



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

Distr.: General
3 August 2023

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

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

**Ninth periodic report submitted by Viet Nam under
article 18 of the Convention, due in 2019***

[Date received: 12 May 2023]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



A. General issues

I. Background information about Viet Nam

1. The population of Viet Nam amounts to more than 96,208,984 people, of which 49.8 per cent are men and 50.2 per cent are women, with a sex ratio of 99.1 men to 100 women. There is a rural–urban divide in the sex ratio whereby in urban areas there are 96.5 men to 100 women, and in rural areas there are 100.5 men to 100 women. The average annual population growth rate from 2009 to 2019 was 1.14 per cent annually. In Viet Nam, the sex ratio at birth in 2019 was 111.5 boys for every 100 girls. The average life expectancy of the Vietnamese population is 73.6 years, with a median of 71.0 years for men and 76.3 years for women. Viet Nam has an increasing proportion of women in its ageing population. In 2019, there were 109 women for every 100 men in the 80+ group (48.6 men for every 100 women).¹

2. The Human Development Index of Viet Nam in 2019 was 0.693. With a gender development index at 1,003, Viet Nam belongs to the top group out of five groups of 166 countries in the world, and Viet Nam is ranked 68 out of 162 countries on the Gender Development Index.

3. Viet Nam is in the process of deep integration into the global economy, attracting investment capital as well as exploiting domestic and international market opportunities to promote economic growth. Implementing the Socio-economic Development Strategy 2011–2020, the economy of Viet Nam enjoyed a relatively stable growth rate. The average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate in 2016–2019 was more than 6 per cent per annum in 2020, despite having been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy of Viet Nam still grew by 2.91 per cent. The economic structure of Viet Nam in 2020 was as follows: the agricultural, forestry and fishery sector accounted for 14.85 per cent; the industrial and construction sector accounted for 33.72 per cent; the service sector accounted for 41.63 per cent; and product tax minus product subsidies accounted for 9.8 per cent (the economic structure in 2019 was 13.96 per cent; 34.49 per cent; 41.64 per cent; and 9.91 per cent, respectively).

4. Viet Nam completed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ahead of the 2015 deadline while achieving a sharp reduction in the poverty rate over the past 15 years. Progress towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women has improved significantly.

5. In parallel with economic development, Viet Nam paid special attention to and prioritized resources for social development and attained many encouraging achievements. The number of people receiving jobs increased; within five years (from 2011 to 2015) jobs were created for about 7.8 million people, in which women workers account for about 48 per cent of the total. Moreover, unemployment remained low at below 4 per cent. While Viet Nam has achieved the universalization of preschool education for 5-year-old children and those at primary or lower secondary levels.²

6. Since 2016, Viet Nam has made the transition from acceding to the MDGs to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals include ending extreme poverty, combating injustice and inequality, and responding to climate change. The SDGs elevate the MDGs by not only addressing the problem of poverty but also its root causes. A human rights-based approach is adopted as the fundamental

¹ Findings of the Population and Housing Census in 2019.

² Report on assessment of results of implementation of five-year socio-economic development tasks in 2011–2015 and five-year socio-economic development directions and tasks in 2016–2020 of the Government.

mechanism for the planning, monitoring and implementation of the SDGs. Differences between population groups and issues related to children are more clearly reflected in the SDGs. Child poverty is specified in the SDGs in conjunction with issues of social protection, minors or juveniles, child nutrition and health, and maternal health and mortality.³

7. Increasing emphasis has been placed on people's health care. For instance, the public health network has been consolidated and upgraded, preventive medicine activities are now being promoted, and several newly emerged diseases were quickly and promptly overcome. Viet Nam pays special attention to vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, ethnic minorities, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities. For each target group, Viet Nam has specific priority mechanisms and policies to protect, support and create opportunities for each group to develop and integrate into the social life in a sustainable way.

8. Viet Nam has been striving to address poverty comprehensively, not only reducing poverty in ethnic minority areas but also paying attention to narrowing inequality, specifically: before 2015 Viet Nam exercised a poverty reduction policy in line with the single-dimensional poverty criteria. Since 2016, as recommended by UNDP, Viet Nam has shifted its poverty policy from a single to a multi-dimensional approach, whereby poverty is not only expressed in terms of "income/expenditure" but also in terms of access to education, health care, housing, sanitation, clean water and information.⁴ The multidimensional poverty rate also sharply decreased from 2016 to 2020. Over the past 5 years, the lives of the vast majority of people have improved, especially women, children, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. The national poverty rate decreases by an average of 2 per cent per year and Viet Nam is recognized as one of the leading countries in hunger eradication and poverty reduction, and in achieving the MDGs.

9. Viet Nam's socio-economic development strategy (2011–2020) has focused on building and improving human capacity as well as effectively promoting human resources in country's development in alignment with the objective to have "Prosperous people, strong country, equitable, democratic, civilized society, prosperous and happy family". Implementing this Strategy also creates favourable conditions for the Government of Viet Nam to effectively implement its commitments to CEDAW.

10. Viet Nam is also in the process of building a modern social protection system, the core of which is a system of social insurance and social assistance policies. Social assistance policy is a measure and an impact tool to achieve the goal of ensuring life safety for part of the population who unfortunately live in difficult circumstances. Accordingly, life cycle based social assistance policies will ensure consistency and harmony with other social security policies, especially social insurance, health insurance and unemployment insurance policies. Social insurance has expanded its coverage, ensuring a sustainable social insurance fund in the long term to guarantee social security rights for all, while helping to reduce the burden on the state budget. Free legal aid is also a social assistance policy which is aimed at protecting the vulnerable and the poor while ensuring social security.

11. Although significant milestones have been achieved, various challenges and hindrances still remain for Viet Nam's socio-economic development, such as uneven socio-economic development across regions, maintaining macroeconomic stability, restructuring the economy, transforming growth models to avoid falling into the

³ Source: UNICEF, 2015.

⁴ Decision No. 1614/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister dated 15 September 2015 on the transformation of poverty measurement approach from unidimensional to multidimensional; Decision No. 59/2015/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister dated 19 November 2015 on promulgating the multi-dimensional poverty line 2016–2020.

middle-income trap, controlling inflation, ensuring social security, pursuing sustainable development, strengthening competitive capabilities, raising per capita income. In addition, climate change, natural disasters and epidemics (particularly the COVID-19 pandemic), the global economic recession has also significantly affected production and people's lives as well as the implementation of strategies aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in Viet Nam.

II. Organizational structure and political institutions of Viet Nam

12. In the sphere of GE, the Government performs the unified state management of GE work. The National Committee for the Advancement of Women was established to assist the Prime Minister in this work with an effort to coordinate the activities among ministries and sectors. The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is the agency that assists the Government in the state management on GE; sociopolitical organizations, especially the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) and women's unions at all levels, play a very important role in executing and monitoring the performance of work to achieve GE by state agencies.

III. A common framework to protect and promote actions against all forms of discrimination against women

Implementing international agreements and commitments and fostering international and regional cooperation frameworks pertaining to gender equality and women's rights

13. Viet Nam has ratified seven among the nine core United Nations conventions on human rights, namely the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

14. Viet Nam is also a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and has so far acceded to 25 ILO Conventions, including seven of the eight fundamental conventions and two fundamental conventions directly pertinent to the elimination of discrimination, which are the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

15. Viet Nam attaches great importance to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the Human Rights Council. To date, Viet Nam has presented the national report under the first cycle of UPR in 2009; the second cycle in 2014 and the third cycle in 2018. Viet Nam has seriously implemented the UPR recommendations that Viet Nam accepted, introducing a National Master Plan for the implementation of Viet Nam's accepted UPR third cycle recommendations of the United Nations Human Rights Council, and having launched a voluntary UPR mid-term report on the implementation of these recommendations in March 2022, which includes the issues related to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

16. Viet Nam has earnestly and proactively contributed to the content on GE, advancement of women's rights and roles in the United Nations forums on human rights, such as the Committee on social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues (3rd Committee of the General Assembly), Human Rights Council and the Commission

on the Status of Women. At the United Nations Security Council, Viet Nam also actively contributed to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Viet Nam has seriously implemented the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In the region, Viet Nam has participated in and made contributions within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on women's cooperation, fostering various regional initiatives and efforts on protecting women's rights and empowerment, preventing and combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children; meanwhile, making active contributions at regional and interregional forums on women, including the Global Summit of Women, the Eurasian Women's Forum, as well as the discussion sessions on GE at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women's forums under Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

17. Viet Nam commits to comply with international treaties to which Viet Nam is a member. Simultaneously, the application of legal documents in the country must not impede the implementation of international treaties to which the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is a signatory. In cases where a domestic legal document and an international treaty to which the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is a signatory contain divergent provisions on the same issue, the provisions of such international treaty shall prevail, except the Constitution.⁵ Based on the requirements, contents and nature of the international treaty, the National Assembly, the State President and the Government, when deciding to accept the binding of the treaty while deciding to directly apply the whole or a part of that international treaty for agencies, organizations or individuals in cases where the provisions of the international treaty are clear enough and detailed enough for execution; shall decide or propose to amend, supplement, annul or enact a legal normative document for the execution of such international treaty.⁶

Legal framework for gender equality at the national level

18. From 2015 to present, Viet Nam has been making efforts to amend, supplement and issue documents to meet the requirements of CEDAW, specifically as follows:

- The Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (2015), amended and supplemented in 2020 (hereinafter referred to as the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents in 2015), prescribes the principles of formulation and promulgation of legal documents to ensure gender mainstreaming in legal documents; and establish the requirements for administrative procedures reform (article 5);
- The Law on Election of Deputies to the National Assembly and People's Councils 2015 stipulates that women constitute at least 35 per cent of the total number of candidates on the official list of the National Assembly and at least 35 per cent of the total number of candidates on the official list of the People's Council are women;
- The Law on Organization of the Government 2015 stipulates that GE is one of the principles of the organization and operation of the Government; specifies the Government's duties and powers in ensuring equal rights for men and women in politics, the economy, culture, society and family issues; stipulates, in principle, the Government's duties and powers in the health and social sectors to ensure equal rights for men and women in every aspect;
- The Penal Code (2015), amended and supplemented in 2017 (hereinafter referred to as the Penal Code 2015), stipulates a series of principles of the criminal policy for dealing with those who commit crimes. One of these principles deeply reflects the spirit of the Constitution on GE, which is that "all individuals who commit crimes are equal before the law regardless of gender,

⁵ Clause 5 article 156 of the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (2015).

⁶ Article 6 of the Law on International treaties in 2016.

ethnicity, belief, religion, social circumstances and status” (article 3). In addition, the Penal Code (2015) contains amendments to the constitution of crimes that infringe upon women’s equal rights. The Penal Code (2015) also contains a number of provisions related to the protection of women’s rights in general, including groups of offences: (a) sexual abuse; (b) human trafficking; (c) sex work; and (d) infringement on the regime of marriage and the family. The Penal Code (2015) also provides new stipulations on several special measures to protect mothers and children in criminal law;

- The Civil Code (2015): In order to continue ensuring women’s rights to equality in civil relations before the law, this Code stipulates that all individuals are equally protected by law in terms of personal and property rights. In particular, the Civil Code (2015) stipulates the right to gender reassignment (article 36), gender affirmation or transitioning (article 37), change the name of a person who has their gender re-assigned or transitioned (article 28);
- The Law on Legal Aid (2017) marks an important milestone in completing the legal aid institutions in particular and implementing the Constitution 2013 in general, especially the provisions on human rights, the basic rights and obligations of citizens, rights of access to justice, equality before the law, non-discrimination towards legal aid beneficiaries, most specifically women and girls, helping them to access and enjoy free state legal aid services in criminal, civil and administrative areas; ensuring that they are truly equal before the law and have access to justice to protect their legitimate rights and interests. The Law on Legal Aid (2017) reflects the issue of GE and the protection of the rights of “disadvantaged” people, including women and girls;
- The Law on Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (2017) defines a woman-owned small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) as an SME in which one or more women own 51 per cent or more of its charter capital, of whom there is at least one executive officer managing the business.⁷ Priority is given to supporting women-owned SMEs, and those SMEs that employ more women;
- The Law on Statistics, amended in 2015, introduces a number of indicators, which are included in the National Gender Development Indicators Set, into the Law. Then, the Ministry of Planning and Investment issued Circular No. 10/2019/TT-BKHDT stipulating the National Gender Development Statistical Indicators Set with 78 indicators; this was also a step forward and showed Viet Nam’s strong commitment to GE;
- The amended Law on the State Budget (2015) sets out the principle of confirming the budget allocation to realize the GE goal as a priority and requires GE budgeting in the formulation of annual state budget estimates;
- The Labour Code, amended in 2019, and came into effect from January 2021, with many progressive revisions to protect and ensure equal rights of women workers, men workers; combat gender-based discrimination in employment, recruitment, labour contracts, salaries, wages, working hours, occupational safety, occupational hygiene;
- Article 8 of the Education Law, revised in 2019, stipulates educational programmes must ensure the scientific and practical criteria meet GE goals and international integration requirements. The educational programmes are the basis for ensuring the quality of comprehensive education;
- The Law on Children (2016) stipulates that the family, society, economic organizations, social organizations and the State have a responsibility to ensure

⁷ Clause 1, Article 3 of the Law on Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (2017).

the implementation of children's rights and obligations, without discrimination, in the best interests of the children, ensuring equality between girls and boys. It is necessary to respectfully listen to children's opinions when formulating policies on children, and children must be consulted.

