 27,688 women), 35,799 individual entrepreneurs operating under a certificate (including 6,880 women) and 54,440 individual entrepreneurs operating under a certificate with special conditions (including 1,372 women), 17,600 dehkan farms (including 3,764 women), and 33,414 legal entities (including 3,659 managed by women).

## P. Rural women

### Paragraph 3 of the concluding observations

185. **Education.** In 2017, the Adult Education Act of the Republic of Tajikistan, No. 1393, was adopted. Pursuant to Government decision No. 115 of 5 March 2008, a State Centre for Adult Education was established as part of the Labour and Employment Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Tajikistan. Currently, the State Centre has 34 branches across the country and provides training for 110 professions and specializations in demand in the labour market. In 15 years of operation, 443,362 nationals, 51.2 per cent of them women, have been trained at the State Centre.

186. **Health.** The primary health care system is being developed in order to provide citizens with walking-distance access to health care facilities, taking into account that more than 70 per cent of the country's population lives in rural areas. In rural areas, the basic primary health care institutions are the health centres, otherwise referred to as rural health centres. Primary health care institutions account overall for more than 70 per cent of all consultations nationwide. Health fairs are organized to provide access to rural women, especially those from remote areas. In 2022, six health fairs were organized in the target districts; they were staffed by obstetrician-gynecologists, legal psychologists and ultrasound specialists (gynecologists).

187. In 2021, the national strategy for promoting the role of women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021–2030 and a plan of action for 2021–2025 for the implementation of the national strategy were adopted.

188. The Ministry of Agriculture, with support from the USAID Feed the Future project, leverages the expertise and resources of several local organizations, companies and individuals to increase sustainability and improve livelihoods.

189. In particular, the action taken aims to increase smallholder farmers' incomes, women's economic empowerment and increased production and consumption of nutritious foods, while supporting livelihood diversification to build household and community resilience to shocks and stresses.

190. The project has also helped 741 women to secure land tenure rights and has raised awareness and legal literacy regarding land tenure rights and land reform for 5,554 women farmers.

191. The project is being implemented in collaboration with the World Bank to create a stable, more productive, climate-resilient and inclusive growth model for the agricultural sector. Strategic reforms in taxation, energy, telecommunications and macro-fiscal management are already underway to achieve this. In 2023, an updated Tax Code went into effect, reducing the number of taxes from 10 to 7. Ongoing reforms will create a favourable investment environment for private sector development.

192. The share of rural women in the country's population is 36.4 per cent. The population of women of working age is 2,026,500, and that of women over working age is 24,150.

## Q. Disadvantaged groups of women

### Paragraph 6 of the concluding observations

193. In accordance with the Act on social protection for persons with disabilities and Government decision No. 181, of 2 April 2009, approving the rules for establishing a

quota for employment of certain population groups in enterprises, organizations and institutions of whatever form of ownership or management (if employing no less than 20 people), the quota is set at 6 per cent, and covers employment of persons with disabilities.

194. Statistics indicate that 7,132 children with disabilities, 40.4 per cent of them girls, are enrolled in general education schools.

195. Youth Medical and Consultation Units have been established, and order No. 41 of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Tajikistan of 1 February 2010 adopted regulations for medical consultation units and created 21 counselling centres at reproductive health centres. The purpose of that action is to increase young people's access of to information and quality medical services, as well as their access to other services that meet the definition and criteria of "youth-friendly" developed and adopted by the United Nations. Youth Medical Consultation Units provide primary specialized therapeutic, diagnostic and medical and social care to young people, including at-risk groups, aimed at preserving their sexual, reproductive and mental health by reducing risk behaviours relating to unwanted pregnancy, drug addiction, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

196. The seventh national programme to counter the HIV epidemic in Tajikistan for the period 2021–2025 has been developed and adopted. The programme was approved by Government decision No. 50, of 27 February 2021.

197. National specialists are working to revise article 125 of the Criminal Code, and a draft decision has been developed by the Plenum of the Supreme Court on the consideration of criminal cases under that article, taking into account existing international practices, the achievement of viral suppression (undetectable = untransmittable), the use of condoms in sexual relations, and other considerations. The plan is to remove these barriers by the end of the current programme.

198. According to information provided by the Centre for Human Rights for 2022, there are 12 court cases pending with attorneys. Of this number, 6 criminal cases are related to article 125 of the Criminal Code, 6 cases are related to disclosure of status and compensation for moral harm, and 4 cases are related to the beating and rape of HIV-positive persons. There are also 4 reports under consideration by law enforcement agencies.

199. Between January and June 2023, 83 people, 26 men and 57 women, were advised through the hotline. During this period, 11 civil, family and criminal cases were referred to the Human Rights Centre. Attorneys were provided for all cases.