19. Currently, the law on domestic violence prevention and control is being formulated (in substitution of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control in 2008) with amendments aimed at concretizing domestic violence acts and consolidating and intensifying more domestic violence prevention and control mechanisms. In particular, the draft law has supplemented the definition of "gender-based domestic violence", and supplemented emergency and long-term forms of support regarding employment, mental and psychological health for survivors of domestic violence.

The national action framework related to gender equality

20. From 2015 to 2019, the Government of Viet Nam implemented various strategies and action plans which clearly identified the objectives on GE and integrated the promotion of GE. These changes have contributed to improving women's position in the family, community and society; they have enhanced their access to social services, especially women and girls in rural, ethnic minority and mountainous areas; and human trafficking, mainly in women and girls, was mitigated. The main implemented strategies and action programmes include:

- National Strategy on Gender Equality (2011–2020);
- National Program on Gender Equality (2016–2020);
- Decision No. 668/QĐ-TTg dated 16 May 2017 by the Prime Minister approving the plan to implement recommendations of the CEDAW Committee;
- Program on preventing and combating human trafficking (Program 130/CP) 2016–2020;
- National Action Program for Children 2012–2020;
- National Action Program on the Elderly 2011–2020;
- National Target Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2016–2020;
- National Target Program on New Rural Development 2016–2020;
- Socioeconomic Development Program for Extremely Difficult Communes 2016–2020;
- National Target Program on Social Assistance System Development 2016–2020.

21. Apart from the above-mentioned national target programs, the Government also implemented various schemes directly related to GE, including:

- Program on the 'Enhancement of Women's Equal Participation in Leading and Management Positions at Policy-Making Levels 2011–2030';⁸
- Scheme on the Implementation of Measures to Ensure Gender Equality for Women Officials, Civil Servants and Public Employees 2016–2020;⁹

⁸ Decision No. 2282/QĐ-TTg issued on 31 December 2020 by the Prime Minister approving Program on "Enhancement of Women's Equal Participation in Leading and Management Positions at Policy-Making Levels 2021–2030".

⁹ Decision No. 515/QĐ-TTg issued on 31 March 2016 by the Prime Minister approving the Scheme on the Implementation of Measures to Ensure Gender Equality for Women Officials, Civil Servants and Public Employees 2016–2020.

- Scheme on Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence 2016–2020 with Vision to 2030;¹⁰
- Scheme on Reduction of Child Marriage and Close-kin Marriage in Ethnic Minority areas 2015–2025;¹¹
- National Strategy on Population and Reproductive Health 2011–2020 (Decision No. 2013/QD-TTg dated 14 November 2011);
- Viet Nam Population Strategy to 2030 (Decision No. 1679/QD-TTg dated 22 November 2019);
- Policies on support for ethnic minority women in poor households during childbirth in accordance with Viet Nam’s population policy (Decree No. 39/2015/ND-CP dated 27 April 2015);
- Scheme on Controlling Sex Imbalance at Birth 2016–2025 (Decision No. 468/QD-TTg dated 23 March 2016).

22. In addition to the above programmes and schemes, other national programmes of Viet Nam were instituted by the Prime Minister to integrate GE and administrative reform objectives so that people have access to the policies and support resources of such programmes.

IV. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

23. Viet Nam realized the achievement of MDGs¹² by 2015, including some targets related to women and GE as described below:

- *MDG 1 – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:* The poverty rate was reduced from 59 per cent of the population in the early 1990s to 4.5 per cent in 2015, using a single-dimension poverty criteria. As per the Steering Committee on the National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2016–2020, as of the end of 2019, the poverty rate in the whole country had been 3.75 per cent, an average reduction of 1.53 per cent annually over four years;
- *MDG 2 – Achieve universal primary education:* Viet Nam achieved a universal primary education rate of 96 per cent in the mid-2000s. This rate was later increased to 99 per cent in 2014. The quality, equality and inclusion of education in Viet Nam is improving;
- *MDG 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women:* There was no remarkable difference between the two genders in the rate of literacy and the rate of completion of all educational levels. The role of Vietnamese women in education and employment is becoming increasingly important;
- *MDG 4 – Reduce child mortality:* The mortality rate of children under 1 year old (per 1,000 live births) was reduced from 14.5 per cent in 2015 to 14.0 per cent in 2019. The mortality of children under 5 years old (per 1,000 live births) declined from 22.1 per cent in 2015 to 21 per cent (in 2019).¹³ Thus, infant mortality dropped by 2.5 times;

¹⁰ Decision No. 1464/QD-TTg issued on 22 July 2016 by the Prime Minister approving the “Scheme on “Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence 2016–2020 and Vision to 2030”.

¹¹ Decision No. 498/ QD-TTg issued on 14 April 2015 by the Prime Minister approving the “Reduction of child marriage and close-kin marriage in ethnic minority areas 2015–2025”.

¹² Country report – 15 years achieving the Viet Nam Millennium Development Goals.

¹³ The Program Documents for the National Action Program for children 2021–2030.

- *MDG 5 – Improve maternal health*: The maternal mortality ratio fell from 52.8 per 100,000 live births (in 2015) to 46 per 100,000 live births (in 2019). The ratio of teenage pregnancies to the total number of pregnancies declined from 2.9 per cent (in 2010) to 2.4 per cent (in 2019). The national contraception rate was 75.7 per cent and these targets were further improved in 2016–2020.

24. The MDG achievement has made an important contribution to improving women's living conditions and quality of life, creating opportunities for women to participate in socio-economic activities, promoting equality between men and women, especially for groups of poor, rural, ethnic minority and mountainous women.

V. Execution of the National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) and Goal 5 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁴

25. In order to successfully realize the objectives and targets of NSGE 2011–2020, the Prime Minister issued the National Action Program on Gender Equality 2016–2020; the Scheme on the communication and education of Vietnamese women's dignity and morality during the enhanced industrialization and modernization process; the Scheme on Controlling Sex Imbalance at Birth 2016–2025; the Scheme on the Implementation of Measures to Ensure Gender Equality for Women Officials, Civil Servants and Public Employees 2016–2020; the Scheme on the Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence 2016–2020 with a vision to 2030; and the Scheme on support for gender equality in ethnic minority areas 2018–2025.

26. In parallel with the realization of the objectives under the NSGE, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 622/QĐ-TTg dated 10 May 2017 regarding the national action plan for implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and Decision No. 681/QĐ-TTg dated 4 June 2019 regarding the roadmap for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the targets of GE, empowerment and opportunity creation for women and girls.

27. The results of the implementation of the national objectives on GE and Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are provided below.

Objective 1: To intensify women's holding of managerial and leading positions, aiming to gradually narrow gender gap in the political domain (SDG 5 target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and social life)

28. Although the rate of women's participation from 2016 to 2020 did not reach the 25 per cent target as identified in the Strategy, it was higher than it had been from 2011 to 2015.

29. The 2015–2020 term was the first time when there were three women in the Politburo (accounting for 15.78 per cent). Women made up 14.3 per cent of the secretariat. For the party committees at central level agencies (including central level agencies, centrally run enterprises, overseas agencies), 10.7 per cent of executive committee members and 19.4 per cent of standing committee members were women. At the provincial level, 14.2 per cent of executive committee members and 10.9 per cent of the standing committee members were women. From 2016 to 2020, 10 out of 63 secretaries¹⁵ and 14 out of 128 deputy secretaries of provincial party committees nationwide were women.

¹⁴ National Report 2020 on implementation of the National Target Program on Gender Equality and the National Review on the Implementation of SDGs by 2030.

¹⁵ Lai Chau, Lang Son, Ninh Binh, Vinh Phuc, An Giang, Yen Bai, Ha Nam, Thai Nguyen, Quang Ngai, Bac Ninh.

Women's participation in the National Assembly and People's Councils at different levels

30. Women deputies of the 13th National Assembly accounted (2010–2015) for 24.2 per cent (reduced by 1.3 per cent compared with 25.76 per cent in the 12th National Assembly) and this rate was lower than in the four previous terms. However, women deputies of the 14th National Assembly (2016–2021) made up 27.31 per cent, an increase of 3.11 per cent compared with the 13th National Assembly, and the 14th National Assembly was the first with a chairwoman. The proportion of women representatives in the People's Councils at three levels (provincial, district and commune) from 2016 to 2021 was higher than from 2010 to 2015.

31. During the 2016–2021 term, the rate of women representation in the provincial People's Council was 30 per cent or higher in 16 out of 63 provinces/cities and the rate was 20–30 per cent in 26 out of 63 provinces and cities. Tuyen Quang Province had the highest rate (46.55 per cent) of women representation in its provincial People's Council. Eight provinces had Chairwomen and 31 provinces had Vice Chairwomen in their provincial People's Councils. However, the rate of women's representation in the provincial People's Councils and district People's Councils varies among provinces, some provinces achieve the rate of less than 15 per cent. No provinces reached the women's representation rate of 30 per cent in their commune People's Councils; the rate of women's representation in their commune People's Councils was 20–29.5 per cent in 43 out of 63 provinces and cities. Ha Giang Province had the highest rate of women representatives (29.11 per cent) in the commune People's Councils. Although the percentage of women representatives in the People's Councils at different levels rose in the 2016–2020 term, it did not achieve the target rate of 30 per cent as set in the Strategy.

Percentage of women leaders in ministries, ministerial agencies and People's Committees at different levels

32. The set target was that by 2020 more than 95 per cent of ministries, ministerial-level agencies, Government agencies and People's Committees at different levels would have key women leaders. However, this target was not achieved although the number of women leaders from 2016 to 2020 was higher than from 2011 to 2015.

33. By the end of September 2020, the ratio of ministries, ministerial-level agencies, Government agencies and People's Committees at different levels with women leaders reached 40 per cent (12 out of 30), among which, there are 12 women vice ministers out of 116 ministers in these ministries, ministerial agencies and Government agencies.

34. At the beginning of the 2016–2021 term, key women leaders made up 32.14 per cent, 32.64 per cent and 21.95 per cent at provincial, district and commune level, respectively.

35. By September 2020, women accounted for 2 of the 63 chairpersons (in Bac Ninh and Binh Phuoc Provinces) and 19 of the 205 vice chairpersons of the provincial People's Committees.

Objective 2: “To narrow the gender gap in the economic, labour and employment domains; to increase the access of poor rural women and ethnic minority women to economic resources and labour market”

Target 1: Annually, at least 40 per cent of the total number of people given new jobs will be guaranteed for each gender (women and men)

36. According to the 2015 statistics, the national labour force (workers aged 15 or more) consists of 54.61 million workers, of which men and women account for 51.7 per cent and 48.3 per cent, respectively.

37. As per the Report on the Labour Force Survey for the second quarter of 2020, the workforce aged 15 or over in the second quarter of 2021 was estimated at 51.8 million people, a reduction of 2.4 million compared with the previous quarter and a reduction of nearly 2.6 million compared with the same period last year. Women workers made up 46.9 per cent of the total number of people employed. Therefore, this target was achieved as set in the Strategy.

Target 2: The rate of women entrepreneurs will reach 30 per cent by 2015 and 35 per cent or higher by 2020

38. In 2011, about 21 per cent of active enterprises were owned by women, by March 2020 this rate had been about 23.4 per cent. However, compared to the set target, the proportion of women-owned enterprises has not been fulfilled.

Target 3: The rate of women rural workers aged under 45 and vocationally and technically trained will reach 25 per cent by 2015 and 50 per cent by 2020

39. According to the results of performing Decision No. 89/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister approving the Scheme “Building a learning society 2012–2020”, from 2016 to 2019 4.9 million rural workers received vocational training, attaining 89 per cent of the plan for this period (5.5 million people), in which, the number of rural workers who received support in vocational training at elementary level as well as training for less than 3 months was 2.85 million people, achieving 74 per cent of the plan for the period (3.84 million people). The rate of employed rural workers after completion of vocational training from 2016 to 2019 was 81.4 per cent, exceeding the target set under the scheme by 1.4 per cent.¹⁶

40. The 2019 Viet Nam Population and Housing Census revealed that the population aged 15 or over participating in the workforce and provided with elementary technical training or higher made up 23.1 per cent, of which 25.5 per cent were men and 20.5 per cent were women, 39.3 per cent in urban areas and 15.6 per cent in rural areas. Therefore, target 3 was not achieved as expected.

Target 4: The rate of women in poor rural areas and ethnic minority areas who wished to borrow preferential loans from employment or poverty reduction programmes and official credit sources will reach 80 per cent by 2015 and 100 per cent by 2020

41. From 2011 to 2020, the total loans to women living in poor rural areas and ethnic minority areas amounted to VND 111,502 billion, with 4.9 million borrowers, accounting for 48 per cent of the total loans and 49 per cent of total number of borrowers of the Social Policy Banks in such areas. Therefore, target 4 was achieved as set.

Objective 3: To raise the quality of women human resources, gradually ensuring equal participation of men and women in the education and training domain

Target 1: By 2020, the literacy rate of women aged 15–60 will be the same as men (98 per cent), particularly 94 per cent in the 14 provinces with disadvantaged socioeconomic conditions; and the literacy rate of ethnic minority people will reach 90 per cent

42. According to the Ministry of Education and Training, in 2019 the literacy rate of women aged 15–60 was 97.33 per cent while that of men was 97.98 per cent. The literacy rate of ethnic minority people aged 15–60 was 93.60 per cent and the literacy rate of ethnic minority women aged 15–60 was 92.58 per cent.

¹⁶ Source: Ministry of Education and Training, National online conference summarizing eight-year implementation of the Prime Minister’s Decision No. 89/QĐ-TTg approving the Scheme “Building a learning society 2012–2020.”

43. In 14 provinces and cities with disadvantaged socio-economic conditions, the literacy rate was 92.85 per cent for women aged 15–60, 93.06 per cent for ethnic minority people aged 15–60, and 90.45 per cent for ethnic minority women aged 16–60. Therefore, the target as set in the Strategy was achieved.

Target 2: The rate of women master's degree holders will be 40 per cent by 2015 and 50 per cent by 2020. The rate of women doctoral degree holders will be 20 per cent by 2015 and 25 per cent by 2020

44. The Housing and Population Census 2019 shows that the rates of women holding master's and doctoral degrees were 44.2 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively. Thus, this target was achieved for doctoral degrees but not for master's degrees.

Objective 4: To ensure gender equality in access to and benefit from health-care service

Target 1: The sex ratio at birth will not exceed 113 boys per 100 girls by 2015 and 115 boys per 100 girls by 2020, in compliance with national target 5.1: minimize and try to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls in all spheres and everywhere (SDG 5 target 5.1)

45. With efforts made by all levels and sectors, the sex ratio at birth has been under control, relatively stable and met the target (111.5 per 100 in 2019).

Target 2: To reduce maternal mortality rate to 58.3 per 100,000 live births by 2015 and below 52 per 100,000 live births by 2020

46. The maternal mortality rate is measured in terms of 100,000 live births, and the rate in Viet Nam was reduced from 67 in 2011 to 58.3 in 2015 and 46 in 2019. In other words, the target was met.

Target 3: To raise the percentage of pregnant women having access to services of medical care and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to 40 per cent by 2015 and 50 per cent by 2020, as compared to 2010

47. In 2016, 55.7 per cent of pregnant women received preventive treatment to reduce HIV transmission from mothers to children. The national percentage of women receiving HIV testing before and during pregnancy was 35.2 per cent in 2017, 45.6 per cent in 2018 and 52 per cent in 2019. In other words, this target was achieved as planned.

Target 4: To reduce the abortion rate to 27 per 100 live births by 2015 and below 25 per 100 live births by 2020

48. As reported by the Ministry of Health, the abortion ratio declined from 25 per 100 live births in 2011 to 13.8 per 100 live births in 2019. In other words, this target was realized.

49. In conclusion, all the targets of objective 4 were achieved as planned.

Objective 5: To ensure gender equality in culture and information domains

50. This objective has two targets: to produce every month at least two specialized programmes for GE communication in the grassroots information systems of communes/wards/small towns by 2020; and that radio and television stations at local and central levels have specialized programmes and topics to raise awareness about GE (90 per cent by 2015 and 100 per cent by 2020).

51. As assessed by specialized agencies and state management agencies on GE, the above two targets were realized.

Objective 6: “To ensure gender equality in family life, gradually eliminating gender-based violence”

Target 1: To reduce women’s time engaged in household duties by 50 per cent by 2015 and 30 per cent fewer hours by 2020 as compared to men’s. This is also the national Goal 5.4 - to ensure gender equality in household work and family care; recognize unpaid domestic work and care work; strengthen public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, family support and child care services (Global target 5.4)

52. According to the report on Labour Force Survey 2019, women spent nearly 39 hours a week working and an additional 18.9 hours on housework, while men spent nearly 40 hours a week work and 18.9 hours on housework. Therefore, women spent 2.1 times more time than men did on household work. In other words, target 1 was not achieved against the target set in the Strategy.

Target 2: By 2020, at least 50 per cent of detected domestic violence victims will get legal and health counselling, support and health care at domestic violence victim support establishments and 75 per cent of detected domestic violence perpetrators, but not yet subject to criminal liabilities will get counsel from counselling centres for domestic violence prevention and control

53. The national study on violence against women in Viet Nam in 2019 reveals that half of the women who experienced violence from their husband never told anyone. Most women (90.4 per cent) who experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their husband/intimate partner did not seek any help from local authorities.

Target 3: By 2015 towards 2020, 100 per cent of cross border human trafficking victims will return through handover and rescue and the number of detected human trafficking victims who return by themselves will benefit from support and community reintegration services

54. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Public Security, there were 300 human trafficking victims who were rescued and handed over or returned by themselves in 2019. All of these victims received the support they required at different levels, such as support for essential needs, medical support, psychological counselling, legal aid, education, vocational training, support start-up difficulties and loans for production. In other words, target 3 was achieved as set in the Strategy.

55. In conclusion, there remain a lot of difficulties and challenges to meet Objective 6. Therefore, some targets were not realized.

Target 5.2(SDGs): Reduce remarkably all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual exploitation and other types of exploitation (SDG 5 target 5.2)

Target 5.2.1: The prevalence of women and girls aged 15 or over having experienced violence from their husband/intimate partner earlier or in the past 12 months

56. The prevalence of women subject to at least one of the forms of violence, such as physical violence, sexual violence and emotional violence, by their husband/intimate partner during their lifetime or in the past 12 months remains high despite being declined over the past 10 years.

Target 5.2.2: The prevalence of women and girls aged 15 or over having experienced sexual violence by others (non-husband/partner) in the past 12 months

57. The national studies on violence against women in Viet Nam in 2010 and 2019 show that one in 10 women aged 15 or over experienced physical violence by others

(non-husband/partner). The study in 2019 reveals that only 1.2 per cent of the interviewed women experienced sexual violence by others (non-husband/partner) in the past 12 months while statistics were not collected for this target in the study in 2010.

Target 5.2.3: Percentage of women and girls subject to violence being detected and counselled

58. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Justice, 181,881 out of 407,057 women, accounting for 44 per cent, were provided with legal aid between 2015 and 2019, including domestic violence victims.

59. According to the 2019 survey data of the General Statistics Office, more than 91 per cent of women subject to violence did not seek help from support services. However, information for this target was not regularly collected and published; therefore, it was not possible to assess the trend and make predictions on the implementation of this target under the road map.

Target 5.3: Reduce and gradually eliminate harmful practices such as child marriage, early marriage, and forced marriage (SDG 5 target 5.3)

Target 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20–24 who were first married or first living in a union before the age of 15 and before the age of 18:¹⁷

60. Decision No. 681/QĐ-TTg sets forth an implementation road map for target 5.3.1: maintain a 2–3 per cent reduction rate per year.

61. MICs and the population census 2019 show that the percentage of women aged 20–24 who were married or living in a union for the first time before they were 15 and 18 years old tended to decline slightly, as compared with 2011, at 0.4 per cent and 9.1 per cent in 2019, respectively.

62. In other words, Viet Nam is likely to achieve the reduction of 2–3 per cent as per the roadmap for target 5.3.1 by 2030 if this tendency over the previous period will continue in coming years.

Target 5.3.2: Number of child marriages: Decision No. 681/QĐ-TTg sets forth an implementation roadmap for Target 5.3.2: maintain a 2–3 per cent reduction rate per year

Target 5.4: Ensure equality in domestic work and care work; recognize unpaid care work and domestic work; strengthen public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, family support and child care services (SDG 5 target 5.4)

Target 5.4.1: Proportion of time spent on unpaid household work and care work

63. Decision No. 681/QĐ-TTg uses a different target which is “time difference in household work and care work by women as compared to men” to define the roadmap: 1.5 times in 2020, 1.4 times in 2025 and 1.3 times in 2030.

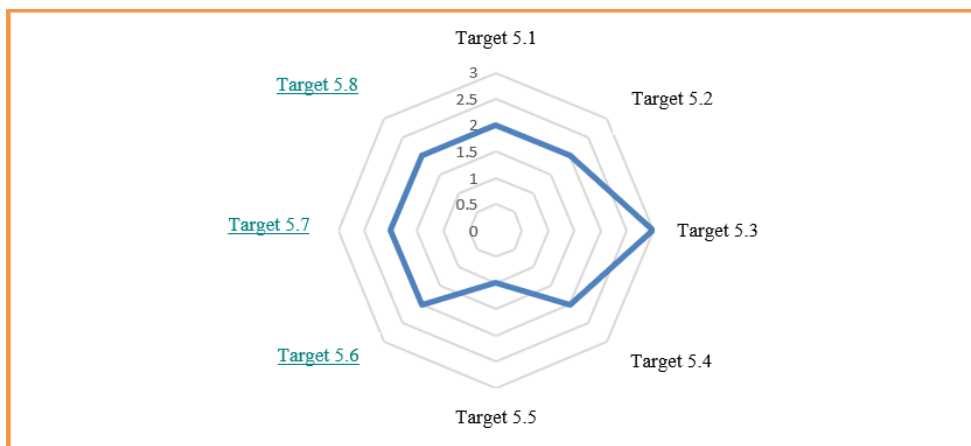
64. There has been little information and few reports on unpaid household and care work in Viet Nam. At the moment, there is only the report on unpaid care work study conducted by MOLISA and Action Aid Viet Nam in 2016. This report shows that women in every category (age, ethnicity and region) do more unpaid care work than men and also spend more time on work that is included in GDP, but that is unpaid. This study reveals that women spent 275 minutes a day (4.5 hours) doing unpaid care

¹⁷ According to the Law on Marriage and Family (2014), marriage is allowed for men aged 20 or older and for women aged 18 or older. Therefore, marriage of a woman before the age of 18 is considered an early marriage.

work, which is 105 minutes more than men. This means a woman contributed nearly 7 months per year to unpaid care work, most of which is not recognized.

65. Based on the National Review Report on SDG implementation up to 2020, Viet Nam will face a lot of challenges to meet SDG 5 on gender equality.

Figure: Overview of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals



VI. Overview of the national report formulation and stakeholder engagement

66. In an effort to formulate this report, on 20 March 2019 MOLISA issued Decision No. 330/QD-LDTBXH with respect to the establishment of the Drafting Committee to prepare the 9th National Report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, with the participation of representatives from relevant ministries, sectors and agencies.

67. During the process of preparation and drafting, the drafting committee gathered related documents, analysed statistics from relevant ministries, agencies and provinces/cities and related national reports coupled with other sources of information and documents; held technical meetings and consultation workshops to seek for comments and feedback from relevant ministries, agencies, sociopolitical organizations, GE organizations, scholars, managers, scientists and non-governmental organizations.

68. The draft report has also been sent to all relevant ministries, sectors, sociopolitical organizations at the central level for written comments.

69. The formulation of the report entailed reference and selected experience from other countries as well as the reference to the contents of national reports namely the third cycle UPR Implementation Report (2018) and national reports on the implementation of international conventions on human rights to which Viet Nam is a member, including the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (3rd–6th report, 2017), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (5th and 6th report, 2018), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the “Torture Convention”) (2017), and midterm reports on the implementation of CEDAW (2017), the Torture Convention (October 2020), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (January 2021) and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (March 2021).

B. Implementation of CEDAW

Article 1

The concept of “discrimination against women”

70. Based on continued use of the term “gender discrimination” and fundamental principles of gender equality (GE) in the Law on Gender Equality in 2006: *gender discrimination* refers to the restriction, exclusion or refusal to recognize or appreciate the role and position of men and women. This results in inequality between men and women in all areas of social and family life.

71. There have been initial positive changes in the awareness of discrimination against women in Viet Nam. However, stereotypes that inform mindsets, such as the preference of men over women, or the consideration of men as family breadwinners, still persist in both urban and rural contexts.

Article 2

Taking measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women

72. Viet Nam has synchronously applied legislative, executive and judicial measures alongside education, social mobilization and other appropriate actions to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. From 2015 to 2019, many laws and codes were amended and promulgated, clearly reflecting the commitment to ensure GE¹⁸ and incorporate gender mainstreaming into socio-economic development programmes. Ensuring gender mainstreaming in legal documents is one of the principles for the formulation and promulgation of legal documents as stipulated in the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents in 2015, amended and supplemented in 2020 (hereinafter referred to as the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents in 2015).¹⁹

73. As of 2019, the drafting agencies as regulated mainstreamed GE into 40 out of 111 codes, laws and ordinances related to GE.²⁰ These include some important codes and laws, such as: the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (2015); the Law on Election of Deputies to the National Assembly and Deputies to People’s Councils (2015); the Law on Government Organization (2015); the Penal Code (2015), amended and supplemented in 2017 (hereinafter referred to as the Penal Code in 2015); the Education Law (2019); the Law on Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (2017);²¹ the Law on Architecture (2019);²² the amended Law on

¹⁸ According to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) report, in 2016 and nine months of 2017, 502 draft legal normative documents were appraised on GE mainstreaming. See Report No. 454/BC-CP of the Government dated 17 October 2017 reporting to the National Assembly regarding the realization of national objectives on GE.