200. There are a number of institutions that support survivors of violence, regardless of their gender. Such institutions are the Committee on Women and the Family, the national social service centre for victims of trafficking in persons and domestic violence, which reports to the under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, as well as 21 civil society organizations. There are no data on the treatment of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.

201. The Jughis are concentrated in Dushanbe, Hissar district, and Khatlon and Sughd provinces. They are the focus of information and education activities. To date, work with the Jughis has been carried out by the civil society organization Marifati Shanrvandi, which engages with various stakeholders to build their capacity regarding inclusion and human rights practices. Work is also being conducted directly with representatives of the Jughis. The Committee on Women and the Family, in collaboration with Marifati Shanrvandi, plans to strengthen outreach to the Jughis, both women and men.



202. In general, discrimination against Pamiri women is not observed in the country. Historically, the level of education coverage, including higher education coverage, for women living in the Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region is high. Men and women from this area are represented in all ministries and departments. Examples of women's participation in politics and business include the following: the Ministry of Culture is headed by a woman, the chairperson of the Murghab district and deputy editor-in-chief of the State national newspaper is a woman, the deputy chairperson of the State Committee for Investment and State Property Management is a woman, and the deputy minister for energy is a woman. Women are also represented in business: the head of Alif-Bank is a woman, the deputy of the first microfinance bank is a woman, and so on.

203. The issue of the revision of Government resolutions No. 325 and No. 328 is under consideration.

204. In order to achieve these goals and to help address the issues of labour migrants and migration processes in Tajikistan, the national strategy for the regulation of migratory processes for the period to 2040 was developed and was adopted by the Government of Tajikistan on 30 June 2023. It provides for a number of measures to support the families of labour migrants.

205. Also, a project on empowerment of families left behind, for improved migration outcomes, is currently being implemented in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration.

206. The project on empowerment of families left behind, for improved migration outcomes, is being implemented in the city of Kulyab, and the Dusti district of Khatlon province, with the main goal of improving the welfare of poor families of labour migrants, increasing their economic stability, eliminating gender barriers, protecting the rights of women and children of labour migrants; it also includes activities in the field of medical and psychological services, effective use of land and water resources, exploring alternative sources of income through the development of skills and access to employment, improving the ability to manage debt, information on access to services relating to domestic violence and access to education and social services.

## **R. Marriage and family relations**

### **Paragraph 4 of the concluding observations**

207. Article 13 of the Family Code sets the legal age for marriage at 18 years. In exceptional cases, a court may, at the request of the persons wishing to marry, lower the age of marriage indicated in that article, for men and women, by no more than one year.

208. As part of the work of the working subgroup of the Committee on Women and the Family relating to the elimination of gender stereotypes, it has been proposed to amend the Family Code of the Republic of Tajikistan and to delete part 2 of article 13 regarding lowering the age of marriage.

209. In the period from 2018 to 2022, the courts of the Republic considered 14,625 family cases relating to lowering the age of marriage; 14,478 applications were granted, and 147 applications were denied.

210. There is no concept of "virginity tests" in the legislation of Tajikistan and it is not mandatory for future married couples. This test is optional for couples and is a free choice of the newlyweds.

211. Under article 177 of the Criminal Code, criminal liability is incurred for the malicious (that is, carrying no valid reason) evasion by parents of court-ordered payments for the maintenance of minor children or of children unfit for work who have reached the age of 18.

212. Analysis in the field of collection of alimony and the cases processed periodically by the enforcement authorities indicates a total of 91,780 enforcement documents related to the collection of alimony; for 2020, 2021, 2022 and the first six months of 2023 alone, more than 101.2 million somoni were collected for mothers and children. With regard to malicious evasion of alimony payments by debtors in the first six months of 2023, criminal proceedings were initiated by the procurator's office against 399 individuals on the basis of documents submitted by enforcement authorities in accordance with the requirements of article 177 of the Criminal Code. The enforcement authorities are pursuing 392 debtors for late payment of alimony and for concealment of their address.

213. Within the structure of the enforcement authorities, there is a department for maintaining an electronic database register of debtors, created in order to track debts and prevent undesirable consequences of such debts. Agents of the enforcement authorities in cities and districts of the Republic of Tajikistan have placed 7,303 individual debtors on the register.

214. Pursuant to article 47 of the Enforcement Proceedings Act, which relates to temporary restrictions on the travel of debtors outside Tajikistan, the travel of 10,500 individuals has been restricted. These actions have yielded positive results, and in the first half of 2023 alone, 758 debtors (payers of alimony) were unable to cross the country's border and paid more than 5.9 million somoni for mothers and children.

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