¹⁹ See clause 4, article 5 of the Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (2015).

²⁰ MOJ report, 2017.

²¹ The Law on Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (2017) No. 04/2017/QH14 was approved by the National Assembly at the third session on 12 June 2017. The Law introduces the concept of women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises and includes them as a subject of application who can benefit from support policies.

²² The Law on Architecture (2019) No. 40/2019/QH14 was approved by the National Assembly at the seventh session on 13 June 2019. Clause 3, article 12 of the Law stipulates that architectural design must integrate architectural solutions with the planning; must comprehensively consider the socio-economic requirements, the requirements on functional performance, technique, fire and explosion prevention and control, environmental protection, economical and efficient use of energy, national cultural identity and other requirements for the works; must ensure easy access to use by people with disabilities, older people and children; must ensure gender equality. See CONG BAO/No. 559 + 560/17 July 2019.

Execution of Criminal Judgments (2019);²³ the Law on Prevention and Control of Harms of Liquor and Beer Abuse (2019);²⁴ the Labour Code (2019); the amended Law on State Budget (2015); the Law on Legal Aid (2017); the Law on Statistics, amended in 2015; the Land Law (2013); and the Law on Vietnamese Nationality (2014)(please see details in the General Report).

74. According to statistics from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in 2015, gender mainstreaming has been fully ensured in 129 out of 130 required legal documents (99 per cent). The respective data for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 are 324/324 (100 per cent), 278/278 (100 per cent), 154/154 (100 per cent), 134/139 (96.4 per cent), and 186/198 (94 per cent).

75. Between 2015 and 2019, the Government of Viet Nam promulgated and implemented many policies, programmes and schemes to promote GE in all aspects of social life. Of these, programmes that directly promote GE included the following: the National Action Program on Gender Equality 2016–2020; the Scheme on the Implementation of Measures to Ensure Gender Equality for Women Cadres and Civil Servants 2016–2020; the Scheme on Controlling Sex Imbalance at Birth 2016–2025; the Viet Nam Population Strategy to 2030; the Health-Population Target Program 2016–2020; the Scheme on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response 2016–2020 with a vision to 2030; the Scheme on Supporting Gender Equality Work in Ethnic Minority Areas 2018–2025; and the Scheme on Minimization of Child Marriage and Consanguineous Marriage in Ethnic Minority Areas 2015–2025, etc. In addition, GE is required to be mainstreamed in other programmes, including the National Target Program on New Rural Development; the National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction; the Program on Socio-economic Development in Extremely Difficult Areas; the Target Program on the Development of Social Assistance System 2016–2020; and the Scheme on the Development of Social Work Profession in Viet Nam 2010–2020.

76. The implementation of these programmes and schemes has contributed to improving the status of women, promoting GE and significantly improving access to social services for women and girls, especially rural and ethnic minority women. The pool of professional and semi-professional social workers (about 235,000 people) has played a crucial role in supporting women and children subject to violence and sexual abuse and who are human trafficking returnees. They have also provided advice, counselling and support on domestic violence prevention and control.

77. Every year, the Government and ministries held hundreds of training courses for thousands of civil servants, cadres and officials in charge of GE work on the provisions of the Law on Gender Equality and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), on GE skills and professional expertise, or on gender mainstreaming skills in professional work. At the provincial level, professional training to improve GE skills and expertise of civil servants and cadres are conducted in a quite creative manner. This involves active collaboration among different provincial functional departments and agencies such as the Party's Commissions for Mass Mobilization or Propaganda and Education; VWU branch, and the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. From 2015 to 2019,

²³ The amended Law on Execution of Criminal Judgments (2019) No. 41/2019/QH14 approved by the National Assembly at the seventh session on 14 June 2019 has mainstreamed GE in the contents of incarceration management and education of the sentenced persons during the execution of the penalties, especially in the execution of prison sentences on women and girls. The Law also stipulates in detail the rights and obligations of the persons serving the judgments; the rights and obligations of competent authorities during the judgment execution to ensure GE and no gender discrimination (articles 4, 27, 30 and 51).

²⁴ The Law on Prevention and Control of Harms of Liquor and Beer Abuse (2019) No. 44/2019/QH14 was approved by the National Assembly on 14 June 2019 (articles 4 and 25).

Government agencies held 12 capacity-building training sessions on State management of GE for more than 1,600 trainees working on GE in different line ministries and provincial agencies. Furthermore, over than 30 training courses for nearly 1,000 participants were provided on gender mainstreaming skills in the political field and on GE knowledge improvement for commune officials.²⁵

78. Communication and dissemination of legal knowledge to raise awareness on GE and anti-discrimination against women have been regularly conducted and strengthened for the Government agencies; political, socio-political and social organizations; and the people, especially in rural and ethnic minority areas, where child marriage still happens and man preference remains quite common.

79. The Government and line ministries started to pay more attention to the development of a GE database. Multi-objective surveys, population and housing censuses and socio-economic surveys in ethnic minority areas have collected data on GE. This has helped to provide a better practical foundation for the evaluation, analysis and formulation of GE policies.

Article 3

Ensuring the full development and advancement of women

80. On 15 January 2018, the Politburo issued Directive No. 21-CT/TW on further promotion of women's work in the new situation. This Directive requires the continued implementation of a number of tasks set out in Resolution No. 11/2007/NQ-TW and a number of new tasks in order to achieve the national targets on GE.

81. In order to promote the accountability of the heads of State agencies from central to local levels in the implementation of the work on GE and the advancement of women, the Prime Minister approved Decision No. 178/QD-TTg in 2016 promulgating the Implementation Plan of Concluding Notice No. 196-TB/TW on the "Scheme on Strengthening the Party's Leadership on Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women in the New Situation". Decision No. 622/QD-TTg dated 10 May 2017 promulgating the National Action Plan for the implementation of 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development identifies one of the specific goals to be achieved as follows: "Ensure women's full, effective participation and equal opportunity to take leadership at all policy-making levels in political, economic and social life".

82. The Prime Minister also approved the National Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda which was divided into two implementation phases: 2017–2020 and 2020–2030.²⁶ This plan emphasizes creating equal opportunities for everyone and every community in society to develop and commit to implementing Goal 5 to achieve gender equality, empower all women and girls, and create opportunities for women and girls with specific targets and tasks suitable to national practices.

83. The Prime Minister issued Decision No. 668/QD-TTg dated 16 May 2017 approving the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) 2017–2020. This assigns line ministries and provinces to implement the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee with specific contents, requirements and roadmaps.

²⁵ Official Letter No. 40/BDG-2020 of the Department of Gender Equality, MOLISA on providing information to develop the Update Report on the implementation of CEDAW.

²⁶ Decision No. 622/QD-TTg dated 10 May 2017 of the Prime Minister.

84. On 3 March 2021, the Government issued Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP promulgating the National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) 2021–2030.²⁷

85. The State management apparatus on GE has been enjoying further consolidation and capacity building. Most agencies and ministries at central and local levels have formed their Committees for the Advancement of Women to execute, monitor and urge the implementation of the GE objectives as well as preventing and combating violence and discrimination against women.

86. The Government has continued to allocate funding to realize the national objectives on GE. In Decision No. 1241/QĐ-TTg dated 22 July 2011 promulgating the National Program on Gender Equality 2011–2015, the Prime Minister approved the budget for the Program of VND 955 billion.²⁸ In the funding for the National Program on Gender Equality 2011 – 2015, the funding for the implementation of the National Action Program 2016–2020 and the Scheme on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response 2016–2020 with a vision to 2030 were allocated via the Project on Support for the Implementation of the National Objectives on Gender Equality under the Target Program on the Development of Social Assistance System 2016–2020. A budget of VND 162 billion was provided, equivalent to 90 per cent of the approved planned budget. The funding from international mobilization was about 300 billion VND. In 2007–2017, GE content was mainstreamed in 31 bilateral and multilateral ODA projects at both central and local levels.

87. Every year, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) publishes and distributes – free of charge – more than 600,000 copies of almost 10 media publications. In particular, the leaflets on GE in politics are bilingual, published in Vietnamese and other ethnic minority languages such as H’Mong, Ede, Khmer, etc. A nationwide contest on “Exploring Policies and Laws on Gender Equality” has also been organised. In 2018, MOLISA launched a writing contest on GE for the purpose of communications and awareness raising which attracted more than 200 entries. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Communications implemented a project on “Training to Build Capacity in Gender Communication at Central and Provincial Levels”. The Ministry of National Defence issued a Directive on the inclusion of “gender awareness-raising” content into the extracurricular programmes of military academies and schools. From 2015 to 2019, the Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU) organized events and developed communication products on GE. These included a communication manual for communicators and three animated movies to raise the awareness of women on child marriage, consanguineous marriage prevention and control, as well as parenting education.

Article 4

Special measures to advance equality between men and women

88. The Government of Viet Nam has adopted a number of special measures to promote equality between men and women, such as the Law on Election of Deputies to the National Assembly and Deputies to People’s Councils (2015) and the Directive No. 21-CT/TW dated 15 January 2018 of the Politburo on further promotion of women’s work in the new situation.

89. Various ministries, sectors and provinces have proactively conducted training sessions to improve the capacity of women leaders/managers, seminars fostering and

²⁷ NSGE 2021–2030 sets the overall objective of continuing to narrow gender gaps, create conditions, opportunities for women and men to participate, equally enjoy achievement in all spheres of society and life, and contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

²⁸ See MOLISA, Review Report on 10-year implementation of the Law on Gender Equality.

strengthening the participation of women in management and leadership positions and people's elected agencies. These activities aimed at enabling women leaders and women elected deputies to participate in political activities more actively and effectively.

90. The 2019 Labour Code dedicated chapter X for separate regulations on women workers and for ensuring GE, including several additional special measures to promote GE in the sphere of labour.²⁹

91. According to the Law on the Viet Nam Fatherland Front in 2015, the VWU is a member organization of the Fatherland Front and plays an important role in socio-political life. The VWU is entitled to participate in the monitoring of GE implementation in the operation of State agencies and social organizations. At the same time, the VWU is a representative organization to protect and promote legitimate rights and benefits of women as stipulated in the Constitution.

92. Since 2016, the Project on Support for the Implementation of the National Objectives on Gender Equality under the Target Program on the Development of Social Assistance System 2016–2020³⁰ has focused on organizing activities to promote the participation of women in management and leadership positions and people's elected agencies.

93. According to the 2017 Law on Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are given priority support for start-up, production and business activities. SMEs that employ many women workers are also given priority when accessing loans from the State budget and other credit institutions.³¹ For the time being, Vietnamese women run more than a quarter of SMEs, creating jobs for more than a million workers.

94. From 2016 to 2020, the Government continued to implement programmes and schemes to realize GE and improve the status of women; including the “Scheme on the Implementation of Measures to Ensure Equality for Female Cadres and Civil Servants 2016–2020”; the “Program on Strengthening Equal Participation of Women in Leadership and Management Positions at Policy-making Levels 2021–2030”; and the “Scheme on Supporting Women's Start-ups 2017–2025”.³²

95. The Scheme on Supporting Women's Start-ups 2017–2025 aims at raising women's awareness of the State's directions, policies and laws on start-ups. It promotes the realization of business ideas, contributing to the accomplishment of the national objectives on business development.

96. In 2018, out of all production and business owners nationwide, women accounted for 26.54 per cent (representing around 150,000 women owners). That rate

²⁹ The Labour Code (2019) stipulates that women workers that are engaged in arduous, hazardous, dangerous and especially arduous, hazardous and dangerous occupations or jobs or the occupations and jobs that adversely affect their reproductive and child-rearing functions while being pregnant and that have notified their employers, they will be entitled to be switched to lighter, safer jobs by their employers or their daily working hour will be reduced by one hour without any cut in wages or salaries and rights, benefits until the end of the period of nursing their children who are under 12 months old. In cases where the labour contract expires while a woman worker is pregnant or nursing a child under 12 months old, the woman worker shall have priority in entering into a new labour contract. The Code also empowers women workers to decide whether or not to do the occupations or jobs on the list of the jobs that adversely affect reproductive and child rearing functions while empowering women workers who are nursing children under 12 months old to be able to decide for themselves whether to assume night shifts, to work overtime, or to go on business trips.

³⁰ Decision No. 565/QĐ-TTg dated 25 April 2017 of the Prime Minister.

³¹ Article 5, Law on Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (2017).

³² Decision No. 939/QĐ-TTg dated 30 June 2017 of the Prime Minister.

was higher in urban (31.6 per cent) than in rural areas (18.7 per cent).³³ Viet Nam ranked sixth out of 57 countries in terms of the percentage of women business owners.³⁴ Indeed, Viet Nam was the only Asian country in the top-10 of this global index. It continued to maintain its ranking on women's economic opportunity and participation index (33 of 149 in 2018 and 33 of 144 in 2017).³⁵

97. Regarding healthcare in remote areas and areas of ethnic minorities, the Government has developed a pool of village midwives, making a significant contribution to improving maternal and child health in ethnic minority and disadvantaged areas.³⁶ In 2015, Viet Nam fulfilled the Millennium Development Goal regarding the maternal mortality rate as it fell to 49 per 100,000 live births. The under 1 child mortality rate fell to 14.7 per 100,000. In 2019, the maternal mortality rate dropped to 46 per 100,000 live births and the under 1 child mortality rate dropped to 14 per 100,000.³⁷

Article 5

Gender roles and gender stereotypes

98. The Law on Education (2019) stipulates the elimination of discriminatory gender norms in general education textbooks.³⁸

99. Decision No. 1381/QĐ-BGDDT dated 28 April 2016 of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was issued to promulgate the guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming into General Education Curricula and Textbooks. MOET also provided guidance on the integration of education on GE and anti-discrimination against girls into the curricula for civic education and class activities at schools.

100. In order to raise awareness and promote communication on GE, many related events were held. These include the Seminar on Gender and Media Awareness on the side-lines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ministerial Meeting on Women held in 2018 to promote gender-sensitive communication, to eliminate gender stereotypes and to highlight the important role of the media in addressing GE. Other examples include the launch of the WikiGap campaign, which aims to increase women's representation in Wikipedia and GE on cyber and social settings.³⁹ Meanwhile, the seminar on "Gender in Sustainable Development" connected the media with the community and collected feedback from journalists on issues of sustainable development and GE. Viet Nam has been conducting the Project 'Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018–2022), in which the dissemination and raising of awareness on gender-based violence prevention and response as well as capacity building to respond to gender-based violence for officers at all levels have been deployed. Since the 2017–2018 school year, the Vietnam Women's Academy has operated a major in multimedia communication. Ninety per cent of its students are women, contributing to boosting the rate of women leaders in the media sector in the future.

³³ Labour Force Survey, 2018.

³⁴ Report No. 301/BC-CP of the Government on the implementation of the national objectives on gender equality.

³⁵ Global Gender Gap Report 2018 of the World Economic Forum.

³⁶ Ministry of Health, 2017.

³⁷ Population and Housing Census of Vietnam 2019.

³⁸ Point a, clause 1, article 32 of the Law on Education (2019) stipulates that "...the contents and format of the textbooks shall not be stereotyped on grounds of ethnicity, religion, profession, gender, age and social status; textbooks are presented in the format of printed books, Braille books and e-books."

³⁹ WikiGap, a global campaign initiated by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Wikipedia Sweden, is carried out in over 50 countries, including Vietnam, to improve women's representation on the Internet.

101. In order to minimize child marriage and consanguineous marriage in ethnic minority areas, the Prime Minister issued a Scheme on Minimization of Child Marriage and Consanguineous Marriage in Ethnic Minority Areas 2015–2025.⁴⁰ The Survey on the socio-economic situation of 53 ethnic minorities shows that the rate of child marriages in ethnic minority people in 2018 was 21.9 per cent, a reduction of 4.7 per cent compared to 2014 (26.6 per cent), equivalent to an average reduction of approximately 1 per cent per year.

102. Under the Scheme on Controlling Sex Imbalance at Birth, a model to support women and girls has been implemented, integrating the contents of controlling sex imbalance at birth into secondary schools as well as village conventions and rules in the communities to enhance the role and status of women in families, communities and societies.

103. Viet Nam conducted the second National Study on Violence against Women in Viet Nam in 2019.

104. In order to support poor and vulnerable people, including children, with better opportunities to protect their legitimate rights and benefits, the Law on Legal Aid (2017) has expanded the scope of eligible recipients of legal aid services from 7 to 14 groups. These groups have equal access to free legal aid services provided by the State without discrimination on grounds of gender, age or ethnicity. According to a report from the MOJ, between 2015 and 2019, 407,057 people accessed legal aid, 44.7 per cent of whom were women and 4.9 per cent were children.

Article 6

Prevention of and combat against trafficking in women and exploitation of women for sex work

105. In an effort to prevent and combat trafficking in women and exploitation of women for sex work, the Penal Code (2015) has amendments regarding related offenses/crimes, concretized the concept of trafficking in persons and supplemented aggravating circumstances.⁴¹

106. In addition, other legal documents have been improved to strengthen the regulations on protecting specific groups. This has created a legal basis for the implementation of effective measures to tackle the root causes of trafficking in women and exploitation of women for sex work. In particular, the 2017 Law on Legal Aid added a new regulation so that victims of human trafficking with financial difficulties would be given legal aid.⁴² Meanwhile, the Labour Code (2019)⁴³ prescribes acts of

⁴⁰ Decision No. 498/QĐ-TTg dated 14 April 2015 of the Prime Minister.

⁴¹ The 2015 Penal Code separates the offences of trafficking, swapping or abduction of a child as specified in article 120 of the 1999 Penal Code into three separate offences, namely, trafficking in a person under 16 years of age (article 151), swapping a person under 1 year of age (article 152) and abduction of a person under 16 years of age (article 153) in order to differentiate and specify penal liabilities for each committed crime on the basis of the nature and degree of severity/danger of the offence. The 2015 Penal Code concretizes the concept of trafficking in persons to pinpoint criminal tricks while adding new aggravating circumstances; criminalizing surrogacy for commercial purposes (article 187); penalties for the act of engaging in prostitution with a person under 18 years of age, the act of engaging in prostitution with a person from full 13 to under 16 years of age have been aggravated if the offence of engaging in prostitution with a person under 13 transformed into the rape offence (article 329). The policy of criminal handling for these offences has been adjusted in a stricter direction.

⁴² Article 7 of the Law on Legal Aid (2017) took effect on 1 January 2018.

⁴³ The National Assembly approved on 20 November 2019 the revised Labour Code with 90.6 per cent in favour thuvienphapluat.vn/tintuc/vn/thoi-su-phap-luat/chinh-sach-moi/26147/90-06-dai-bieu-dong-y-thong-qua-bo-luat-lao-dong-sua-doi-nam-2019.

enticement, false promises, false advertising, or other trickeries designed to deceive or recruit a worker for the purposes of human trafficking, exploitation of labour or forced labour; or making use of employment services or activities of sending workers abroad to work on the basis of an employment contract to commit illegal acts that are the strictly prohibited acts in the sphere of labour.⁴⁴ The Law on Legal Dissemination and Education and its guiding documents clearly define the tasks of ministries, sectors and localities in law dissemination and education, including the law on preventing and combating trafficking in persons. The 2020 Law on Vietnamese workers working abroad under contracts contains provisions to ensure GE and anti-discrimination and to combat actions that take advantages of the activities to send workers to work abroad for human trafficking, exploitation and abuse.

107. On 31 December 2015, the Prime Minister signed Decision 2546/QD-TTg approving the program on preventing and combating trafficking in persons 2016–2020 (shortly referred to as Program 130/CP). On 9 February 2021, the Prime Minister also enacted Decision No. 193/QD-TTg approving the program on preventing and combating trafficking in persons 2021–2025 and a vision to 2030.

108. The Government issued Plan No. 15/KH-BCD of the 138/CP Program Steering Committee on 19 January 2016 to execute the Program on preventing and combating trafficking in persons 2016–2020 as the basis for relevant ministries, agencies and provinces to promulgate and organize the program's implementation.⁴⁵

109. The Prime Minister issued Decision 793/QD-TTg dated 10 May 2016 selecting 30 July as the annual “National Day against Trafficking in Persons”.

110. The Prime Minister issued Decision 361/QD-TTg dated 7 March 2016 approving the Program on Prostitution Prevention and Control 2016–2020, which aims to create a robust change in awareness and increase the responsibilities of authorities at different levels and sectors and the whole society in the prevention and control of prostitution.

111. The Government enacted a scheme combining communication for HIV/AIDS prevention and control and communication for the prevention and control of drugs and prostitution until 2020.⁴⁶ In addition, the Government also issued other social security policies to support vulnerable groups and to address the root causes of prostitution. These include the poverty reduction policies which have been continuously improved for more comprehensive support for the poor.⁴⁷ On 27 January 2021, the Government issued Decree No. 07/2021/ND-CP stipulating the multidimensional poverty line 2021–2025 towards raising the income poverty line and accessing basic social services.

112. The Government, relevant ministries, agencies and local authorities prioritized preventing and combating prostitution. As such, it was integrated into the implementation of their socio-economic development programmes in combination with the strict management of local areas by functional authorities. Many local authorities emphasized the implementation of poverty reduction programmes, vocational training for rural workers, employment programmes, health insurance for the poor, scholarships for poor children and preferential loans for the children of poor

⁴⁴ Article 8 of the Labour Code (2019).

⁴⁵ For example, Decision 420/QD-BTP issued on 14 March 2016 promulgating the implementation plan for the programme on preventing and combating human trafficking 2016–2020 by MOJ.

⁴⁶ In accordance with the Prime Minister's Decision 2140/QD-TTg issued on 30 December 2017.

⁴⁷ The Prime Minister issued Decision 59/2015/QD-TTg dated 19 November 2015 promulgating multidimensional poverty lines applicable for 2016–2020. Based on this Decision, from 2016, Viet Nam changed the measurement from a single-dimensional to multi-dimensional approach in order to control poverty in a comprehensive way and define appropriate policies, making a contribution to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

households to go abroad for work to prevent women and girls without jobs and under financial difficulties from engaging in prostitution. In particular, the Viet Nam Bank for Social Policies and VWU, at different levels, helped hundreds of thousands of poor women access favourable loans worth dozens of thousands of billion VND to create jobs and stabilize and develop their family economy. A lot of models integrating prevention and support for women at high risk are being widely launched and scaled up in many provinces/cities nationwide. Examples include “Women Helping One Another in Economic Development”, “Development of Handicraft Villages”, “Members do Business Well” and “Cooperative Groups”.

113. The development of healthy communes/wards without social evils and which are suitable for children goes together with the advocacy campaign “all people unite to build a new life in residential areas” and other social movements. This is a significant preventive measure and has become a regular task assessed in almost all provinces every year. It has made an important contribution to protecting women and girls and preventing and combating prostitution and child abuse.

114. The police agencies and relevant sectors in a wide range of provinces have proactively collaborated to conduct surveys and prepare a list to manage public hotspots and restaurants which are suspected of conducting prostitution services, scrutinize business establishments involving sensitive services (motels, hotels, karaoke venues, massage parlours, bars and discotheques) to serve as a basis for preventing, suppressing and combating prostitution-related crimes and human traffickers.

115. Prosecution and trials were intensified. Support was also provided to sex workers through community models, peer groups and self-help groups of sex workers. However, it was still difficult to detect and deal with prostitution activities because criminals used the internet to establish their prostitution lines, gangs and dens on social media that operate in a mobile manner and pertain to numerous localities.

116. In 2019, functional agencies rescued, admitted and supported more than 300 returning victims of human trafficking.⁴⁸ One hundred per cent of the admitted victims received initial support, psychological counselling, health checks and legal aid as per the current legislation.

117. Between 2016 and 2020, the Government developed and implemented pilot models for prostitution prevention and control. These include: the model providing community-based support services for sex workers and social work centres; the model on support to ensure the rights of workers in business establishments prone to prostitution; and the model on support to enhance the capacity of peer groups/self-help groups/clubs of sex workers for better access to, communication of and support for the reduction, prevention and control of gender-based violence in key provinces/cities, such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong and Nam Dinh. Notably, some models that support returning victims of trafficking are being effectively implemented. For example, charity houses and peace houses are supporting returning women and children of human trafficking, giving them reliable addresses and temporary community shelters. The national hotline for child protection of MOLISA was established and is operated 24/7 to support and protect children; this is also the hotline for human trafficking prevention and combat.

118. Local authorities created favourable conditions for 77,781 sex workers and people at high risk to access social support services provided by models on prostitution prevention and control. In particular, 66,862 sex workers were provided with medical support, health care, services for prevention and control of HIV transmission. Meanwhile, 7,772 sex workers received counselling and legal aid; 1,812 were provided

⁴⁸ Report 06/BC-LDTBXH dated 10 January 2020 on “Results of crime prevention and control; admission of and support for trafficking victims returning in 2019”.

with education support; 556 were provided with jobs and business loans totalling VND 457 million; and 779 were provided with vocational training.⁴⁹ Furthermore, 10,291 sex workers and people at high risk benefited from these models on prostitution prevention and control and community reintegration support. Specific support activities include medical support, health care, services for the prevention and control of HIV transmission, legal aid, support for vocational training and loans, and job creation.

Article 7

Exercising the right to equality in political and community life

119. The Law on Election of Deputies to the National Assembly and Deputies to People's Councils (2015), for the first time, regulates that at least 35 per cent of total official candidates must be women.

120. On 15 January 2018, Directive No. 21-CT/TW was issued by the Politburo on "further promotion of the women's work in the new situation".

121. On 2 July 2018, Decision 800/QD-TTg was issued by the Prime Minister amending and supplementing some contents of NSGE 2011–2020, in which specific measures were introduced in efforts to exercise the right to equality in political and community life.⁵⁰

122. Decision 622/QD-TTg dated 10 May 2017 of the Prime Minister enacting "the National Action Plan for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" defines one of the specific targets to be achieved: "to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and social life".

123. On the basis of the aforementioned policies, relevant ministries, agencies and provinces actively organized a range of capacity-building training courses and talks for women management leaders on the promotion of women's involvement in management and leadership positions and people's elected bodies.

124. Communication on GE in the political field was enhanced with diversified forms, e.g., using posters, leaflets and other communication products;⁵¹ to advance the exercising of GE in the political field, contributing to increasing women's participation in Party Committees at different levels, the 14th National Assembly and People's Councils.⁵²

⁴⁹ Report No. 26/BC-LDTBXH dated 2 March 2021 on reviewing "the Program on Prostitution Prevention and Control 2016–2020".

⁵⁰ Decision 800/QD-TTg amends and supplements several contents of the NSGE 2011–2020, in which specific measures were introduced in efforts to exercise the right to equality in political and community life such as: (i) the development, approval and implementation of planning in close combination with the arrangement, use, assessment and training of women cadres, civil servants and public employees in leadership and management positions at State agencies and organizations on the basis of concrete criteria and feasible solutions, alongside annual review, adjustment and supplementation of manpower planning; (ii) support for capacity-building for women cadres, civil servants and public employees to enhance women's participation in leadership and management positions and elected bodies, especially young women leaders and those from ethnic minority groups.

⁵¹ During the election of deputies to the 13th National Assembly and People's Councils for the term 2011–2016, 10,000 posters and 6,000 pens conveying the message "voting for excellent women to the 13th National Assembly and People's Council for the term 2011–2016" were produced. Report 171 BC-LDTBXH dated 18 December 2018 on 10 years' implementation of the Gender Equality Law.

⁵² Report 171 BC-LDTBXH dated 18 December 2018 on 10 years' implementation of the Gender Equality Law.

125. Achievements: The percentage of deputies to the National Assembly in the 2016–2021 tenure reached 27.31 per cent, an increase of 3.11 per cent compared to the 2011–2015 tenure. This very tenure of the National Assembly of Viet Nam was also the first to be presided by a woman. A number of provinces also had a high percentage of women deputies to the National Assembly, including Bac Kan (66.67 per cent), Bac Giang (62.5 per cent) and Quang Ngai (57.14 per cent).

126. The percentage of women members appointed to provincial People's Councils in the 2016–2021 tenure reached 26.54 per cent, an increase of 1.37 per cent compared to the previous term. Women members in district People's Councils made up 27.85 per cent, an increase of 3.32 per cent. Women members in commune People's Councils accounted for 26.59 per cent, an increase of 4.88 per cent against the previous term. However, despite these increases, the target defined in NSGE 2011–2020 were unmet.

127. Fourteen out of 30 ministries, ministerial-level agencies and Government agencies had women officials in key leadership positions (accounting for 47 per cent). Notably, three of the media agencies with biggest nationwide coverage (Viet Nam Television, Voice of Viet Nam and Viet Nam News Agency) have key women leaders in their management boards to ensure women's representation and participation in decision-making in the field of media.

128. However, at the moment, some ministries, ministerial-level agencies, government agencies and provinces still have no women holding key positions. There were only one woman minister in the government in the 2016–2021 tenure. Gender stereotypes and man preference still persist in families and society, creating barriers and pressure for women.

Article 8

Women's participation in international activities

129. From 2005 to 2019, the Government of Viet Nam finalized policies and laws to create favourable conditions for women to participate in international activities, specifically in 2017, the Law on Overseas Representative Missions of Viet Nam was amended and supplemented.⁵³

130. From 2015 to 2019, the number of women Heads of Viet Nam's representative missions abroad doubled (from 8.1 per cent to 16 per cent). The number of women officials and civil servants employed in the diplomatic sector increased from 58 per cent (2016) to 62 per cent (2019).⁵⁴

131. Viet Nam has also regularly held training programmes and courses to strengthen capacity for women diplomats and women staff working in foreign affairs at central

⁵³ The Law on Overseas Representative Missions of supplemented and standardized some criteria for appointing ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary. These are applicable to both men and women officials and civil servants (including the provision on appointment age). These changes were made to ensure the equal rights of women to work and contribute, to enable women to make use of their experience and prestige, and to contribute to increasing the percentage of women appointed as ambassadors. The Law also supplemented several regimes and policies for members of representative missions and their accompanying minor children. This was done in order to make these regimes and policies concrete and more commensurate with the role and position of representative missions. They also enabled officials, especially women officials, to feel secure in their work as well as to increase awareness of women's role and contribution in the family.

⁵⁴ Official Letter No. 879/BNG-TCQT dated March 13, 2020, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on providing information to develop the 9th National Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in Vietnam.

and local levels and promote cooperation with international partners to carry out programmes and projects on capacity-building for women officials.

132. Viet Nam has promoted the connection and establishment of networks of women in foreign affairs. These have served as a bridge of friendship and cooperation between Vietnamese women and counterparts in the region and worldwide. One notable example is the establishment of the ASEAN Community Women's Circle of Ha Noi in 2015. Viet Nam has fostered a wide range of regional initiatives and efforts to protect women's rights and empower them through the frameworks of the Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the ASEAN Committee on Women, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children.

133. On 25 May 2014, the Prime Minister approved the scheme on "Vietnamese People's Army Participating in UN Peacekeeping Operations 2014–2020 and the Coming Years". Since 2014, Viet Nam has been an active and effective participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations, especially supporting the role of women in sustaining peace and security in each nation, in the region and worldwide. At the United Nations Security Council, Viet Nam has been actively engaged in discussions and contributed to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2020–2021 term, Viet Nam hosted the International Conference on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) "Strengthening Women's Role in Building and Sustaining Peace: from Commitments to Results", at which the Hanoi Pledge for Action was adopted with the content of increasing women's participation in peace making, boosting women's economic empowerment, as well as recognizing the role of women in addressing emerging challenges.

134. In 2017, the first woman officer of the Viet Nam People's Army joined United Nations peacekeeping operations in South Sudan. Following the end of her term, she was awarded two medals by the United Nations for the United Nations cause of peace and stability along with outstanding achievements in the completion of tasks in all aspects of her work. Since October 2018, Viet Nam has had 10 women soldiers on duty at level 2.1 field hospital in South Sudan, accounting for 17 per cent of the total 63 participants. Viet Nam is currently among the member states with the highest percentage of women participating in peacekeeping operations. From 2014 to 2019, in Viet Nam, five women held the rank of General in Public Security forces and four in the National Defence forces.

135. At various United Nations forums, such as the Committee on Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, Viet Nam has actively contributed to the contents on GE, co-sponsoring or joining consensus on the resolutions on preventing and combating violence against women while protecting women from trafficking in persons, eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. At the Human Rights Council, Viet Nam proposed a number of GE initiatives such as convening events on "Strengthening Education for Women and Girls to Combat Human Trafficking" (September 2016), "Securing and Promoting the Rights of Coastal Women in the Context of Climate Change" (June 2017). Viet Nam also took the lead in formulating the Resolution on Climate Change and Women's rights (June 2018). Under the framework of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Viet Nam and member economies formed and adopted the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth, one of the long-term and overall strategies of APEC on GE and women's empowerment while successfully implemented two initiatives of Viet Nam within APEC, which were "APEC Workshop on advancement of inclusive development through enhancing women and girls' digital literacy and related skills in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution" and "APEC Virtual Workshop on Harnessing

Fintech Skills of Women-led MSMEs in Promoting inclusive Growth against COVID-19". Under the framework of the Asia-Europe Meeting, Viet Nam held a High-level Dialogue on Women's Economic Empowerment amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in which specific proposals to enhance women's empowerment, including economic empowerment were raised.

136. Within ASEAN, Viet Nam has worked with other member states to develop and adopt the Joint Statement on Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN (2017) and the Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN at the 26th ASEAN Regional Forum. In order to implement the Joint Statement 2017, Viet Nam and ASEAN countries have initially established a list of experts in the areas of promoting women, peace and security. Viet Nam also joined the ASEAN Joint Statement on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and the Declaration on the Protection of Children from all Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN.

137. Within the country, Viet Nam has been making efforts to implement the One Strategic Plan between Viet Nam and the United Nations for 2017–2021, focusing on supporting the Government of Viet Nam to implement the Socio-economic Development Plan 2016–2020 and Sustainable Development Goals with the following focus areas: Investing in people; ensuring adaptation to climate change and sustainable environmental development; promoting prosperity and partnership; strengthening justice, peace and inclusive governance; and viewing gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue in implementing these areas.

Article 9

Nationality issues

138. The laws of Viet Nam are consistent and ensure equal rights between men and women in nationality-related matters. In addition to the Law on Nationality (2014), the Law on Children (2016) prescribes non-discrimination against children and prohibits acts of stigmatizing or discrimination against children on the basis of their personal characteristics, family circumstances and gender.

139. It is quite common for Vietnamese women to marry foreigners. If they return to live in Viet Nam, the Law on Nationality (2014) enables them to restore their Vietnamese nationality. To ensure the rights of children who are offspring of Vietnamese women and foreigners who return to live in Viet Nam under the direction of the Government and guidance of ministries and branches, localities have taken a flexible approach to nationality issues to ensure that children's birth certificates are issued and children are entitled to full education.⁵⁵ Up to now, the education of such children has been basically guaranteed. Only a few cases remain, but these are being actively handled by the authorities.

140. Viet Nam has joined the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) agreement and the Global Compact on Refugees (December 2018) which contain contents on prevention of trafficking in women and children and ensuring the rights of migrant women. On 20 March 2020, the Prime

⁵⁵ A child who has a birth certificate issued by a foreign country must have the birth certificate translated into Vietnamese, or a Vietnamese translation of a foreign-issued international travel valid document (in cases where a birth certificate is not available, only a passport or international travel document is available); In case none of the documents are available, a school will temporarily place the child in a class with appropriate levels and ages, and then coordinate with the child's family and related departments and sectors to prepare supplementary required documents to complete the child's academic records.

Minister signed Decision No. 402/QĐ-TTg issuing the implementation plan for the GCM agreement. This plan has ensured gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment and non-discrimination against women and girls in all forms. Along with that, Viet Nam has cooperated with the International Organization for Migration to hold conferences to disseminate the GCM agreement.

141. Viet Nam is also studying and taking into consideration the adoption of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of the Statelessness 1961. These contents have also been incorporated in the implementation plan of the GCM agreement.

Article 10

Equality in education

142. The Law on Education (2019) contains specific provisions on GE in education.⁵⁶

143. In collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), MOET conducted a review of textbooks and removed gender stereotype messages and images. At the same time, it has also developed documents and guidelines on mainstreaming gender into textbooks and general education curricula; carried out activities to improve understanding on gender and GE for management officials and those working on gender and GE in the education sector; and formulated and promulgated specific policies for women teachers with small children aged under 12 months. For this new set of textbooks, ensuring GE has become one of the important criteria when appraising and approving these textbooks.⁵⁷ Some provinces and cities have also issued policies to support women staff to study, especially those who have to take their children with them to study away from home, to enable women to participate in education and training courses, including postgraduate courses.⁵⁸ The content of GE has been incorporated into training programmes on state management and political theories to raise awareness on GE.

144. The State has promulgated the Scheme on Building a Learning Society 2012–2020 and implemented policies related to equality in accessing education –especially for poor students, ethnic minority children and children living in remote and mountainous areas – to ensure that they can access learning opportunities. During the 2015-2019 period, many significant programmes and policies were carried out to support access to basic education and improve education and training for people,

⁵⁶ The Law on Education (2019) contains specific provisions on GE in education, specifically: education programmes must respond to GE goals and international integration requirements (article 8). Learning is the right and obligation of every citizen. All citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, personal characteristics, family background, social status or economic circumstances, are equal in learning opportunities (article 13). The State of Viet Nam has a policy on subsidizing, exempting and reducing tuition fees for learners who are beneficiaries of social policies, ethnic minority people in areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions, orphans, children who have no one to rely on, people with disabilities and people from poor and near-poor households. The State encourages organizations and individuals to award scholarships or grants to learners in accordance with the Law (clauses 2 and 3 of article 85). It also has a policy of prioritizing ethnic minority people residing in difficult areas. The State also focuses on developing a system of ethnic minority boarding schools and community-supported semi-boarding schools, and policies support food supplies for ethnic minority students, enabling them to access equitable and quality education.

⁵⁷ <https://baodantoc.vn/giup-tre-thay-doi-nhan-thuc-gioi-1584972673400.htm>.

⁵⁸ Within the framework of the Gender Equality and Girls' Education Initiative in Viet Nam, implemented by UNESCO and MOET.

including women and girls.⁵⁹ As a result, the groups of women and girls in difficult circumstances – such as poverty, ethnic minorities, or living in areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions – could access opportunities to go to school, receive general education and vocational training, and gain qualifications so that they can find a good job, escape poverty and have a brighter future.⁶⁰

145. Achievements: The opportunity to go to school has been extended to everyone, especially girls. By 2017, the ratio of universal early childhood education and the ratio of primary school attendance at the right age reached more than 99 per cent. Meanwhile, the ratio of secondary school attendance at the right age reached more than 93 per cent.⁶¹ By 2019, the gross attendance ratio at primary, secondary and high schools were 101.1 per cent, 92.8 per cent and 72.3 per cent, respectively. At the primary school level, there is no difference between urban and rural areas in the gross attendance ratio (100.9 per cent versus 101.0 per cent). The attendance ratio of children at the right age at primary, secondary and high schools were 98 per cent, 89.2 per cent and 68.3 per cent, respectively.⁶² The ratio of population of school age not attending school in 2019 was 8.3 per cent, of which 9.2 per cent were boys and 7.5 per cent were girls. Thus, the gender gap in general education attendance in Viet Nam has been eliminated. The gross literacy rate in 2019 for the population aged 15 years and older for the whole country was 95.8 per cent. The figure for boys was 97 per cent and 94.6 per cent for girls.

146. Viet Nam's policies and laws always ensure equality for men and women in career choice. As a result, the rate of workers undergoing training with a degree/diploma, certificate in 2019 was 23.1 per cent (25.5 per cent men and 20.5 per cent women). The rate was 39.3 per cent for urban areas and 15.6 per cent for rural areas. Currently, there have been 1,954 vocational education institutions, including 394 colleges, 515 professional secondary schools, 1,045 vocational education centres.⁶³

Article 11

Equality in employment

147. During 2015 - 2019, Viet Nam promulgated many legal documents and implemented many support policies and models for women workers to ensure legitimate rights and interests of women workers and decent jobs for the whole

⁵⁹ Tuition fee exemption policy for 5-year-old kindergarten children in areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions; universal early childhood education for 5-year-old children; the policy on reimbursement of lost tuition fees for preschools, general education schools, vocational schools and universities; fee exemption and reduction for pupils (boys and girls) of poor and near-poor households; food and accommodation allowance support to pre-schoolers and secondary pupils (boys and girls), children of poor and near-poor households, or semi-boarded pupils in extremely difficult communes; food and accommodation allowance support for students (boys and girls) studying in ethnic minority boarding schools; lunch allowance support for pre-schoolers aged 3–4; and the policy on preferential credit for both pupils and students.

⁶⁰ UN Women, 2015.

⁶¹ MOET, 2017.

⁶² Preliminary results of Population and Housing Census in 2019.

⁶³ Source: MOLISA.

society. Specifically, the Labour Code (2019) embraces a large number of new contents to better ensure GE in labour.⁶⁴

148. The Law on Support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (2017) promotes women's participation in start-ups as business owners and encourages SMEs to use a large number of women workers to qualify for support under Government policies.

149. From 1 January 2016, according to the Law on Social Insurance (2014) and its guiding documents, there are more benefits that come with maternity leave for both women and men workers as compared with the past.

150. Decree No. 145/2020/ND-CP dated 14 December 2020 of the Government prescribing details and guidelines for the implementation of some articles of the Labour Code (2019) regarding working conditions and industrial relations sets aside one chapter for women workers and GE provisions. This chapter sets out many specific provisions on ensuring GE and maternity protection for workers.⁶⁵

151. Government Decree No. 135/2020/ND-CP dated 18 November 2020 prescribes the increase in retirement age of workers to narrow the retirement age gap between men and women from 5 years down to 2 years.⁶⁶

152. Circular No. 07/2017/TT-BLDTBXH dated 10 March 2017 stipulates the working regime of vocational education teachers. Accordingly, a woman teacher who has a child under 12 months is entitled to a reduction of 15 per cent of the standard teaching hour range.

153. On job creation support: Decree No. 74/2019/ND-CP of the Government amends and supplements some articles of Decree 61/2015/ND-CP prescribing policies on job creation support and the National Employment Fund in the direction of increasing preferential loans from the National Employment Fund for SMEs, cooperatives, cooperative groups, business households and employees – where there are many women workers, increase the engagement of mass organizations and Women's Union, increase loan levels and loan terms as compared to the past. The National Employment Fund contributed to creating jobs for 147,631 people in 2018.

⁶⁴ The Labour Code (2019) embraces a large number of new stipulations such as: Firstly, it has expanded the law's scope of application to all entities participating in the labour market. Secondly, it has increased the retirement age as per the agreed roadmap, narrowing the retirement age gap between men and women. Thirdly, for jobs that adversely affect childbearing, reproduction and child-nursing functions of employees, it requires employers to provide adequate information on the hazardous nature, risks and requirements of the jobs to employees for their decision making and ensure occupational health and safety according to regulations when employing them for this category of work. With regard to specific provisions on women workers and GE, there have been changes to the approach to ensuring the rights of women workers to employment and labour. In particular, there is an additional provision regulating cases where the labour contract expires while the woman employee is pregnant or nursing a child under 12 months of age. In this case, she will be given priority to enter into a new labour contract.

⁶⁵ Including specific provision on exercising the equal rights between men and women workers, ranging from initial recruitment and throughout their employment, including issues related to training, salary, rewards, promotion opportunities, insurance regimes, occupational hygiene and safety, working time, rest time and other welfare benefit regimes. The Decree regulates, in detail, the improvement of working conditions and health care for women workers. It also states that women workers are not subject to labour discipline during pregnancy or maternity leave in accordance with the Law on Social Insurance and during the period of nursing a child under 12 months.

⁶⁶ Under normal working conditions is 60 years and three months for men. It then increases by three months each successive year until it reaches 62-years-old in 2028. Likewise, the retirement age for women is 55 years and four months. It then increases by four months each successive year until it reaches 60-years-old in 2035.

Of these, 95,613 were women (accounting for 65 per cent). In 2020, 214,900 jobs were created, of which 120,977 went to women (accounting for 56 per cent).

154. During 2015–2019, many national projects and programmes in the areas of labour and employment were proposed, including the scheme on “Supporting Women’s Start-ups 2017–2025”.⁶⁷ The scheme aims to raise women’s awareness on the Party and State’s guidelines, policies and laws on start-ups; promote the realization of business ideas; and contribute to the realization of national objectives of enterprise development and those of NSGE.

155. The National Program on Vocational Education, Employment and Occupational Health and Safety 2016–2020 aims to improve the quality of human resources, promote labour market development, ensure occupational health and safety, support and create a conducive environment to promote decent work for all and boost equality in employment.

156. In 2015, the Prime Minister issued Directive No. 09/CT-TTg on accelerating the implementation of solutions to problems of schools and kindergartens in industrial zones. Thanks to the policy, non-public preschools have rapidly developed, particularly in cities, towns, densely populated areas and industrial zones. In 2018, the Government implemented policies to provide lunch for kindergarten children, to support with teaching materials, to encourage teachers of private kindergartens to participate in capacity-building courses and support lunch for preschool teachers (including principals and vice principals) who are working in private and people-founded preschools just like public preschool teachers.⁶⁸ The Government also stipulates that employers need to offer an appropriate space where employees can pump and store breast milk in accordance with the actual conditions of the workplace, the needs of women workers and the ability of employers to meet requirements on hygiene and privacy.⁶⁹

157. In addition to the above policies, a large number of service delivery models to support GE for women have been carried out by organizations and agencies. These include clubs of women workers living in inns, residential clusters near industrial zones and export processing zones hosted by MOLISA. The ministry also guides affiliated agencies and units in localities nationwide to pilot the family service model and “When moms and dads are away from home” clubs implemented by VWU.

158. As a result, the rate of working-age women in Viet Nam’s labour force is 71.2 per cent.

159. Over the years, an emphasis has been put on vocational training and job creation for women workers, especially in rural areas. Over 80 per cent of women workers have jobs and stable incomes after receiving training.

160. Since 2016, each year more than 100,000 Vietnamese people go to work abroad under contract, and about 35–40 per cent of them are women workers. Vietnamese people abroad work mainly in the following countries and territories: Taiwan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Japan and countries in the Middle East. This has contributed to job solutions, therefore improving the quality of the female human resources.

161. However, due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as of December 2020, 32.1 million people in Viet Nam aged 15 and over had been negatively affected,

⁶⁷ Decision No. 939/QĐ-TTg dated 30 June 2017 of the Prime Minister.

⁶⁸ Article 7, Decree 06/2018/ND-CP of the Government.

⁶⁹ Decree No. 145/2020/ND-CP dated 14 December 2020 of the Government on detailing and guiding the implementation of several articles of the Labour Code (2019) on working conditions and industrial relations.

including those who lost their jobs, went on a furlough/rotational leave and experienced reduced working hours and reduced income...⁷⁰

Article 12

Equal access of women to health care and protection

162. During 2015 - 2019, the Government of Viet Nam issued many policies to ensure women's equal access to health care and protection services. On 25 October 2017, the Party Central Committee issued Resolution No. 20-NQ/TW on strengthening the protection, care and improvement of people's health in the new situation, with recommendations to implement programmes to supplement necessary micronutrients for pregnant women, breastfeeding women, children and older people.

163. On 25 October 2017, the Party Central Committee issued Resolution No. 21-NQ/TW on population work in the new situation.⁷¹ The Government issued Decree No. 39/2015/ND-CP dated 27 April 2015 on support policies for ethnic minority women of poor households who comply with the population policies on the number of children. The Prime Minister issued Decision No. 679/QD-TTg dated 22 November 2019 approving the Vietnam Population Strategy to 2030.

164. Aiming at universal health insurance coverage, the Prime Minister approved Decision No. 1167/QD-TTg dated 28 June 2016 on adjustments to the assignment of health insurance performance targets for the 2016-2020 period. This stipulates those women and girls who are eligible for social protection shall also be supported by the State budget to pay health insurance premiums.

165. The Scheme on Building and Developing the Grassroots Health-Care Network in the New Situation 2016–2025 was approved by the Prime Minister in 2016 with the goal of improving the delivery capacity and service quality of the grassroots health-care network. The project emphasizes the enhancement of training for village health workers and village midwives in areas with difficult and extremely difficult socio-economic conditions and requires commune health stations to fully perform primary health-care tasks, including health care for older people, mothers and children.

166. Viet Nam's health-care service has been improving day by day to meet the needs of people. By 2016, up to 98.4 per cent of the total communes across the country had health stations in operation. Moreover, 96 per cent of villages had village health workers, 80 per cent of communes had doctors, 60 per cent of communes met the national criteria for commune healthcare 2011–2020, and over 95 per cent of communes had obstetrician-gynaecologists or midwives. These obstetrician-gynaecologists and midwives were reasonably distributed between urban (18 per cent)

⁷⁰ Source: GSO – Press release on labour and employment situation in the fourth quarter and in 2020. In which, 69.2 per cent of people were subject to reduced income, 39.9 per cent experienced reduced working hours/went on a furlough/rotational leave and about 14.0 per cent were forced to temporarily suspend from work or suspend production and business activities.

⁷¹ The resolution sets out Goal 2 –all women of childbearing age have convenient access to modern contraceptive methods; reduce by two thirds the number of teenagers and young adults with unwanted pregnancies; and Goal 3 –90 per cent of young men and women receive counselling and health examination before marriage; 50 per cent reduction in child marriages, 60 per cent reduction in consanguineous marriages; 70 per cent of pregnant women are screened for at least four of the most common congenital diseases; 90 per cent of newborns are screened for at least five of the most common congenital diseases. The resolution also emphasized the review and supplementation of legal provisions on prohibiting fetal sex selection; effectively prevent the abuse of science – technology for fetal sex selection; promote gender equality for the advancement of women.

and rural areas (26 per cent). The rate of pregnant women receiving antenatal care at least three times was more than 90 per cent, while the rate of delivery cases supported by trained health workers reached 98 per cent. Finally, the rate of mothers and newborns receiving care in the first week after birth reached 81 per cent.

167. Viet Nam has been making efforts to expand health insurance coverage. In Particular, health insurance cards are provided free-of-charge to children under 6 years old. Meanwhile, many groups of people are supported to buy health insurance or are granted free health insurance cards. The proportion of ethnic minority people having health insurance and free medical cards increased from 8 per cent in 1998 to 100 per cent in 2016. As of 31 December 2016, approximately 16,347,000 poor and ethnic minority people, including women residing in remote areas, were granted health insurance cards. Health insurance covers costs for prenatal check-ups and delivery at health-care facilities.⁷² There is no difference between the percentage of women and men who have a health insurance card or free medical card.

168. The Prime Minister issued Decision No. 468/QĐ-TTg dated 23 March 2016 approving the Scheme on Controlling Sex Imbalance at Birth 2016–2025.⁷³ Forms of communications have been diversified and accentuated for awareness raising and behaviour change towards not choosing fetal sex; and checks and inspection over obstetrics and gynaecology service providers on their implementation of legal provisions on the prohibition of fetal sex selection.

169. In order to improve maternal and child health status and to reduce maternal, newborn and child mortality, on 3 August 2016, the Ministry of Health issued the National Action Plan on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Care 2016–2020.⁷⁴

170. In order to provide reproductive healthcare for the entire population, the Government has issued national guidelines on reproductive health care services⁷⁵ in conformity with the Scheme on “Strengthening Counselling and Delivery of Population and Family Planning Services for Adolescents/Young Adults 2016–2020”.

171. For the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and some common communicable diseases, the Government has issued a national action plan to eliminate HIV and hepatitis B and eliminate mother-to-child transmission of syphilis 2018–2030⁷⁶ and implement specific activities towards eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and syphilis by 2030.⁷⁷

172. For the first time in NSGE 2021–2030, Viet Nam has adopted a GE target related to healthcare for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.⁷⁸

⁷² Ministry of Health, 2017.

⁷³ The project on controlling the sex ratio at birth 2016–2025 with the goal “Effectively control the increase rate of the sex ratio at birth, towards bringing the sex ratio at birth back to the natural balance, contributing to improvement of the quality of human resources, serving the industrialization, modernization of the country” sets out groups of tasks and specific solutions.

⁷⁴ Decision No. 4177/QĐ-BYT dated 3 August 2016 of the Ministry of Health.

⁷⁵ Decision No. 4128/QĐ-BYT dated 29 July 2016 of the Ministry of Health.

⁷⁶ Decision No. 7130/QĐ-BYT dated 29 November 2018 of the Ministry of Health.

⁷⁷ Directive No. 10/CT-BYT dated 26 December 2017 on strengthening activities to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination in health-care facilities.

Directive 1139/CT-BYT dated 25 October 2018 on strengthening HIV/AIDS prevention and control. Resolution No. 20-NQ/TW dated 25 October 2017 of the 12th Party Central Committee on strengthening the protection, care and improvement of people’s health in the new situation, towards the goal of ending the AIDS pandemic in 2030.

⁷⁸ Specifically, Target 4 of Objective 4 in the health sector: By 2025, 40 per cent of provinces and cities under the central administration shall have at least one health-care facility piloting health-care services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and the figure shall reach 70 per cent by 2030.

Article 13

Socio-economic and cultural welfare

173. From 1 January 2016, according to the Law on Social Insurance (2014) and its guiding documents, there are now more benefits that come with maternity leave for both women and men workers (see details in para. 79).

174. The Bank for Social Policies gives priority to supporting women to get access to capital for production development and income enhancement, thereby enhancing the status of women in the family as well as in society. From 2015 to 2019, credit support for women has increased in both quantity and quality. The trust loan through the VWU alone has more than 2.522 million members with a balance of more than VND 80.435 billion, ranking first in terms of both members and outstanding loans in four socio-political organizations receiving trust loans from the Bank for Social Policies. The policy credit helps women gradually change their perception and mindset about production and business. However, the figure of 39 per cent of the members and outstanding loans of the VWU in the performance report of the Bank for Social Policies does not reflect the total number of women households borrowing from the Bank. This is because some of those households have borrowed from the Farmers' Union, the Veteran's Union, the Youth Union or the Bank for Social Policies itself. However, these have not all been accounted for. It is estimated that women borrowers account for about half of the 6.5 million households with outstanding loans at the Bank for Social Policies.⁷⁹

175. The scheme on "Supporting Women's Start-ups 2017–2025" and the campaign on "Building Families with 5 Nos 3 Cleans" associated with new rural area development as well as the scheme on "Communication, Education, Advocacy and Support for Women in Solving some Women-related Issues 2017–2027"⁸⁰ has created a consensus and drawn a great deal of attention and response from a large number of women, households and policy beneficiaries.

176. Communication activities on GE continue to be carried out by relevant authorities at all levels and sectors. Every year, MOLISA launches a nationwide action month on GE and gender-based violence prevention and response. Many rich and diverse activities in response to the action month were organized by all sectors at all levels. These have attracted the active participation of agencies, organizations and residents in the community, aiming to spread messages and images on GE and build a safe and non-violent living environment for women and children.

177. The writing contest about GE was first held in 2018, attracting the participation of many reporters, editors and people. More than 250 entries reflected multidimensional perspectives on GE in all areas of social life, contributing to bringing messages about GE closer to the community.

178. In 2019, the Vietnam Women's Union coordinated with ministries, sectors and agencies to launch the "Safe Year for Women and Children" with the participation of leaders of the Party, the Government, and ministries, sectors, localities, agencies and organizations, thereby demonstrating the commitment and joint action of all sectors and levels.

179. Ministries, sectors and local agencies have held many communications orientation workshops and training courses on GE and gender-based violence prevention and control for press agencies and reporters in order to help them have a more gender-sensitive perspective while writing news and building reports.

⁷⁹ Performance Report of the Vietnam Bank for Social Policies.

⁸⁰ Decision 938/QĐ-TTg dated 30 June 2017 of the Prime Minister.

180. While continuing to advocate for the content of the Gender Equality Law, ministries, departments and sectors also advocated on newly promulgated policies and laws related to GE. Central and local radio and television stations broadcast the thematic programmes to raise awareness on GE. The contents on GE have been creatively integrated and are suitable for many different audiences. The thematic television/radio programmes on GE have also been translated into many ethnic minority languages, such as Thai, Mong, Dao, Ede, K'ho, Gia Rai, Bana, Xe Dang, Cham and Kh'mer, and in forms of communications that are easy to understand and remember.

Article 14

Women in rural areas

181. The Prime Minister issued the Scheme on “Vocational Training for Rural Workers until 2020”,⁸¹ which regulates policies to support vocational training for women workers and the participation of VWU in vocational training for women workers. Implementation results in 2018 showed that 82 per cent of trained rural women workers got jobs.

182. The Government issued Decision No. 491/QD-TTg dated 16 April 2016 on the criteria set for new rural development. It includes the content on ensuring GE, preventing and controlling domestic violence and protecting and supporting vulnerable people in family and social life. Accordingly, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has issued guidelines for the implementation of these criteria. These guidelines prescribe that there must be at least one woman leader in a new rural commune (including the titles of Secretary of the Communal Party Committee, Deputy Secretary of the Communal Party Committee, Chair of the Communal People's Council, Vice Chair of the Communal People's Council, Chair of the Communal People's Committee, and Vice Chair of the Communal People's Committee).

183. Rural women are prioritized for concessional loans from employment and poverty reduction programmes and official credit sources. In 2018, the National Employment Fund contributed to supporting job creation for 147,662 workers, including 110,445 women workers (accounting for 74.8 per cent). In addition, the National Employment Fund also dedicated a specific fund management channel for VWU to generate jobs for its members. This support helped to generate jobs for 800–1,400 workers per year, of whom 80 per cent were women.

184. The National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2016–2020 with the total budget for the programme implementation of VND 48.397 billion. During the programme implementation process, GE mainstreaming and promoting the role of Women's Unions at all levels in supporting poor women in their livelihoods, capacity enhancement and networking for access to resources was required.

185. However, due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the overall result in 2020 of the work force aged 15 and over was estimated at 54.6 million people, a decrease of 1.2 million people compared to 2019. This decline was mainly attributable to the work force in rural areas. Compared to 2019, the rural work force fell by more than 1.1 million people.⁸²

⁸¹ Decision No. 1956/QD-TTg dated 27 November 2009 and Decision No. 971/QD-TTg dated 1 July 2015 of the Prime Minister.

⁸² GSO. Press release on labour and employment situation in the fourth quarter and 2020.

Article 15

Ensuring women's equal civil rights before the law

186. From 2015 to 2019, the Government of Viet Nam promulgated the Civil Code (2015) to further ensure the rights of women to equality in civil relations before the law.⁸³

187. The Law on Marriage and Family (2014) (effective from 1 January 2015) also prescribes equal property rights in civil relations, specifically: Common property of spouses includes property created by both spouses, income generated from labour, production and business activities, yields and profits arising from their separate property and other lawful income during the marriage period; property jointly inherited by or given to both, and other property agreed upon by spouses as common properties. The land-use rights obtained by spouses after marriage shall be the common property of both spouses, unless they are separately inherited by, or given to a spouse or are obtained through transactions made with separate property. Common property of spouses shall be under the joint ownership and used to meet family needs and perform common obligations of spouses. When there is no ground to prove that the property in dispute is a separate property of a spouse, such property shall be regarded as common property (article 33).

Article 16

Women's equal rights in marriage and family relations

188. From 2015 to 2019, the laws of Viet Nam were further completed. The regulations ensure equality between women and men in marriage and family relations, including the Law on Marriage and Family (2014), the Criminal Procedure Code (2015) and other legal documents.⁸⁴

⁸³ The Civil Code (2015) stipulates that all individuals are equally protected by law in terms of personal and property rights. In particular, the Civil Code (2015) stipulates the right to gender reassignment (article 36), gender transition/affirmation (Article 37), the right to change the given name of a person who has their gender re-assigned, transitioned (Article 28).

⁸⁴ The Law on Marriage and Family (2014) (effective as from 1 January 2015) stipulates: Voluntary, progressive and monogamous marriage in which husband and wife are equal; build prosperous, progressive and happy families; family members have the obligation to respect, attend to, care for and assist one another; treat children without discrimination (clauses 1 and 3 of article 2). The husband and wife are equal, have equal rights and obligations in all family aspects and in the execution of citizens' rights and obligations as prescribed in the Constitution, in this Law and relevant laws (article 17). The domicile of husband and wife shall be selected based on their agreement without being bound by customs, practices, or administrative boundaries (article 20). The husband and wife have the rights and obligations to create conditions for and support each other to select professions; study and develop their educational levels and professional qualifications and skills; and take part in political, economic, cultural and social activities (article 23). The Criminal Procedure Code (2015) regulates some changes in the protection of denouncers, witness testifiers, crime victims and participants in legal proceedings through which the victims of sexual violence, especially women, are protected. The Criminal Procedure Code (2015) regulates the criminal prosecution applicable to a number of violations related to the age of marriage and consanguineous marriage. Decree No. 82/2020/ND-CP regulates the sanctions of administrative violations in the fields of judicial assistance, judicial administration, marriage and family, civil judgement enforcement, enterprise and cooperative bankruptcy, as well as the administrative sanctions applicable to child marriage and the organization of consanguineous marriage. Decree No. 177/ND-CP dated 28 September 2020 of the Government prescribing penalties for administrative violations in the health sector regulates the administrative sanctions applicable to the act of forcing others to apply measures for a preferred fetal sex. These regulations are one of the legal corridors to contribute to protecting the right of women to equality in the family.

189. In 2016, the Prime Minister signed Decision No. 21/2016/QĐ-TTg promulgating regulations on intersectoral coordination in domestic violence prevention and control. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST); MOLISA; MOET; and the Ministry of Public Security issued a joint circular guiding the implementation of behaviour change education on family building and domestic violence prevention and control in educational establishments of the national education system. Circular No. 24/2017/TT-BYT of the Ministry of Health stipulates the process of receiving, providing medical care, and making statistics and reporting on survivors of domestic violence at medical examination and treatment establishments.

190. The scheme on “Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response 2016–2020, with a Vision to 2030” was approved by the Prime Minister on 22 July 2016.

191. The scheme on “Minimization of Child Marriage and Consanguineous Marriage in Ethnic Minority Areas 2015–2025” was approved by the Prime Minister in Decision No. 498/QĐ-TTg in 2015.

192. Since 2016, the Government has adopted initiatives on GE awareness raising, prevention and control of violence against women, including the “Domestic Violence Awareness Month” led by MCST annually in June and the “National Action Month on Gender Equality and Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response” led by MOLISA annually from 15 November to 15 December. These initiatives include awareness raising campaigns for community members, local leaders and policymakers, as well as the development of education and communication materials and the promotion of inspection and monitoring of GE implementation in localities. As a result, the public awareness and interests in gender-based violence prevention and control in localities have been raised. In particular, people have gained strong awareness of prohibited acts related to gender-based violence; and individuals’ roles and responsibilities in gender-based violence prevention and response have been strengthened.

193. Violence against women and domestic violence in localities have been increasingly addressed, and their prevalence shows a downward trend. In 2018, Viet Nam conducted the second National Study on Violence against Women with 6,000 samples in 63 provinces and cities under the central administration.⁸⁵ The preliminary findings of the survey show a decrease in violence against women: The prevalence of physical violence decreased from 31.5 per cent (2010) to 26.1 per cent (2018) and emotional violence decreased from 53.6 per cent (2010) to 47.0 per cent (2018). However, the prevalence of violence against women still persists.

194. By 2018, there were 9,024 domestic violence prevention and control models nationwide, covering 74.85 per cent of all communes/wards/towns.⁸⁶ There have been 33,192 reliable addresses in the community, there are 26,558 domestic violence prevention and control groups, and there are 19,812 clubs that promote sustainable family development.⁸⁷ Many models of gender-based violence and domestic violence prevention and control of agencies and organizations have been implemented and replicated. For example: the model of harm prevention and minimization of gender-based violence is guided by MOLISA for implementation and replication in a number of localities. Under this model, interventions have included clubs to prevent and minimize harms of gender-based violence, the gender-based violence prevention and response working groups, reliable addresses, community-based shelters, etc. With the model of domestic violence prevention and response of MCST, clubs of sustainable family development and domestic violence prevention and response groups have been

⁸⁵ Viet Nam is the first country in the world that has conducted the second study on violation against women.

⁸⁶ MCST, 2018.

⁸⁷ MCST, 2015.

established. In addition, there have been other models, including the following: the model of domestic violence prevention and response; the model of building happy families, led by VWU; the model of domestic violence prevention and control; and the model of communications on GE and gender-based violence prevention and response, led by the Farmers' Union.

195. Viet Nam has further completed its service delivery system to protect women and children from violence and abuse. Currently, there are 425 social protection centres nationwide, of which 195 are public and 230 are non-public. This service system helps to ensure women and children have comprehensive access to protection and support services.
